

Hispanic Heritage Month: Celebrating Pioneers in Medicine

Source: <https://www.oregonclinic.com/about-us/blog/hispanic-heritage-month-celebrating-pioneers-medicine>

In honor of National Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15 – October 15), we are sharing the incredible stories of Hispanic and Latinx individuals who made important contributions to the medical community and society as a whole.

The Oregon Clinic is proud to honor the groundbreaking achievements and discoveries Hispanic physicians, nurses, scientists, and researchers have made, and continue to make. The people highlighted below are just a few of many inspiring Hispanic medical pioneers who have had a profound impact on the healthcare field.

Dr. José Celso Barbosa



In 1880, Dr. José Celso Barbosa was the first person from Puerto Rico to graduate from medical school in the US. He joined the Red Cross and treated soldiers in the Spanish-American War. After the war, he returned to Puerto Rico where he developed the idea of employer-based health insurance – a radical idea at the time – inspired by the poverty among his patients. He also served in the Puerto Rico Senate until 1921 and founded a political party that advocated for Puerto Rican statehood.

Dr. Severo Ochoa

Severo Ochoa, M.D., was a Spanish-American biochemist who graduated from the University of Madrid's medical school in 1939 and went on to teach at the New York University College of Medicine for 30 years. Known as "the man behind RNA," in 1959, Dr. Ochoa was the first Hispanic American to win the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in recognition of his work discovering an enzyme synthesizing ribonucleic acid, which was vital in furthering understanding of the human genetic code.



Dr. Ildaura Murillo-Rohde, Ph.D., RN, FAAN

Dr. Ildaura Murillo-Rohde was a Panamanian-American nurse and professor who founded the National Association of Hispanic Nurses in 1975. She felt strongly that the country needed an organization to attract Hispanic people to nursing as well as to support their unique concerns and those of the communities they served. Dr. Murillo-Rhode was a trailblazer in nursing: the first Hispanic nurse awarded a PhD from New York University and the first Hispanic Dean of Nursing at SUNY. Over her career, Dr. Murillo-Rohde also wrote about a broad range of issues from single parenthood to same-sex couples.



Dr. Antonia C. Novello

In 1990, Dr. Antonia C. Novello became the first woman and first person from Puerto Rico to serve as Surgeon General. She previously spent 20 years at the National Institutes of Health where she served as deputy director of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. As Surgeon General, Novello continued to advocate for children's health, addressing issues like underage drinking and cigarette ads that targeted children. After leaving the role of Surgeon General, Novello became a representative of UNICEF, continuing her work in public health advocacy.



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September 2023 Calendar

Hispanic Heritage Month
Blood Cancer Awareness Month

- 4 – Labor Day (US)
- 8 – World Physical Therapy Day (International)
- 10 – Grandparents Day (US)
- 11-16 – Suicide Prevention Week (US)
- 15 – Rosh Hashanah (Judaism)
- 17 – World Patient Safety Day (International)
- 21 – World Alzheimer's Day
- 22 – International Day of Sign Languages
- 26 – National Day of Praise and Worship (Christianity)
- 27 – Milad an-Nabi (Mawlid) (Islam)
- 29 – World Heart Day
- 30 – International Translation Day

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Dr. Helen Rodríguez Trías

Dr. Helen Rodríguez Trías was a Puerto-Rican American pediatrician, educator and women's rights activist who was the first Hispanic woman to be named president of the American Public Health Association in 1993. She was also a leader in public health and an activist for equal rights in healthcare for women and children from historically marginalized socioeconomic backgrounds. In 1979, she co-founded the Campaign to End Sterilization Abuse, which led to strict federal guidelines for consent. In the 1980s, she led the New York State Department of Health's AIDS Institute and pioneered standards of care that became the nationwide model for HIV/AIDS treatment. She received a Presidential Citizens Medal from President Bill Clinton in 2001.

Do Sign Language Users Understand Tones? The Short Answer Is Yes

Source: <https://www.mcislanguages.com/do-sign-language-users-understand-tones-the-short-answer-is-yes/>



A few weeks ago, we came across a discussion on a Chinese social media page about sign language. Similar to many anecdotes that went viral online, this story has a peculiar opening and a heart-warming ending: A person ordered food delivery online. When the food arrived, she was contacted by the deliverer, who acknowledged himself as being deaf and communicated with the orderer through texting. Despite understanding the deliverer's difficulties, the orderer felt his tone was impolite. Wondering if the situation was normal, she posted the conversation and her concerns online, which was then flooded with comments from people who have experiences working with the deaf community. They explained to her that the grammars and sentence structures in sign language are different from spoken language and that figuring out tones in written text is hard for people who are deaf. The story was then shared across various platforms to inform the public about sign language and has received thousands of likes.

