

CME Seminar

TAPIT Member Presents CME Seminar

By: Holly Melendez



East Tennessee State University's Language and Culture Resource Center (LCRC) in collaboration with students from the Quillen College of Medicine (QCOM) proudly presented East Tennessee's first CME- approved (Continuing Medical Education) seminar on interpretation in the healthcare setting.

In 2010, TAPIT member Jeannine De La Torre Ugarte spoke to a group of approximately 60 participants on Wednesday, April 14 from 6-8 pm in a presentation entitled "Translation and Interpreting in the Healthcare Setting: Overcoming Language Barriers to Provide the Highest Quality Care to All Patients." The introduction and welcome address were presented by TAPIT co-founder, Marvyn Bacigalupo-Tipps.

The seminar was the culmination of a project which began in January 2010 as a way for QCOM students enrolled in the "Professions in Medicine" course to complete the service component of their class. These thirteen students, led by first-year student Jason Fogleman, were introduced to the various community service projects performed out of the LCRC during a Volunteer Fair for Community Organizations in the Fall semester of 2009 at which LCRC member Raquel Fratta and ETSU Americorps*VISTA Member Emily Goepel presented an information booth. Through a series of meetings and a presentation to QCOM students by Holly Melendez on the importance of proper healthcare interpretation, the idea for the seminar was born.

QCOM students worked with the Office of Continuing Medical Education to secure 2 official CME credits for participants, as an enticement for the local healthcare community. They also worked to market the event, collect RSVPs, arrange the venue, and operate the presentation technology.

The turnout was a good one. "The event exceeded my expectations in both the quality of the presentation and the number of excited attendees," said Fogleman. "It gave us all an opportunity to learn more about the CME process and more importantly, the need and importance of professional interpretation in the healthcare setting."

Ugarte spoke with the following objectives: that each of the program participants would (1) be able to state three reasons why language access is essential in healthcare, (2) learn how to identify a trained from an untrained interpreter, (3) be able to describe the process of telephone interpretation, and (3) learn how to implement cultural competence into their own practice(s).

In addition to addressing the preceding objectives, Ugarte discussed interpreter training methods and evaluations, and encouraged discussion about interpretation in the healthcare setting. The audience of healthcare professionals, medical students, and bilingual professionals left with a much better understanding of the issues related to and the need for proper healthcare interpretation.

According to Goepel, "As our community grows and becomes more diverse, it's vital that our providers be aware of how to use interpreters and translators to overcome language and cultural barriers. This seminar delivered information that will empower providers to better serve all members of the community, and that brings us a step closer to eliminating disparities in health care."

Holly Melendez lives in Johnson City, TN with her husband and four children and has worked with the Hispanic community since she began as a student at East Tennessee State University (ETSU) in 1999. She has since worked in various capacities, including coordinating university and community grant-funded initiatives, teaching Spanish and English and translating and interpreting. She taught Spanish as an adjunct professor at ETSU (2003 - 2011) and coordinated the ETSU Migrant Education Program summer school for children (2009 and 2010).