

## Interpretive Services Recognized as Model Program

By Jennifer Hansen, Mammoth Hospital



Over the past four years, Mammoth Hospital has been working toward the development of an Interpreter Services program to help assist those patients who do not speak English, who are Limited English Proficient (LEP), deaf, or hard of hearing. The implementation process began with hiring an independent consultant to conduct a language needs assessment, evaluate existing delivery of services, and provide a guide to program development. After several months of research, the hospital's Community Relations department developed the policy for Interpreter Services, and in June of 2005, Mammoth Hospital's Senior Management approved the creation of an Interpreter Services department. Now, Mammoth Hospital offers interpreting service coverage 24 hours a day, seven days a week for no cost to those patients that need assistance.

Because Mammoth Hospital has developed such an efficient interpreter services program, during the 6<sup>th</sup> annual California Healthcare Interpreting Association (CHIA) educational conference in Los Angeles on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2006, Jose Garcia, Mammoth Hospital's Interpreter Services Supervisor, was asked to participate by presenting the hospital program. The focus for this conference was to present developed programs and how they can be used as a model for other facilities. Over 400 interpreters and program coordinators from all over the country attended this conference. Jose's presentation included the history and facts of Mammoth Hospital; the Interpreter Services program; the standards of practice; and the challenges faced with developing a program of this magnitude. Other facilities (Mee Memorial Hospital in Kingman City, Ca., and Memorial Health System in Colorado Springs, Co., among others) have now asked Mammoth Hospital to be a model for the development of their programs. In addition, Mammoth Hospital has been invited to participate in research studies conducted by the University of California San Francisco, Center for Health Professions, and by the South Carolina Rural Health Research Center, Department of Health Services Policy and Management University of South Carolina Columbia, SC. This presentation was a huge step for Mammoth Hospital and its strategic goals for creating a professional Interpreter Services program. The program's mission is to: *"support the Southern Mono Healthcare*

*District's mission by serving the community providing the highest quality health care; facilitating communication between Limited English Proficient or non-English speaking patients and their providers."*

Mammoth Hospital's Spanish Interpreters follow the California Standards for Healthcare Interpreters set forth by the California Healthcare Interpreting Association as well as abiding by hospital confidentiality policies and regulations. Interpreters are committed to supporting Mammoth Hospital in the delivery of culturally competent care with professionalism and integrity; respect for individuals and their communities while maintaining impartiality, accuracy and completeness. To accomplish this goal, interpreters convert the meaning of all messages from one language to another, clarify words or concepts when their meaning is unclear or because they do not exist in the other language, and alert the patient and the provider when cultural terms are used.

Jose Garcia was born and raised in Mexico City. He graduated from Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico in 1986 with a degree in Cirujano Dentista (equivalent to a doctor of dentistry). The medical knowledge that he acquired during his years of dental school has allowed him to rapidly grow as a health care interpreter. Jose was hired by Mammoth Hospital as a "medical interpreter/translator." He has been a key person in the development and implementation of Mammoth Hospital's Interpreter Services Program. Jose has lived in Bishop since 1989 and recently became CHIA's Eastern Sierra Chapter Chair.

To learn more about Mammoth Hospital's Interpreter Services Program, please contact Jose Garcia, at (760) 934-3311 extension 2640, email [jose.garcia@mammothhospital.com](mailto:jose.garcia@mammothhospital.com) or visit [www.mammothhospital.com](http://www.mammothhospital.com).