

**HEALTH CARE
INTERPRETER
ASSESSMENT
(HCIA®)**



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GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Health Care Interpreter Assessment (HCIA®) tests whether an interpreter meets the standard to be qualified as a medical interpreter by demonstrating sufficient skill and understanding of professional standards of conduct. It is based on the formats of the national certification. Currently the full assessment is available in Spanish, Arabic, Vietnamese, Chinese Mandarin, Russian, and Burmese. Other languages are also assessed by professional evaluators using a modified version of this assessment.

TEST ADMINISTRATION

The test must be administered in a quiet testing area, and an assessments administrator will decide which staff members will be present to assist with proctoring the exam.

Exam administration requires a computer with high-speed internet access and a telephone (landline preferred).

Examinees may not take notes or copy any portion of the exam.

Examinees are allowed 45 minutes to complete the written component of the assessment and about 32 minutes to complete the oral component of the assessment. Examinees are allowed four and a half minutes for each mini-scenario in the oral assessment and five minutes to translate the document in the sight translation. A clock is provided on the computer screen to indicate time remaining during the written component of the assessment.

SCORE REQUIREMENTS

In order to pass the written component of the test, 80 percent (60) of the items must be answered correctly. If this score is achieved, the examinee will be able to advance to the oral portion of the test. In order to pass the oral component of the test, the examinee must earn a score of 75% or greater.

Immediately retaking the exam is not permitted; however, after a period of three months a candidate may retest. It is recommended that a candidate review [Appendix B](#) and engage in reading and preparatory study before retaking the written assessment.

STRUCTURE

The assessment is divided into two portions (written and oral) and is based on the formats of the two national certification exams.

	CCHI – Certification	NBCMI – Certification	MasterWord’s HCIA®
Health Care Terminology	Yes	Yes	Yes
Consecutive Interpreting	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sight Translation	Yes	Yes	Yes
Simultaneous Interpretation	Yes	No	No
Interpreter Standards	Yes	Yes	Yes

Written Test

The written assessment consists of 75 multiple choice questions and is the first of two steps toward becoming a MasterWord approved health care interpreter. Passing this test does not mean that a person has become a qualified interpreter; rather, it means that the examinee has met the first requirement for approval and qualifies to move on to the second step and take the oral assessment. In order to pass the test, 80 percent of the items must be answered correctly. Please see [Appendix A](#) regarding ADA accommodations.

The written assessment measures candidates' knowledge of two areas central to the work of a health care interpreter at the level minimally required for a qualified health care interpreter:

1. Health Care Related Terms and Usage. To function as a professional health care interpreter, familiarity with medical terminology, areas of medical specialization, health insurance, and related procedures is essential. Accordingly, the written assessment measures recognition health care related situations and vocabulary.
2. Ethics and Professional Conduct. The second area of knowledge required of professional health care interpreters encompassed in the written test is a good understanding of standards guiding the performance and conduct for health care interpreters. Accordingly, questions aimed at measuring candidates' knowledge of ethical behavior and professional conduct are included towards the end of each section of the written assessment.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Instructions: Items 1 through 23 consist of unfinished sentences that are marked with an empty space at the end of the sentence. These sentences may be related to health care in various ways such as areas of a hospital, names of jobs in health care, names of practices, interpreter standards of practice, and/or things related to health care policy. Select the word or phrase that best completes the sentence.

Example 1: A person who uses a machine that works in the place of his/her kidneys is said to be on _____.

- a. medication
- b. dialysis
- c. supplements
- d. IV

Example 2: In order to maintain accuracy, the interpreter must take cultural context _____.

- a. for granted
- b. with a grain of salt
- c. out of the interpretation
- d. into consideration

(answers: 1.B, 2.D)

Instructions: Items 24 – 33 consist of a medical term or acronym written in bold. These terms and/or acronyms may be related to health care in various ways such as areas of a hospital, names of jobs in health care, names of practices, and/or things related to health care policy. Select the word or phrase that best represents the common terminology or has the same or closest to the same meaning for the bold word/phrase or acronym.

