



**National
Multiple Sclerosis
Society**

**Reducing
Communication
Barriers for Hispanic
Patients with Multiple
Sclerosis:**

**Interpreter
Demonstration Project**

This project was made possible by a
generous unrestricted educational
grant from the



Background

- **Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a chronic, progressive, unpredictable neurological disease that affects the central nervous system**
- **Experts feel it is important to diagnose and treat MS early in the disease process**

Background

- **Hispanics/Latinos (monolinguals) have difficulty receiving appropriate medical care due to the lack of culturally and linguistically proficient services.**
- **National MS Society support of the Presidential Executive order “Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency”, 2001.**



Collaborators

MS Clinics

- Bronx Lebanon MS Clinic – NYC
- Los Angeles County – Univ. of Southern California MS Clinic
- Houston Ben Taub MS Clinic

National MS Society

- Moyra Rondon, LCSW; Marion Brandis, MA,RN,BSN- **NYC Chapter**
- Mercy Willard, MNM; Denise Nowack, RD - **Southern CA Chapter**
- Barbara Olsen, RN, MS; Lissa Cameron, LMSW-**Lone Star Chapter**
- Deborah Hertz, MPH; Maria Reyes-Velarde, MD, MPH – **National**



Project Goals

- **Improve access to MS specialty care by reducing language barriers**
- **Assess patient/provider communication**

Selection of sites

- **Site selection process**
- **Lessons learned**
 - Approach must include the benefit to the provider
 - Requirements for approvals and coordination are unique to institutions

Finding medically trained interpreters

- **Models**
 - NYC – contracted with individuals
 - Los Angeles – contracted with an agency
 - Houston – hospital staff
- **Lesson Learned**
 - Many options exist

Role of Interpreters

- **Service to patients**
- **Service to the healthcare providers**
- **Feedback to the National MS Society**
- **Participation in trainings, meetings and conference calls**



Preparing Interpreters

- **Training**
 - **National** – about MS, disability etiquette, goals of program, expectations
 - **Local** – HIPAA, hospital requirements, additional chapter training
- **Glossary of MS specific terms and definitions**
- **Scripts**



How did it work?

- **Interpreters scheduled on a regular basis**
- **Spanish speaking patients invited to participate**
- **Consent forms**
- **Chapter staff present at clinics**

Instruments to Assess the Quality and Impact of the Service

- **“Post-then-pre” telephone survey by a trained Spanish speaker**
- **Interpreter activity reports/conference calls**
- **Physician survey**
- **Chapter evaluation**

Results

- **120 served -- 89% participants surveyed**
 - 100% respondents suggested improved communication with the physician, compared to 7.7 % prior to the service.
 - 100% respondents indicated understanding physician information, compared to 12.9% prior to service.

Results

- **Participating physicians indicated a benefit to the service**
- **Interpreters felt integral to the demonstration project**

Outcomes

- **Lessons learned:**
 - Interpreter services reduce communication barriers
 - Evaluation tools need to be culturally modified
 - Efficient use of interpreter time
 - Glossary has multiple uses
- **Project costs & future funding**
- **California hospital partners in training professional staff on cultural competence and MS**



The Interpreter Demonstration Project

Results of this project will be used to promote:

- **Value of reducing communication barriers between physicians and patients**
- **Need for appropriate cost effective interpreter services**
- **Efficient interpreter service models**



Professional Resource Center

- **Clinical consultation**
- **Literature search services**
- **Continuing education opportunities**
- **Insurance and long-term care information**
- **www.nationalmssociety.org/PRC**

PRC
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