

My name is Isomar Vazquez; I reside at 235 Dorchester Ave. in Waterbury Connecticut. I am a youth leader with the Naugatuck Valley Project in Waterbury CT. I am 17 years old and a senior at Wilby High School and presently in the Allied Health Nursing Program.

I oppose the elimination of the funding for medical interpretation services. It is a needed service; people's lives are at risks when they cannot communicate effectively with their medical provider. If Hospitals were reimbursed to provide this service it would eliminate some of the barriers that are hindering the possibilities of providing better medical interpretation services.

I would like to share my story: At the age of 8 years old I had to interpret for my mother at all her Doctor's visit. Nine years ago her understanding of English was very limited and she was only able to speak just a few words, but not enough to communicate effectively in a medical setting.

My two other sisters who were adults were employed and not free to take the time off from work to go with my mother. I had to miss school many times to do this. Although I have always been close to my mother I felt very uncomfortable and embarrassed when I interpreted for her and I know that she felt the same for many things. Many times I didn't tell her everything that the Doctor was saying and she did not explain every thing to the Doctor because I was present.

In many occasions it was very difficult to explain the information back to my mother because I was a child and not an adult trained interpreter. Many times the words were too difficult to go back and forth in Spanish and English.

When I look back now, my mothers' health was at risk many times, and so are many people that need medical interpretation. Today, my trips to the Doctor with my mother are only a few because her English has improved.

Many of my friends have experience the same. They have to miss days of school to accompany their parents or relatives to provide interpretation for them. I feel that children should not be interpreting. This is a task for trained adults. If adequate funding is available, the hospitals will be able to deal with the big demand that this service has and will do a better job providing it as well. I ask of you to look into this issue deeply and try to keep the funding for medical interpretation services.

Thank You
I.V.