Example 1: **cardiac arrest**

- a. stroke
- b. heart attack
- c. hyperventilation
- d. hypertension

(answers: 1.B)

Instructions: Items 34 – 56 consist of sentences with a word or phrase missing represented by a blank space. These sentences may be related to health care in various ways such as areas of a hospital, names of jobs in health care, names of practices, interpreter standards of practice, and/or things related to health care policy. Select the word or phrase that best fits in the space provided.

Example 1: People who have a tumor that is _____ don't face problem of it being cancerous.

- a. malignant
- b. benign
- c. mutated
- d. bacterial

Example 2: An interpreter must maintain _____ at all times. This is why it is not a good idea to interpret for friends and family members.

- a. anonymity
- b. tranquility
- c. impartiality
- d. accuracy

(answers: 1.B, 2.C)

Instructions: Items 57 through 75 consist of questions about general health care and interpreter terminology. These questions may be related to health care in various ways such as areas of a hospital, names of jobs in health care, names of practices, interpreter standards of practice, and/or things related to health care policy. Choose the word or phrase from the list that best answers the question.

Example 1: What is the name of the elastic band that is tied around a person's arm before an injection with a needle?

- a. a syringe
- b. a tourniquet
- c. a stethoscope
- d. an MRI

Example 2: What should an interpreter do if he/she doesn't understand what is being said?

- a. say "I, the interpreter, do not understand."
- b. Interpret what he/she does understand and use context clues to figure the rest out
- c. skip what was not understood, but tell the patient/client what was skipped
- d. wing it

(answers: 1.B, 2.A)

Oral Test

The oral assessment is the second of the two portions of the HCIA®. It assesses the ability of examinees to convey meaning accurately without omitting, adding, summarizing or editorializing any information while maintaining the proper amount of professionalism between patients and health care professionals. There are two components to the oral assessment:

1. Consecutive Interpreting. Consists of five mini-consecutive interpreting scenarios. Each scenario contains a recording of an exchange between a health care practitioner and a patient to be interpreted by the examinee.
2. Sight Translation. Consists of one brief document to be sight translated. Examinees will have no more than five minutes to read the document and make notes in preparation. The recording for the voice interpretation will begin immediately following the end of the preparation period. The interpretation must be made in five minutes or less.

SAMPLE ORAL EXAM SCENARIO

Scene: A patient is talking to her doctor after being admitted to the hospital. This is the first time they have met.

Practitioner: Hello, Mrs. Garcia. I would like to start by asking a few questions. Is that ok?

Patient: Yes, doctor. Fire away (In other language)

Practitioner: Ok. Where exactly do you feel pain?

Patient: Actually, I feel it all over. Sometimes it just feels like my entire body hurts. (In other language)

Practitioner: Is this a constant pain or does it come and go?

Patient: It isn't all the time, but it does last for long periods of time. (In other language)

Practitioner: Do you feel it now?

Patient: No, not at this moment. Am I going to be ok doctor? (In other language)

SAMPLE SIGHT TRANSLATION

Preoperative Instructions for Surgery-Local Anesthesia

Before Surgery:

1. Do not take aspirin, medications containing aspirin, any anti-inflammatory and herbal alternatives two weeks prior to surgery. Please refer to medications to avoid list. If you are unsure if a medication that you are taking is to be avoided, please ask the doctor. If needed, Tylenol may be taken after consulting with the doctor.
2. Smoking must be stopped two weeks prior to, and two weeks after surgery. Nicotine patches and gum MAY NOT BE USED.
3. PLEASE BE AWARE, THAT SMOKING OR THE USE OF UNAUTHORIZED MEDICATIONS CAN LEAD TO COMPLICATIONS AND JEOPARDIZE THE RESULT OF YOUR SURGERY!
4. Report any signs of a cold or infection occurring within the week prior to your surgery

Appendix A

**MASTERWORD HEALTH CARE INTERPRETER ASSESSMENT REQUEST FOR ADA
ACCOMMODATION**

Complete this form only if you are requesting individual testing arrangements because you have a disability recognized by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

APPLICANT NAME:

Have you been diagnosed with a disability that is recognized by the ADA: Yes____No____

Describe the type of disability:

I request an accommodation, which is described in the Documentation of Accommodation, attached hereto.

