FORUM ON
LANGUAGE & DISABILITY ACCESS

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Virginia's Medicaid Program

How Organizations Ensure Translation and Interpretation Quality

December 2, 2025 (1PM-3PM)

DMAS

Logistics

- This presentation is being recorded and will be available for viewing on the DMAS website at a later time.

- This presentation is intended for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice.

- Add your name, job title and organization you represent in the chat

- Remote Conference Captioning (RCC) available through Virginia Relay. Find link in the chat

- American Sign Language Interpreters (ASL) available through the Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH)
    - To Pin the ASL: Click on the ASL video feed and then select the three-dots menu icon on the feed. A drop-down menu appears. Select Pin for me.

- If you experience technical difficulties during this call, e-mail: civilrightscoordinator@dmas.virginia.gov

- If you have questions, please enter them in the chat and we will address them at the end of this presentation as time allows

Today's Agenda

1:00 P.M. – 1:05 P.M.	**Welcome and Introductions**
1:05 P.M. – 1:10 P.M.	**Opening Keynote -** Sara Cariano, Division Director, Eligibility Policy & Outreach, Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS)
1:10 P.M. – 1:30 P.M.	**Presentation** – Translation Review Process. By Montserrat Serra, DMAS Civil Rights Manager
1:30 P.M. – 2:45 P.M.	**Panel Discussion**

- **Kahlil B Thomas,** Language Access Quality Specialist, City of Philadelphia, Office of Immigrant Affairs

- **Christina Bonilla-Barboza,** Language Access Program Manager, Public Access & Innovation, TriMet

2:45 P.M. – 2:55 P.M.	**Q&A and Public Comments**
2:55 P.M. – 3:00 P.M.	**Closing**

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Opening Keynote

Sara Cariano

Division Director, Eligibility Policy & Outreach

Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS)

Translation Review: Ensuring Accuracy, Clarity, and Cultural Appropriateness

- Identifies mistranslations, omissions, and cultural mismatches
- Evaluates terminology consistency and style adherence
- Ensures compliance with industry standards and client requirements
- Provides actionable feedback for translator improvement

The Translation Trust Gap: Why Verification Matters

Original English: "Medicaid covers a variety of inpatient and outpatient medical services. Benefits include behavioral health services, addiction and recovery treatment, dental services and prescription medicines."

Arabic Translation: " يغطي برنامج Medicaid مجموعة متنوعة من الخدمات الطبية للمرضى الداخليين والخارجيين. تشمل المزايا خدمات الصحة السلوكية، وعلاج الإدمان والتعافي، وخدمات الأسنان، والأدوية الموصوفة."

What Is Translation Review?

It is not a critique of style or preference

Focus: identifying errors that impact meaning, tone, or usability

Accuracy
Ensuring faithful representation of source meaning

Clarity
Maintaining readability and comprehension

Cultural fit
Adapting content for cultural context and appropriateness

When and Who Should Review

- **When Translation Review Is Essential**
  - High-stakes content affecting safety, health, or legal compliance
  - Long-lasting materials that will be widely distributed or published
  - Complex technical or specialized content requiring precision
  - Materials for vulnerable or underserved populations
  - Content with significant cultural sensitivity requirements

- **Qualified Reviewer Characteristics**
  - Professional translator with expertise in relevant subject matter
  - Native or near-native fluency in target language and dialect
  - Deep understanding of target audience's cultural context
  - Strong digital literacy and file management skills
  - Familiarity with CAT tools and track changes functionality
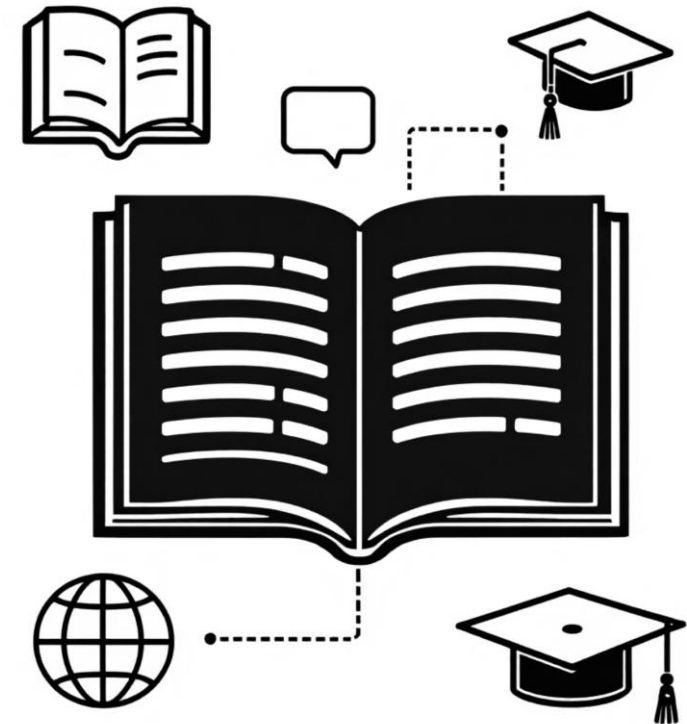
How to Facilitate the Review Process