If people who are deaf don't understand tones, how do they express their emotions? Intrigued by the use of tones in sign languages, we explored more on the internet. An educational video soon answered our questions. Made by Dudu, a Chinese Sign Language (CSL) teacher and vlogger from the deaf community, the video was dedicated to explain to hearing people the linguistic facts in the story above.

According to Dudu, sign languages have the ability to convey emotions, but most of the "tones" are achieved through different facial expressions, while the actual "words" that are signed remain the same. When people who are deaf translate their words into written language, it's common for them to translate vocabulary by their literal meanings and omit facial expressions, making their sentences unpolished and sometimes crude. For example, the expression "You don't like it? How about giving it to me?" in CSL can be signed the same as "You don't like it? Give it to me," while the differences in tones and levels of politeness are completely distinguished by facial expressions. For deaf people who are not familiar with written languages, it's common to mix the two.



("Good for you! (Sincere)" in CSL.)



("Good for you! (Sincere)" in CSL.)

The use of facial expression is also essential in making jokes and being sarcastic. In 2015, researchers in Manitoba looked into how adults who use American Sign Language (ASL) communicate and understand sarcasm. Similar to CSL, sarcasm in ASL is expressed through facial expressions. According to the study, the use and understanding of sarcasm in sign language evolved with age. While children frequently fail to recognise sarcasm, college students sometimes overthink and mistakenly interpret literal language as sarcastic. However, the exact time when children start to be able to distinguish between tones hasn't been determined yet.

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“Good job! (Sincere)” in ASL



“Good job. (Sarcastic)” in ASL

The studies of tones in sign language even went as detailed as the use of specific facial features. In the book *American Sign Language Tone and Intonation: A Phonetic Analysis of Eyebrow Properties*, the author broke down the use of eyebrows in conveying emotions in ASL. In the book, the author concluded that the height of an ASL user’s eyebrow suggests their sentence’s properties: While the lowering of eyebrows indicates open-ended questions, the raising of a person’s eyebrows usually suggests expectation of a yes/no answer.

As crucial as tones are to human communication, this gap between emotional expressions in signed and written languages yet needs to be filled. Recently, a tool called tone indicator has been introduced for digital communication in text-based online communities. It works similarly to emojis or emoticons in the hope of conveying users’ tones and connotations. Though not as popular and widely used, tone indicators can potentially clarify text-based conversations and can be helpful to the deaf community. But to figure out all the features of tones and facial expressions in sign languages, as the researchers in Manitoba have said, there still is a lot of research to be done.

New Staff Profile: Barbara Ayres Jett



Barbara is the newest addition to our MIS team as an American Sign Language interpreter. She attended college at Northwestern University in Chicago, where she majored in interpersonal communication and started to learn ASL in her junior year.

After college, she moved to New York and worked in the Office for the Handicapped in Yonkers. She decided she wanted to teach and went to NYU where she earned a Master of Arts in Deaf Education in 1989. She worked teaching 8th grade at Saint Francis De Sales school for the Deaf in Brooklyn, NY for one year then moved to Boston.

She worked as a teacher at The Learning Center for Deaf Children in Framingham, MA also for one year when she was laid off due to attrition. At that point, she was disillusioned with the educational system and had started to take classes at a Sign Language interpreting certificate program at Northeastern University in Boston as a way to have additional income.

Barbara’s first interpreting job was at a high school with a Deaf program, and that is when she decided that interpreting was an excellent fit for her. She worked several jobs while building her interpreting skills and passed the Massachusetts state sign language interpreter screening test in 1992.

She started interpreting in 1991 in Boston, MA and received national certification from the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) in 1999. Shortly thereafter, she applied to work with the Deaf pediatrician doing a research fellowship at Harvard with clinic hours at Massachusetts General Hospital. She worked there for about 3 years before moving to New Jersey. In 2003 Barbara moved back to California to be closer to her aging parents.

Upon arriving in California, she worked for a video relay company and went back to community interpreting in Sacramento. Barbara was quickly hired as a staff interpreter for Sign Language Interpreting Services agency contracted with UC Davis Health. She has been servicing UC Davis Health providers and patients since 2007. When an opportunity came up to work at UC Davis Health as a staff interpreter, Barbara did not hesitate to apply.

In her free time Barbara likes to cook and bake for family and friends. She enjoys working on logic-based puzzles and playing with her cat.

It is a pleasure to have you onboard, Barbara! Patients and providers appreciate your work very much!