Signature

Date

Attach the Documentation of Accommodation form and submit to:

MasterWord Services

TAD

303 Stafford St.

Houston, Texas 77079

DOCUMENTATION OF ACCOMMODATION

This section must be completed by an appropriate professional (doctor, psychologist, psychiatrist, or education professional) to certify that your disabling condition requires the requested exam accommodation.

If you have existing documentation of having the same or similar accommodation provided to you in another test situation, you may submit such documentation instead of having this portion of the form completed.

I HAVE KNOWN _____ SINCE _____
(APPLICANT NAME) (DATE)

AS A _____. I HAVE DIAGNOSED OR EVALUATED
(PATIENT, OR OTHER PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP)

THE APPLICANT MYSELF AND I AM NOT RELYING UPON FACTS RELATED TO ME BY THE APPLICANT.
MY DIAGNOSIS IS _____

(DESCRIBE THE MEDICAL OR OTHER CONDITION)

THE APPLICANT HAS DISCUSSED WITH ME THE NATURE OF THE TEST TO BE ADMINISTERED. IT IS MY PROFESSIONAL OPINION THAT BECAUSE OF THIS APPLICANT 'S DISABILITY, HE/SHE SHOULD BE ACCOMMODATED BY PROVIDING THE FOLLOWING: (CHECK ALL THOSE THAT APPLY)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Large type print	<input type="checkbox"/>	Extra time (how much?)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Separate testing area	<input type="checkbox"/>	An examination reader
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other oral administration (describe)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other accommodation (describe)

Signature and title of professional _____

Printed name and title _____

Date _____ Telephone Number _____

Appendix B: Preparing for the Test

If you are not familiar with taking written multiple-choice tests, you may find it beneficial to study preparation material for similar exams such as the TOEFL (www.ets.org/toefl.html). There are many similarly structured tests online with a focus on medical terminology.

With respect to health care related terms and usage, some of the following activities might be helpful in expanding knowledge and in preparing for the test:

1. Attending MasterWord trainings for medical interpreters as found at www.masterword.com. Email TAD@masterword.com for a list of scheduled workshops.
2. Take a course in medical terminology at a local college.
3. Read widely such items as books, professional journals, editorials, and health care articles in newspapers and news websites.
4. Review health care insurance information and forms downloadable from most insurance companies and hospitals.
5. Watch online instructional videos or read instructional material about health care topics such as:
 - a. www.staysmartstayhealthy.com (Insurance)
 - b. www.cms.gov (Medicare and Medicaid)
 - c. www.dmu.edu/medterms/ (Online medical terminology course)
6. Ask for copies of in-take, insurance, allergy, and consent forms from your local clinic or hospital in order to review procedures and vocabulary.

With respect to ethics and professional standards of practice, **it is important that a testing candidate be intimately familiar with the National Standards of Practice for Interpreters in Health Care**, as produced by the National Council on Interpreting in Health Care. This guide can be downloaded and printed from:

<http://www.ncihc.org/mc/page.do?sitePageId=57768&orgId=ncihc>

All items in the written assessment related to standards of practice are based on the information found in this guide.

Reviewing study guides for national certification tests from CCHI and NBCMI will also help in preparing for the MasterWord HCIA®.

- <http://www.certifiedmedicalinterpreters.org/>
- <http://www.healthcareinterpretercertification.org/>

Medical Acronyms and abbreviations

AAA : abdominal aortic aneurysm	Hx : medical history
a.c. : "ante cibum" before meals	IBW : ideal body weight
AMI : acute myocardial infarction	IPL : intense pulse light
ANS : autonomic nervous system	IV : intravenous
ARD : acute respiratory disease	KUB : kidneys, ureters, bladder
BAC : blood alcohol content	ml : milliliter
BBT : basal body temperature	MS : multiple sclerosis
BE : barium enema	OB : obstetrics
BID : "bis in die" twice a day	OR : operating room
BP : blood pressure	P : Pulse
BUN : blood urea nitrogen	p.c. : "post cibum" after meals
C : Celsius	PCP : primary care provider
Ca : cancer	PET : positron emission tomography
CAD : coronary artery disease	q.d. : once a day
CBC : complete blood count	q.i.d. : "quater in die" four times a day
cc : cubic centimeter or "cum cibos" with food	q.h. : "quaque hora" hourly
CHD : congenital heart disease	q.2h. : every 2 hours
CNS : central nervous system	R : respiration
COPD : chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	RBC : red blood cells
CSF : cerebrospinal fluid	Rx : prescription medication
Ct/CAT : computerized axial tomography	Staph : staphylococcus
Dx : diagnosis	Stat : immediately
ED : erectile dysfunction	Strep : streptococcus
ECT : electroconvulsive therapy	SOB : shortness of breath
EKG : electrocardiogram	T : temperature
ENT : ear, nose, throat	TFT : thyroid function testing
F : Fahrenheit	TID : three times a day
GERD : gastroesophageal reflux disease	Tx : treatment
GI : gastrointestinal	VD : venereal disease
GTT : glucose tolerance test	WBC : white blood cell
Hb : Hemoglobin	Wt : weight

