

## Hispanic Heritage Month

Source: [https://latino.si.edu/learn/teaching-and-learning-resources/hispanic-heritage-month-resources/hispanic-heritage-month?gad\\_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQjw28W2BhC7ARIsAPerrcJ\\_ScyNQJqZ--k-McXa0shMRxYt\\_17fiGnZNMza-eYFShb\\_-2aBKrlaAla8EALw\\_wcB2024/](https://latino.si.edu/learn/teaching-and-learning-resources/hispanic-heritage-month-resources/hispanic-heritage-month?gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQjw28W2BhC7ARIsAPerrcJ_ScyNQJqZ--k-McXa0shMRxYt_17fiGnZNMza-eYFShb_-2aBKrlaAla8EALw_wcB2024/)

Hispanic Heritage Month is a month-long celebration of Hispanic and Latino history and culture. While we celebrate Hispanic and Latino communities beyond this month, from September 15 to October 15 we give extra recognition to the many contributions made to the history and culture of the United States, including important advocacy work, vibrant art, popular and traditional foods, and much more.

Hispanic Heritage Month provides an additional opportunity to explore the incredible impact Latinas and Latinos have had on the United States for generations. The Latino presence in America spans centuries, predating Spain's colonization of what is now part of the United States, and they have been an integral part of shaping our nation since the Revolutionary War. Through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and the Treaty of Paris that followed the Mexican-American and Spanish-American wars, the United States gained territories in the Southwest and Puerto Rico. This incorporated the people of this area into the United States and further expanded the presence of Hispanic Americans.



Today, the Latino population (link is external) in the United States today is over 60 million, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. This makes up 18.9% of the total population and is the largest racial or ethnic group. Latinos continue to help fuel our economy and enrich our nation as entrepreneurs, athletes, artists, entertainers, scientists, public servants, and much more.

### What is the difference between Hispanic and Latino?

Hispanic and Latino are the two most used terms to describe Americans with Latin American and Caribbean ancestry. You may often see these terms used interchangeably, but different people understand and use these terms differently. The National Museum of the American Latino uses the term "Latino" to describe the diverse residents of the United States with cultural or ancestral ties to Latin America or the Caribbean. For many, the term "Latino" also creates room for acknowledging Black, Indigenous, Asian, and other heritages on equal terms with European ancestry. The term "Hispanic" is used to signal a connection to Spain or the Spanish language.

### When is Hispanic Heritage Month?

Hispanic Heritage Month is celebrated each year from September 15 to October 15. It began as a week-long celebration in 1968 under President Johnson and was expanded to a month by President Reagan 20 years later in 1988. The month-long celebration provides more time to properly recognize the significant contributions Hispanic/Latino Americans have made in the United States.

Hispanic Heritage Month does not cover one single month but instead begins in the middle of September and ends in the middle of October. The timeframe of this month is significant because

many Central American countries celebrate their independence days within the (Continues on next page) September 15 with Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. By aligning with these independence dates, Hispanic Heritage Month honors the resilience and determination of the Hispanic



### September 2024 Calendar

Sexual Health Awareness Month  
Childhood Cancer Awareness Month

- 2 – Labor Day (US)
- 5 – International Day of Charity
- 10 – World Suicide Prevention Day
- 13-19 – National Eczema Week (International)
- 15 – Birthday of Prophet Muhammad (UAE)
- 17 – World Patient Safety Day
- 21 – National Opioid Awareness Day (US)
- 21 – International Day of Peace
- 22-28 – Deaf Dog Awareness Week (US)
- 23 – International Day of Sign Languages
- 23 - National Family Day (US)
- 24 – Heritage Day (International)
- 25 – National Daughters Day (US)
- 29 – World Deaf Day
- 30 – International Translator / Interpreter Day

community. Key Independence Days celebrated within Hispanic Heritage Month include:

- September 15 - Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua
- September 16 – Mexico
- September 18 – Chile
- September 21 – Belize

**How can I celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month?**

During Hispanic Heritage Month, celebrate by taking the time to learn more about Latino identity and historical legacies that enrich communities and continue to shape our nation.

**San Francisco declares Vietnamese an official city language**

Source: <https://asamnews.com/2024/06/15/san-francisco-declares-vietnamese-an-official-city-language/>

San Francisco has made Vietnamese an official city language.

According to the San Francisco Chronicle, Vietnamese became an official city language after a unanimous vote from the San Francisco Board of Supervisors on Tuesday. The goal is to ensure San Francisco residents can access services in the language they are comfortable with.

(Continued from previous page)

City data estimates that around 6,800 residents in San Francisco speak primarily Vietnamese, VN Express International reports. According to the San Francisco Chronicle, an old ordinance required the city to translate services into languages with at least 10,000 speakers in the city. On Tuesday, the Board of Supervisors approved an amendment that will lower the threshold to 6,500 speakers.

District 10 Supervisor Shamann Walton introduced the amendment to the legislature last year.

“San Francisco is home to many diverse immigrant communities and is a national leader in providing language access services with one of the strongest and most comprehensive local language access laws,” Walton said at a news conference ahead of Tuesday’s vote per the San Francisco Chronicle.



