

Spoken Language Healthcare Interpreter Work Group

DATE: JUNE 25, 2026

TOPIC: FINAL WORK TO COMPLETE

MINUTES PREPARED BY: LEA BITTNER

LOCATION: VIA WEBEX

Attendance

- Jose Tori Maguina – member (left before 2:30)
- Katie Freeman - member
- Lailee Tung – member
- Marisa Rueda - member
- Michele Reither – member
- Munna Yasiri – member (left at 3:00)
- Rachel Herring – member (left at 3:12)
- Rick Michals – member
- Rosemond Owens – member (left at 3:00)
- Jia Vang – MDH
- Julianna Leintz - MDH
- Lea Bittner – Alliant Consulting
- Kelly Deering – Alliant Consulting
- Jessie Schuppe – Alliant Consulting
- Soo Lauby – public attendee

Agenda

- 2:00 - 2:05 Welcome and Housekeeping
- 2:05 - 2:15 Meeting Recap and Final Work to Complete
- 2:15 - 3:20 Member Discussion
- 3:20 - 3:30 Next Steps, Thanks and Closing

Meeting Recap

Members reviewed and voted on recommendations to convene a meeting to discuss financial assistance to spoken word health care interpreters.

Members also voted on 5 recommendations regarding roster barriers.

Member Rachel offered to read through the Recommendation Log to ensure consistency and make suggested edits to recommendations as many overlap and relate to one another.

Work Group Discussion

Remaining topics: roster barriers and reimbursement recommendations.

Roster Barriers

Member suggested getting right to a vote rather than discussion as members had previously seen these recommendations and had the opportunity to provide input on them. Other members supported this proposal.

Facilitator Lea asks members to vote on the two remaining recommendations regarding roster barriers:

Recommendation 5: Registry fees for interpreters utilizing a language outside of the top 15 most common languages spoken in MN will be set at 50% of the standard cost.

Recommendation 6: Registry application to include verification of up-to-date background check at time of application through a verified organization (Dept of Human Services NETStudy) Link to NetStudy provided in the application materials on the site

From chat: [MN State Demographic Center \(https://mn.gov/admin/demography/data-by-topic/population-data/our-estimates/\)](https://mn.gov/admin/demography/data-by-topic/population-data/our-estimates/)

Members voted on both recommendations at one time, resulting in:

- Full Endorsement – 50%
- Support with minor reservations – 50%
- Recommendations are approved

Reimbursement Recommendations

- Recommendation 1: Review and update interpreter reimbursement rates
- Recommendation 3: Reduce administrative barrier to interpreter service billing
- Recommendation 4: Simplify interpreter service billing by incorporating payment into the provider rate structure
- Recommendation 5: Tiered Onsite reimbursement rates; tiers
- Recommendation 6: Remote Reimbursement rates; tiers
- Recommendation 7: Correct Onsite reimbursement rates
- Recommendation 8: No-Show onsite reimbursement length
- Recommendation 9: Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) of 3% annually

Question about recommendation 4; could it be incorporated into the provider rate? Another member commented that it probably won't work; it would be messy.

This is a massive, messy topic that we don't have the expertise for; recommend a group comes together to study these recommendations and makes a recommendation.

The rates are too much to create for every sector; it's huge; it supports a workgroup coming together to review and make recommendations.

Agrees it's a huge topic and members are not subject matter experts; propose additional work on this topic.

Suggestion to take out portions that seem more straightforward and vote on those separately.

We might want to entertain that if it's just increasing rates with a structure that's already in place, it may work.

Recommendation 5 – increase rates, versus specifying amounts.

The tiers don't currently exist. Each tier needs to be reimbursed at a higher rate vs specific rates.

Current recommendation is to replace recommendations 5 and 6; to raise all rates and to differentiate rates by each level in the registry.

Tier 1 is the lowest, tier 4 is highest.

Also recommend that these rates are reviewed every couple of years.

Member suggests being specific on frequency of reviews.

Suggestion to review rates annually.

Proposed that Advisory Council reviews rates.

Recommendation 5 was updated per the member conversation and voted on by members:

- Full Endorsement – 37%
- Support w/ minor reservations – 63%

Recommendation 1: Review and update interpreter reimbursement rates.

Facilitator Lea asked if members want a work group or a study? A work group should conduct the study.

Suggestion to convene an expert work group formed to make additional reimbursement recommendations, considering the points of concern brought forward by this workgroup and including documenting current reimbursement rates and practices

Recommendation 1 rewritten per member discussion and voted on:

- Full Endorsement – 38%
- Support w/ minor reservations – 63%

Reviewed full recommendations document, statute by statute. Opened to the group for any comments or questions. Facilitator made changes directly to the document based on feedback.

Statute 7, Point 4 – Survey; need to define “all common languages”; Minnesota's 5 are (Spanish, Somali, Vietnamese, Hmong, Chinese).

Statute 6 – The word “scalable” isn't legislative-friendly.

This document will be sent to the Advisory Council.

Gratitude

Members were thanked for their contributions, their willingness to bring forward different perspectives and their respectful collaboration. Members who volunteered outside of meetings to draft and review recommendations were especially thanked for their volunteer work.

- MDH will refine the overall recommendations and make them available to members of the public via the website; updates will also be available here: Spoken Language Health Care Interpreter Work Group (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/facilities/providers/interpreter/workgroup/index.html>).
- Two public comment sessions will be held before the end of summer, as well as the opportunity for written comments to be submitted.
- MDH will further refine recommendations, considering the public comments, and make them submittable as legislative recommendations which are due November 1, 2026.

Reminders

- Submit Expense Forms **for this meeting** to SLHCIWG.MDH@state.mn.us, and **copy** Rick.Michals@state.mn.us and Julianna.Leintz@state.mn.us.

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To obtain this information in a different format, call: 651-201-4200.