Medical Terminology

Bear in mind that most medical terms are derived from Latin and Greek roots. Therefore if you learn what roots, prefixes, and suffixes mean, you stand a greater chance of deducing the meaning of the medical term.

a – away/without.

rhythm/o – rhythm

ia – condition/state/thing.

Ex. Arrhythmia: An irregularity in the force or rhythm of the heartbeat.

Anti – against.

Ex. Antiarrhythmic: Preventing or alleviating irregularities in the force or rhythm of the heart.

Anti – against.

Pyr/o – fire, burning.

-etic – pertaining to.

Ex. Antipyretic: Preventing fever.

Peri – around.

My/o – muscle.

Card/I – heart.

Um – structure.

Ex. Pericardium: The membrane sac that encloses the heart in vertebrate animals.

Ex. Myocardium: The middle layer of the heart, consisting of cardiac muscle.

Dys – painful/difficult/abnormal.

Phag/o – eating/swallowing.

ia – condition/state/thing.

Ex. Dysphagia: Difficulty in swallowing or inability to swallow.

Medicare VS Medicaid

Medicare

Medicare is an insurance program. Medical bills are paid from trust funds which those covered have paid into. It serves people over 65 primarily, whatever their income; and serves younger disabled people and dialysis patients. Patients pay part of costs through deductibles for hospital and other costs. Small monthly premiums are required for non-hospital coverage. Medicare is a federal program. It is basically the same everywhere in the United States and is run by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, an agency of the federal government.

Medicaid

Medicaid is an assistance program. Medical bills are paid from federal, state and local tax funds. It serves low-income people of every age. Patients usually pay no part of costs for covered medical expenses. A small co-payment is sometimes required. Medicaid is a federal-state program. It varies from state to state. It is run by state and local governments within federal guidelines.

Appendix C: Health Care Interpreter Assessment Results

All Health Care Interpreter Assessment (HCIA®) results are reported in the following format. If the examinee successfully completes both parts of the HCIA®, you will also receive a certificate deeming them QUALIFIED as medical interpreters by MasterWord Services.

The Score for the written test and the oral test will be reflected in percentages. Please note that is 80% is not achieved on the written test, the examinee will not be able to advance to the oral test. Score requirement for the oral test is 75%.

The “Comment” section contains detailed comments regarding his/her performance.

This provides a reference number for this specific assessment.

The diagram shows a sample of the MasterWord Health Care Interpreter Assessment results form. Red arrows point from explanatory text boxes to specific parts of the form:

- An arrow points from the first text box to the 'Total Written Score' and 'Total Oral Score' boxes.
- An arrow points from the second text box to the 'Comments' section.
- An arrow points from the third text box to the reference number '000000'.

The form itself contains the following elements:

- Header:** MWS MasterWord Health Care Interpreter Assessment, MasterWord Services. Below this is a disclaimer: "Contents are Confidential and Proprietary and Constitute Trade Secrets of MasterWord Services, Inc.".
- Form Fields:**
 - Department: _____
 - Name: _____
 - Date: _____
 - Language: _____
- Score Boxes:**
 - Total Written Score: _____
 - Total Oral Score: _____
- Comments Section:** A large yellow rectangular area labeled 'Comments' at the top.
- Reference Number:** 000000
- Footer:** Proprietary and Confidential ©2013 MasterWord Services