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Training Students on the Effective Use of Translator Services: How Can You Treat Someone You Don't Understand?

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Training Students on the Effective Use of Translator Services:

How can you treat someone you don't understand?



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Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine Inova Campus

Background

In 2005, the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine partnered with the Inova Health System to create the first regional branch medical campus in Northern Virginia. As a part of this partnership, the VCU School of Medicine Inova Campus accepts a minimum of twenty-four medical students from the third and fourth year classes annually. In an effort to better prepare the incoming students for their clinical years and an extremely diverse patient population, a video was created to demonstrate effective use of translator services.

Why is this training important?

- In highly diverse geographical regions, students WILL encounter patients who are not fluent in English. Providing students with training on proper usage of translator services will better prepare them for their clinical experience dealing with a wide spectrum of patients.
- Formal training in the use of translator services reinforces professional student-patient interactions. [It also may reduce the risk of communication-based patient safety incidents.](#)
- The training addresses two key LCME standards:

*ED-19. There must be specific instruction in communication skills as they relate to physician responsibilities, including communication with patients, families, colleagues, and other health professionals.**

*ED-22. Medical students must learn to recognize and appropriately address gender and cultural biases in themselves and others, and in the process of health care delivery.**

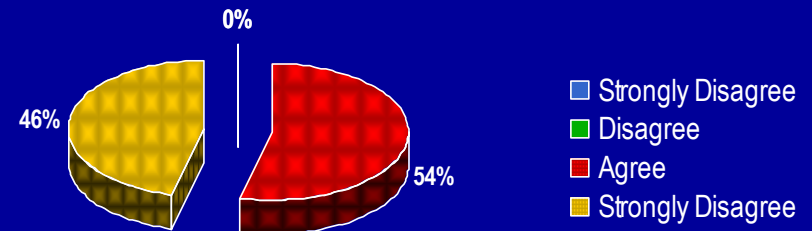
**Liaison Committee on Medical Education Standards of Accreditation*

The Video

- Professionally produced, running time 14 minutes
- Features real students and a nationally-recognized cultural competency expert, Dr. Steve Crossman

What the students thought of the training

When asked if the video was an effective training tool, the students of the VCU School of Medicine Inova Campus Class of 2010 (N=28) responded in the following manner:



How can you train your students?

- Incorporate the training into M3 Orientation or early in the M3 year.
- Take a copy of the VCU School of Medicine Inova Campus training DVD and use it as a component of your school's training process.
- Survey the students on their feedback and further refine your campus training plan.

Dr. Seneca is the Associate Dean for Medical Education, Dr. Cheifetz is the Assistant Dean for Medical Education, and Ms. Luangkhot is the Academic Research Coordinator.