

Self-Improvement Month

Source: [Self-Improvement Month](#)

September is Self-Improvement Month; a time to improve yourself, set new goals, and eliminate the negative things in your life that are holding you back. One of the best investments that you can make in your life is to invest in improving yourself physically, spiritually, and mentally. Self-improvement could be any set of steps or actions (minor or major) that you take with an aim of making yourself better than you were before.

If you're unsure of where to start, here are a few practical ways of improvement to consider:

- Pick up a new hobby
- Sit in on a seminar or workshop
- Start your days earlier
- Incorporate exercise into your daily routine
- Do something out of your comfort zone, often
- Quit a bad habit

SMART tips for setting goals

If your aspirations are ill-defined or ambiguous, you're more likely to become delayed -or even completely derailed- when encountering an unexpected situation. To help prevent either from happening, one of the most recommended tips for setting goals is to make sure any goal you set is SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely). These five aspects are not in order of importance and should be carefully considered individually before moving forward:

Specific: Run through the "who, what, where, when, and why" of your goal. It can be helpful to write these points in a planner or journal so you can reference them again.

Measurable: In order to know whether you've accomplished your goal or not, you'll need to determine how you'll know. Don't forget to consider ways you can measure your progress along the way.

Attainable: Some of your goals may be loftier than others but in order for it to be considered attainable, you must actually believe that you can achieve it. This belief in yourself is what fuels your excitement and motivation to keep going.

Realistic: If it's not realistic you won't be motivated to take action. This means that the areas outside of your control (e.g., time, space, other people)

Timely: Whether your goal is short or long term, make sure you have a clear idea of what your anticipated timeframe and/or deadline is.



September 2026 Calendar

National Hispanic Heritage Month
National Suicide Prevention Month

- 4 – Janmashtami (Hinduism)
- 5 – International Day of Charity
- 7 – Labor Day (US)
- 11 – Rosh Hashanah (Judaism)
- 11 – Stand up to Cancer Day (International)
- 13 – Grandparents Day (US)
- 17 – World Patient Safety Day
- 21 – International Day of Peace
- 23 – Fall Equinox (US)
- 23 – International Day of Sign Languages
- 25 – World Pharmacist Day
- 27 – World Deaf Day
- 28 – National Family Day (US)
- 30 – International Translation Day

Language Access: Why Translation Alone Isn't Enough

Source: [Language Access: Why Translation Alone Isn't Enough](#)

A Hospital Can Provide Discharge Instructions in a Patient's Preferred Language—And Still Fail to Communicate

That may sound counterintuitive, but it happens every day.

In our inaugural issue, we introduced the concept of Discharge Safety Risk—the often-overlooked risks that arise when patients leave the hospital without fully understanding their discharge instructions. In this issue, we focus on one of its most significant contributors: language access.

Hospitals across the country have made significant investments in interpreter services, multilingual communication, and language access programs. These efforts are essential—not only for delivering equitable care, but also for meeting the expectations of Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act.

Yet despite these investments, many patients still leave the hospital without fully understanding what they need to do after discharge. Why?

Because **translation and understanding are not the same thing**.

A set of discharge instructions filled with complex medical terminology, lengthy sentences, and clinical jargon does not suddenly become easier to understand simply because it has been translated into another language. In other words: **Complexity survives translation**. And when patients don't understand discharge instructions, language access becomes more than a compliance initiative. It becomes a patient safety issue.

Language Access Is About More Than Translation

Providing discharge instructions in a patient's preferred language is an important first step. But effective communication requires more than converting one language into another. Patients must also be able to understand:

- What medications to take—and when
- Which symptoms require immediate medical attention
- How to care for a wound or medical device
- Which activities to avoid
- When and where to schedule follow-up care

If those discharge instructions remain difficult to understand after translation, the communication gap still exists. Language access succeeds only when patients understand what they need to do once they leave the hospital.

Why Traditional Translation Falls Short

Most discharge instructions originate within the Electronic Health Record (EHR). They are written by clinicians, for clinicians. As a result, they often contain:

- Medical terminology
- Abbreviations
- Long, complex sentences
- Dense paragraphs
- Multiple medication changes
- Clinical assumptions that make sense to healthcare professionals—but not necessarily to patients.

When these discharge instructions are translated directly into another language, the complexity often remains intact. The language changes. The readability does not. This is especially challenging for patients with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), but it also affects many native English speakers with limited health literacy. Translation alone cannot solve a readability problem.

The Next Evolution of Language Access

Healthcare is beginning to recognize that effective discharge communication requires three essential elements.

1. Clinical Accuracy

Every discharge instruction must preserve the clinician's original intent. Patient understanding can never come at the expense of clinical accuracy.

2. Readability

Patients should receive discharge instructions written in language they can realistically understand. Simpler communication improves confidence, adherence, and safer transitions of care.

3. Language Access

Patients should receive understandable discharge instructions in their preferred language—not simply translated text. Only when all three work together can hospitals truly improve communication at discharge.

