

# Spanish Bilingual Assistant

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition

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Additionally, we are grateful to the  
**National Council on Interpreting in Health Care**  
for permission to include the national Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice for Interpreters in Health Care.

2<sup>nd</sup> edition © 2002, 2004 Maricopa County Medical Interpreter Project  
at University of Arizona and Phoenix Children's Hospital  
with generous support from St. Luke's Health Initiatives and BHHS Legacy Foundation

3<sup>rd</sup> edition © 2006 Medical Interpreter Project at Phoenix Children's Hospital  
with generous support from the global organization Ronald McDonald House Charities, Inc.

#### *ARS LONGA, VITA BREVIS*

This book is dedicated to the memory of my mentor and friend, a great translator, Marc Calegari, S.J., and to the memory of my daughter, Miriam Hernández Rayes, who was beautiful beyond any words in my vocabulary.

Barbara Rayes, 2004



Maricopa County  
 Medical Interpreter Project  
 TOWARD A HEALTHIER STATE...



**Ask a Doctor**

Medical information changes all the time. The medical information in this book isn't supposed to take the place of a doctor's medical advice. If you have a medical question, ask your doctor.

**Ask a Linguist**

Our collective lexicon has never seen such rapid growth and change. Words come and go, languages change and die, and people affix new meanings to old words all the time. This book is meant to serve as a guide to study medical interpreting for people who speak English and Spanish. The information in this book doesn't include everything a person might hear or need to know in order to interpret in a health care setting. Linguists are language experts. If you have questions about language, ask a linguist.

**We Asked the Experts**

The Maricopa County Medical Interpreter Project is grateful to these national experts in the fields of interpretation, translation, teaching and testing. Each person shared willingly and contributed thought-provoking insight to improve medical interpreter training in Arizona during a round-table discussion on February 27 & 28, 2003.

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*The*  
**Medical Interpreter Project**  
*for Children's Hospitals*

Phoenix Children's Hospital continues the work of the Maricopa County Medical Interpreter Project with generous funding from the global organization, **Ronald McDonald House Charities, Inc.** Project leadership includes program manager Juanita Francis, master trainer Barbara Rayes, the director of community outreach at Phoenix Children's Hospital, Sally Moffat, and the manager of language and cultural services at Phoenix Children's Hospital, Irma Bustamante.

Participants in the national Medical Interpreter Project learn to teach the Spanish Bilingual Assistant class in their children's hospitals. We are grateful to these instructors from the class of 2006 for their contributions to this manual.

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From admission to discharge, whether the encounter is short or long, they help people understand each other. They teach and support their colleagues and anyone else fortunate enough to know them.

We are grateful for the perspective, feedback, and service of the translators and interpreters at Phoenix Children's Hospital.

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<b>Eva Carrillo</b>	<b>Sandra Muñoz</b>
<b>Judy Cohen</b>	<b>Kendall Mark Nunley</b>
<b>Jorge Coronado</b>	<b>Jorge Pérez</b>
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<b>Patsy Encinas</b>	<b>Ricardo Rodríguez</b>
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<b>Elizabeth Fimbres-Estrada</b>	<b>Harry Sasson</b>
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## Preface

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The instruction we find in books is like fire. We fetch it from our neighbours, kindle it at home, communicate it to others, and it becomes the property of all.

-- Voltaire (1694 – 1778)

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Everything comes from somewhere. But this class comes from *everywhere*. It was born in over twenty-two Spanish-speaking countries around the world, in fifty states of the U.S., in the hearts of people who try to connect cultures, in the broken hearts of patients and families who needed an interpreter but didn't have one. Now you are part of this program, too, and what you do with it is all up to you.

### **Timeline**

This class began in 1984 with Spanish classes for English-speaking doctors and nurses. It was taught by María de Montaña at Maricopa Medical Center in Phoenix, Arizona. The University of Arizona contributed funding and expertise. By 1989, an educational psychologist and specialist in adult education, Dr. Alicia Alvarez, was hired to set up a program to train bilingual employees to interpret. The program consisted of medical information in English and Spanish, and won awards for Innovation and Cultural Competence from the National Association of Counties. Maricopa Medical Center expanded the program to include hiring dedicated staff interpreters. By 1997, Irma Bustamante was teaching the program at Maricopa Medical Center and Phoenix Children's Hospital. By 1999, she was teaching at other institutions as well, including Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center. That same year, Gricelda Zamora González, just thirteen years old, died of appendicitis at a local hospital. She had served as her family's interpreter during her illness.

### **Compassion**

The community responded to Gricelda's death with grief and compassion. St. Luke's Health Initiatives focused efforts on increasing the quality and quantity of medical interpreters in the greater Phoenix area. Elizabeth McNamee brought SLHI expertise and funding, joining Nita Francis of the University of Arizona with Irma Bustamante and Barbara Rayes of Phoenix Children's Hospital. In 2001 the Maricopa County Medical Interpreter Project was born. During the three-year, grant-funded project, hundreds of interpreters were trained. This book became a community-based training manual. Twenty-eight instructors and language coaches were trained. At the time of publication, Arizona's colleges and universities are working together to implement the program as a for-credit course that leads to undergraduate credit and degrees.

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You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth... Let your bending in the Archer's hand be for gladness; For even as He loves the arrow that flies, so He loves also the bow that is stable.

-- Khalil Gibran (1883 – 1931)

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You are flying into a new trajectory, carrying a flame of knowledge. Your career was borne of pain and of love. You will be present at birth and death, and at the mundane moments of vomiting and headaches.

How wonderful that you will be there.