Prepare Materials
Provide complete source documents, glossaries, style guides, and reference materials to reviewers

Set Clear Expectations
Define scope, timeline, audience, purpose, tone, and specific areas of focus for the review

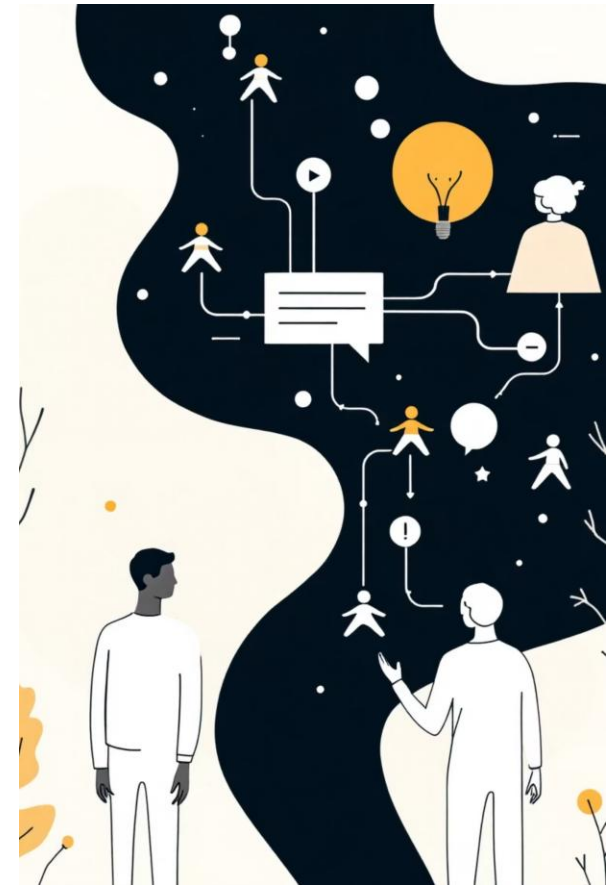**Conduct Review**
Reviewer examines translation systematically, documenting issues with constructive, justified feedback

Implement Changes
Translator addresses feedback, makes revisions, and documents decisions for quality records

QA Project Scope: Documents and Recordings Under Review

Document Name	Language	Number of Pages
ABD Flyer	Vietnamese	1
Adult Flyer	Amharic	1
Coverage for Adults	Vietnamese	1
IRS Form	Arabic	6
IRS Form	Amharic	6
IRS Form	Vietnamese	6
IRS Form	Urdu	6
Famis Brochure	Arabic	1
Famis Moms	Urdu	1
FAMIS One Pager	Arabic	1
Final Agency Decision	Amharic	5
LTSS Renewal Factsheet	Amharic	2
Spenddown Closure	Urdu	3
Withdrawal Letter	Arabic	5
Total		**45**

Recording Name	Language	Recording Length (hr.)
Hearing # XXXX	Amharic	1
Hearing # XXXX	Amharic	1
Hearing # XXXX	Korean	1
Hearing # XXXX	Dari	1
Hearing # XXXX	Urdu	1
Hearing # XXXX	Pashto	1
Hearing # XXXX	Arabic	1
Hearing # XXXX	Turkish	1
Hearing # XXXX	Urdu	1
Hearing # XXXX	Dari	1
Total		**10**

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QA Vendor Review Guidelines: A Comprehensive Brief

Scope of the Review
Clear definition of all materials to be reviewed, including document types and recording formats.

About the Client
Essential background information on the client's industry, brand voice, and specific requirements.

Important Links
Access to key resources such as style guides, glossaries, and reference materials for consistency.

Target Audience
Understanding the intended recipients of the translated content to ensure appropriate tone and cultural resonance.

Review Instructions
Step-by-step guidance on how to conduct the review, including tools and specific error classifications.

Query Management
Protocol for raising questions, addressing ambiguities, and seeking clarification during the review process.

Deliverables
Outline of the expected outputs, including review reports, corrected files, and any additional documentation.

