Healthcare Interpreter

Interpreters convert information from one language into another language. Interpreters work in spoken or sign language; translators work in written language.

Interpreters typically do the following:

- Convert concepts in the source language to equivalent concepts in the target language
- Compile information and technical terms into glossaries and terminology databases to be used in their oral renditions and translations
- Speak, read, and write fluently in at least two languages, one of which is usually English
- Relay the style and tone of the original language
- Render spoken messages accurately, quickly, and clearly
- Apply their cultural knowledge to render an accurate and meaningful interpretation or translation of the original message

Interpreters convert information from one spoken language into another—or, in the case of sign language interpreters, between spoken language and sign language. The goal of an interpreter is to have people hear the interpretation as if it were the original language. Interpreters usually must be fluent speakers or signers of both languages, because they communicate back and forth among people who do not share a common language.
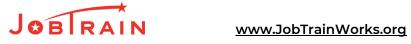
There are three common modes of interpreting: simultaneous, consecutive, and sight translation:

Simultaneous interpreters convey a spoken or signed message into another language at the same time someone is speaking or signing. Simultaneous interpreters must be familiar with the subject matter and maintain a high level of concentration to convey the message accurately and completely. Due to the mental fatigue involved, simultaneous interpreters may work in pairs or small teams if they are interpreting for long periods of time, such as in a court or conference setting.
Consecutive interpreters convey the speaker's or signer's message in another language after they have stopped to allow for the interpretation. Note taking is generally an essential part of consecutive interpreting.
Sight translation interpreters provide translation of a written document directly into a spoken language, for immediate understanding, but not for the purposes of producing a written translated document.

Healthcare Interpreters typically work in healthcare settings and help patients communicate with doctors, nurses, technicians, and other medical staff. Interpreters must have knowledge of medical terminology and of common medical terms in both languages. They may translate research material,

regulatory information, pharmaceutical and informational brochures, patient consent documents, website information, and patients' records from one language into another.

Healthcare Interpreters must be sensitive to patients' personal circumstances, as well as maintain confidentiality and ethical standards. Interpretation may also be provided remotely, either by video relay or over the phone.

Work Environment
Depending on the setting and type of assignment, interpreting may be stressful, as highly technical or sensitive information must be relayed accurately. In some settings, interpreters may work as part of a team. With the development of new communication technology, more interpreters are working remotely via video or telephone connections.

Self-employed Interpreters often have variable work schedules, which may include periods of limited work and periods of long, irregular hours. Most Interpreters work full time.

Watch a video about being a Healthcare Interpreter

Top Local Employers: LanguageLine Solutions, Procare Therapy, Stanford Health Care, Freelancer Technology Pty Limited, E2V, Inc.

Median Pay
$73,788

Job Growth (2020-2025)
23%

Education and Training
Although Interpreters typically need at least a bachelor's degree, the most important requirement is to have native-level proficiency in English and at least one other language.

Local Education:

City College San Francisco

Evergreen Valley College

For More Information:

Bureau of Labor Statistics

Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters