TITLE: Towards Rural Language Access: Developing a Health Care Interpreter Training Curriculum

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STUDENT SUBMISSION: Yes

TOPIC/TARGET AUDIENCE: The target audience for this presentation would be language access specialists, training program developers and instructors, health care interpreters, and Coordinated Care Organizations.

ABSTRACT: Background: Health Care Interpreters enable communication between language minority patients and health care personnel with whom they do not share a language. HCI services mitigate disparities in access to care, quality of care, and health outcomes for language minority patients, but HCI services are not consistently available for patients in Oregon. SB 790 (2001) requires working with state-registered HCIs whenever possible. More recently, HB 2359 (2021) requires health professional regulatory boards, the Department of Human Services and OHA to adopt rules to enforce this requirement, and a current CCO incentive metric evaluates the availability of HCI services to CCO members. Purpose: To create a blended Health Care Interpreter training program, which is intended to build and maintain a rural HCI workforce. Approach: The hybrid modality of the course, Spanish-language focus, simultaneous and remote interpreting practice, and preparation to get and stay on the Oregon Health Authority registry all respond to the unique needs of rural HCIs and Oregon Health Plan beneficiaries. Outcomes: The HCI training program will launch in September 2022. Our presentation will describe the development, content, launch, and evaluation plan. Implications: The successful implementation of this program will increase the workforce of interpreters in rural Oregon and will lead to improved language access and ultimately better health outcomes for this population, as well as career opportunities for rural, bilingual Oregonians.

OBJECTIVE(S): Identify core requirements of interpreter training programs, and differentiate between interpreting, translation and bilingual communication skills. Discuss challenges facing rural interpreters, and describe how interpreter training programs can respond to those challenges.