Why This Matters to Healthcare Leaders

Language access is no longer simply a regulatory requirement. It directly influences many of the outcomes health systems care about most:

- Patient understanding
- Medication adherence
- Care transition quality
- HCAHPS Care Transition performance
- Preventable readmissions
- Health equity
- Section 1557 compliance
- Patient Outcomes

Yet very few organizations can objectively answer questions such as:

- How readable are our discharge instructions?
- Which departments generate the most complex discharge instructions?
- Which languages require the greatest support?
- Are patients consistently receiving understandable discharge instructions in their preferred language?
- Can we measure improvements over time?

If these questions cannot be answered, opportunities to improve patient communication remain largely invisible.

A Governed Approach to Language Access

Artificial intelligence has created new opportunities to improve multilingual communication. But healthcare doesn't need AI that simply translates discharge instructions. Healthcare needs **governed AI**. Technology should support clinicians—not replace them.

Integrated into the EHR discharge workflow, Aivida Lingo automatically simplifies discharge instructions to an appropriate Grade 5–7 reading level, translates them into more than 100 languages in real time, presents the original and AI-assisted versions side by side, and enables clinicians to review, edit if needed, and approve the final discharge instructions before they are delivered to the patient.

Aivida Insight, the expert portal, enables clinicians to review, edit, approve, and continuously optimize discharge instructions, while analytics provide objective insights into readability, provider variation, language usage, and adoption.

Patients receive their discharge instructions through a secure patient portal, Aivida Navigate, a secure patient portal. They review information in a structured format and ask bounded follow-up questions that reinforce—not replace—the guidance provided by their care team. Integrated with existing EHR workflows, the platform helps hospitals transform language access from a compliance activity into a measurable component of their overall Discharge Safety Risk strategy.

A Better Question

For years, healthcare has asked: **"Did we provide discharge instructions in the patient's preferred language?"** Perhaps the better question is: **"Did we provide discharge instructions the patient could actually understand?"** The difference between those two questions may determine whether a patient recovers safely at home—or returns to the emergency department unnecessarily. Translation is important. Understanding is essential.

Complimentary Discharge Safety Risk Assessment

Improving discharge communication begins with understanding where opportunities exist today. Aivida Healthcare Technology offers a complimentary Discharge Safety Risk Assessment using a sample of discharge instructions. The assessment provides objective insights into readability, multilingual communication, patient understanding, provider variation, and opportunities to reduce Discharge Safety Risk through before-and-after comparisons.

Whether your organization is focused on improving language access, strengthening Section 1557 compliance, advancing health equity, improving HCAHPS Care Transition performance, or reducing preventable readmissions, establishing a measurable baseline is the first step. Because every patient deserves discharge instructions they can understand—regardless of the language they speak. And every healthcare organization deserves the ability to measure, improve, and reduce Discharge Safety Risk.

New Staff Profile: Hiu Yan (Rebecca) Mak



Rebecca is the newest addition to our department and has joined our Mandarin and Cantonese team. Born in Hong Kong and raised in Macau, she relocated to the United States at the age of 10. As her English proficiency grew, Rebecca began helping her family make inquiry calls and interpret during medical appointments when needed.

Before graduating from UC San Diego with a Bachelor of Science in General Biology, Rebecca worked as a medical assistant at an acupuncture clinic serving primarily Cantonese- and Mandarin-speaking patients. The role required interpretation in both languages and became her first professional interpreting experience in a clinical setting. There, she learned the importance of showing compassion to every patient, recognizing that many individuals seek care while experiencing pain or distress. She also developed strong communication skills to facilitate teamwork with providers.

While at UC San Diego, Rebecca completed a Medical Chinese course, further strengthening her healthcare vocabulary and interpretation skills. These experiences reinforced her interest in using her language skills to help patients navigate healthcare services.

A personal family emergency further shaped Rebecca's commitment to medical interpreting. After her father experienced an acute heart attack, she helped communicate his symptoms and medical history to the hospital team. Her father received an immediate STEMI alert response and underwent a procedure to place two stents. This experience showed Rebecca that interpreting is more than communication between languages—it can be essential to timely, life-saving care.

Outside of work, Rebecca enjoys badminton, hiking, kayaking, sticker collecting, traveling to new countries, and learning new languages as a way to connect with others. She also loves guinea pigs and hopes to adopt more in the future. Rebecca is happy to be part of UC Davis Health, where she supports patients in need while continuing to gain valuable healthcare experience.

Welcome to the team, Rebecca! We are excited to have you here.



International Translation Day 2026
Journée mondiale de la traduction 2026
Día Internacional de la Traducción 2026

LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY AND LANGUAGE RIGHTS

*The Power of
Being Understood*

Diversité des langues et droits
linguistiques : le pouvoir de se
faire comprendre

Diversidad de lenguas y
derechos lingüísticos: el poder
de hacerse entender

The theme of the International Translation Day 2026 is “Linguistic Diversity and Language Rights” – Translation, interpreting and terminology at the heart of linguistic inclusion, with “the power of being understood” as subtitle.

It is a timely and highly relevant theme for International Translation Day (ITD) 2026, highlighting the essential role of translation, interpreting, and terminology in fostering inclusion, equity, and participation in an increasingly interconnected world.