Error Categories

Accuracy
Addition, omission, mistranslation, or untranslated content that affects the correctness of the message

Locale Convention
Incorrect date formats, currency, units of measurement, or address formats for the target locale

Style and Register
Inconsistency in formality level, inconsistent spelling or capitalization, or inappropriate tone for context

Fluency
Grammar errors, awkward phrasing, punctuation mistakes, or unnatural word order in target language

Terminology
Inconsistent use of specialized terms, failure to use approved glossary, or incorrect technical vocabulary

Layout
Formatting issues, broken links, truncated text, or display problems in final output

Error Severity Levels

Critical
Fundamentally changes meaning, impacts safety, legal compliance

Major
Significantly affects clarity, accuracy, or comprehension but doesn't completely alter meaning

Minor
Small grammar, punctuation, or style inconsistencies that don't impair understanding

Preferential
Subjective differences in word choice or phrasing—valid alternatives, not actual errors

Repeat
The same error occurring multiple times throughout the text, counted once but noted for pattern

QA Review Results: Error Analysis by Category and Severity

Error location	Source text	Original translation	Suggested translation	Category	Subcategory	Severity	Reviewer's comment
FAMIS MOMS Flyer EN FINAL	Apply	اپلائی	درخواست	Fluency	Grammar	Minor	This transliteration does not suit at all, "Apply" should be simply translated as in column D.
	Online at commonhelp.virginia.gov.	پر آن gov.virginia.commonhelp الئن ہے.	پر آن commonhelp.virginia.gov لائن۔	Layout	Document layout	Minor	Site Address should be Blue/bold and underline and not the text, which follow it.
	Call the CoverVA Call Center at 1-855-242-8282 (TTY: 1-888-221-1590). CoverVA is available Monday through Friday, 8 am to 7 pm, and Saturday, 9 am to 12 pm. Spanish-speaking representatives and interpretation services for additional languages are available.	کال سینٹر پر کال کریں CoverVA 1- 855-242-8282 CoverVA .)1-888-221-1590 :TTY پیر سے جمعہ، صبح(8 بجے سے شام 7 بجے، اور ہفتہ، صبح 9 بجے سے دوپہر 12 بجے تک دستیاب ہے۔ ہسپانوی بولنے والے نمائندے اور اضافی زبانوں کے لیے ترجمانی کی خدمات دستیاب ہیں۔	کال کریں CoverVA کال سینٹر پر 1- 855-242-8282 CoverVA ۔ (TTY: 1-888-221-1590) دستیاب ہے پیر سے جمعہ، صبح 8 بجے سے شام 7 بجے تک، اور ہفتہ کو صبح 9 بجے سے دوپہر 12 بجے تک۔ ہسپانوی بولنے والے نمائندے اور دیگر زبانوں کے لیے ترجمانی کی سہولت بھی دستیاب ہے۔	Fluency	Grammar	Major	Phone is separated from translation, fluency issue, this is two sentence paragraphs, but divided in a wrong way and got mixed.

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Tips for Success

Budget Appropriately
Translation review typically adds 15-25% to project costs.

Plan Realistic Timelines
Allow adequate time for thorough evaluation, typically 1-2 days per 5,000 words, plus revision time.

Ensure Font Compatibility
Test font display across platforms before finalizing to avoid character rendering issues.

Consider Reviewer Availability
Identify and engage reviewers early in project planning.

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After the Review: Implementing Feedback

Prioritize Critical Issues
Address critical and major errors immediately. Document decisions on minor and preferential items.

Share QA Results
Provide detailed feedback to translation vendors to improve future quality and align expectations.

Foster Continuous Improvement
Use insights from reviews to refine glossaries, style guides, and translator selection processes.

Plan Periodic Reviews
Schedule regular reviews (annually or biannually) for long-lasting materials to ensure continued accuracy.

Panel Discussion:

- **Kahlil B Thomas**

  Language Access Quality Specialist, City of Philadelphia, Office of Immigrant Affairs

- **Christina Bonilla-Barboza**

  Language Access Program Manager, Public Access & Innovation, TriMet

Panelists Questions

1. What prompted your agency to begin conducting quality assurance for translations or interpretations, and what goals were you hoping to achieve?

2. How do you define "quality" in translation and interpretation within your agency?

Panelists Questions

3. Can you share examples of specific methods or tools your agency uses to review translations or interpretation services? Examples: peer review, back translation, bilingual staff review, client feedback, vendor scoring forms.)

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Panelists Questions

4. What challenges have you encountered when trying to assess or improve translation and interpretation quality, and how have you addressed them?

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5. How do you ensure that feedback from QA reviews leads to actual improvement in vendor performance or internal processes?

Panelists Questions

6. How do you balance quality assurance efforts with time and budget constraints?

Panelists Questions

7. Do you apply the same QA approach across all languages, or do you adapt methods based on the language or service type (translation vs. interpretation)?

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8. Looking ahead, what practices or partnerships do you think could strengthen statewide consistency in translation and interpretation QA?

Q&A and Public Comments

Questions and comments will be addressed during today's event as time allows.

- Type your question on the chat, or
- Email your question to civilrightscoordinator@dmas.virginia.gov

Unaddressed questions will be published on the DMAS website

Closing Remarks and Resources

- DMAS Language & Disability Access Plan
- Cultural Validation and Translation Review Toolkit (2024): Developing Culturally Responsive and Linguistically Accurate Materials in the U.S.
- City of Philadelphia Language Access Reports and Guides
- DMAS Forum on Language and Disability Access