



spotlight on health care

Speaking The Same Language: Health Care's Diversity Debate

(NAPSA)—In the U.S. some 176 languages are spoken.

This is especially apparent in hospitals when patients literally do not speak the same language as their doctor.

It is important to know that a hospital is prepared for a diverse pool of patients. Hospitals with a followed policy on language services cut down on cost and wait times for all patients, regardless of their language.

The leading language services company serving the health care market, CyraCom, has teamed up with Roper Public Affairs to learn more about the scope of the diversity challenge from various experts and thought leaders.

Its 2006 report, "Increasing Diversity: Issues and Opportunities with Providing Health Care," explores the thought leaders' perspectives on diversity. The publication also includes statistics from the Language Index, CyraCom's proprietary database of language information drawn from tracking more than 900 hospitals and health care facilities nationwide.

Information found in the study, which includes expert interviews, referenced source material and Language Index data, includes:

- Excerpts from a report that state cross-cultural issues can result in longer office visits, patient nonadherence and consent delays

- Data showing hospitals in Midwestern states—Michigan, Missouri and Nebraska—have seen the largest percentage increase in number of languages requested



A nurse uses an over-the-phone interpreter to talk with a patient about her new baby.

- Suggestions that hospital and medical staff must deal directly with issues of language, culture and communication

- Statistics illustrating that languages most needed in hospitals served by CyraCom are Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, Korean and Arabic

- An opinion that more than 20 percent of hospital residents are unprepared to treat new immigrants and patients with religious beliefs that may affect treatment

- Data indicating emerging languages being asked for in hospitals more and more include Somali, Bengali and Haitian Creole.

Minorities currently comprise 25 percent of the U.S. population, yet a Sullivan Commission report found minority groups account for less than 9 percent of nurses and 6 percent of physicians.

Using improved techniques to help break down language and cultural communication barriers will result in better care for everyone—with lower costs and increased understanding.

For more information, visit www.cyracom.com.