**What does compassion mean for medical interpreters?**

Source: <https://medicalinterpreterblog.com/2024/05/25/what-does-compassion-mean-for-medical-interpreters/>

When you ask healthcare providers to give some examples of when they showed compassion to a patient, you may hear a story of a nurse who spent extra time, the time they did not have, in a patient’s room when the patient was frail, scared and lonely. A doctor might tell you about a home visit they made to a patient who was struggling to make it to appointments amidst a sea of health challenges and life worries. A physical therapist might share a time when a patient everyone was scared of cried when they talked about all the losses they suffered, prompted by thoughtful questions from their physical therapist and their genuine interest in the person in front of them. But what about medical interpreters? The way we show compassion may not look like the examples above. In fact, our ethical guidelines discourage us from staying with patients alone, to help us better maintain professional boundaries, and they certainly don’t allow for independent home visits, or for solicitation of overly personal information from patients. So is there room for showing compassion as a medical interpreter? How do we walk the line between being empathetic while maintaining role boundaries and impartiality? I believe we as medical interpreters can still demonstrate compassion within their role boundaries. Here are some examples:



**Active listening and being present**

I find that sometimes my thoughts may want to drift away, especially when I have to interpret something upsetting. In my daily life, I’ve been known to fast-forward TV shows or movies when something violent is happening; this is clearly not an option when I’m interpreting. In fact, situations when somebody is receiving bad news or sharing something traumatic is precisely the time to listen extra carefully so that patients or their loved ones can have all the information they need to make informed decisions or to start the grieving process, and so that the patient’s anguish can be shared with

someone who can help. If you find your mind drifting into thoughts about the situation (“Oh no! This is awful! I can’t believe this is happening to them! Oh wait, what did the doctor just say?”), consider learning some techniques that can help ground you in the here and now and focus on interpretation. I personally find taking notes helpful – even if the parties speak in relatively short sentences, it allows me to focus on the task at hand and gives me a concrete object to look at.

### Staying calm and professional in all circumstances

There is a video I use when I teach a class about vicarious trauma for medical interpreters. It’s a video clip from a program called Crime Watch Daily and depicts a phone call that a child makes to 911 to report a domestic violence incident between her parents. The video serves to showcase the variety of upsetting/shocking/traumatic situations that an interpreter may find themselves interpreting in, but every time we watch it, several students inevitably zero in not on the little girl, but on the 911 operator. As the girl emotionally describes her dad hurting her mom, and at some point, herself, and frantically asks for help, the 911 operator calmly asks clarifying questions and gives instructions on staying safe. Some students marvel at how calm the operator sounds; some remark that the operator’s voice almost sounds cold. Here’s the thing though – what would happen if the operator started getting upset too, if their emotions matched those of the little girl, if they started crying? While this may be considered a display of empathy and compassion, it would not help the family experiencing an emergency. However, when the operator asks the right questions in the right order so that they can get the information they need, they are able to dispatch help even as they continue talking to the caller. Similarly, the best thing an interpreter can do to help the patient/client, no matter the circumstances and challenges they are facing, is to interpret to the best of their ability, in a professional and collected manner – so that the patients may get the help that they need.

Other examples of how interpreters can exhibit compassion through their professionalism include arriving on time if interpreting in person, dressing appropriately, and maintaining a respectful attitude towards both patients and healthcare providers.

### Conveying all nuances of a message

In particular, the tone of voice. There are so many things that can get lost in translation (and some due to the imperfect communication technology): the crack in the patient’s voice when they talk about their pain, whether physical or spiritual, the warmth a nurse radiates when reassuring the patient, the uncertainty in the family member’s gestures as they sign their agreement to a course of action for their loved one... These are expressions of our humanity, and making sure every nuance gets conveyed is the most compassionate thing we as interpreters can do. What about bad language, you might ask? What if someone is annoyed, angry, downright furious? Again, helping parties execute communicative autonomy so that they can say what they would like to say, regardless of the content, is absolutely the right thing to do.

### Displaying cultural sensitivity

Understanding and respecting cultural differences is essential for effective communication in healthcare settings. Interpreters can show compassion by acknowledging and respecting cultural norms, beliefs, and practices while facilitating communication between patients and healthcare providers. These are, of course, the basics of the ethical guidelines for interpreters – what’s important is HOW you demonstrate cultural sensitivity. The interpreter should gently point out the possibility that a cultural nuance may be at play, and invite the parties to discuss the issue further, rather than assuming that this is happening and offering up explanations straight away.

By incorporating these approaches into their practice, medical interpreters can demonstrate compassion while still adhering to their role boundaries and ensuring accurate communication between patients and healthcare providers.

## New Staff Profile: Josephine Lopez



Josephine is the newest Spanish Interpreter joining the UC Davis Medical Interpreting team. She was born in Sacramento to her parents who are from Michoacan and Guanajuato, Mexico. She has lived her whole life in Sacramento. After graduating from high school, she attended American River College where she began studying computer science, but she soon realized it was not for her. Josephine felt lost for a while until she discovered the ARC Healthcare Interpreting Program. She enjoyed being in the program, and completed it in the Spring of 2020. About a year later she found her first interpreting job where she was able to gain a lot of experience. Working in the field she realized the importance of medical interpreters. Serving in the role of an interpreter brings Josephine joy and pride. She is glad she is able to do such a meaningful job and is able to help others. She is also very excited and grateful to be a part of the UCDH Medical Interpreting team. She hopes to learn more from all her colleagues here.

In her free time Josephine loves to try new activities and new foods. She also enjoys traveling and spending time with her family. Lately her baby daughter who recently turned one takes up most of her time. Welcome to the team, Josephine!