



WEILL CORNELL MEDICAL COLLEGE IN QATAR

10YR ANNIVERSARY



PRESS RELEASE

WCMC-Q Initiates New Program in Qatar

Training of medical interpreters aims to ease the way for medical students in a multi-lingual setting

Doha, Qatar

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Communication between medical students and patients takes center stage this week as Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar (WCMC-Q) begins a seven-day training program for medical interpreters.

More than 150 people applied for the 25 places on the course. The successful applicants are attending the 40-hour “Bridging the Gap” program starting Sunday, May 28.

The course is run by experts from the Seattle-based Cross Cultural Health Care Program (CCHCP), an organization that has trained approximately 10,000 interpreters in the US, Canada and Japan since 1995.

The immediate aim is to train the participants, who are all fluent in English and one of four other languages, to work as translators and interpreters between the medical students and patients who speak only Arabic, Hindi, Tamil or Urdu. They are the first professional medical interpreters to be trained in Qatar.

The move comes as part of an initiative to ease the way for WCMC-Q’s medical students during their third year clinical clerkships, which commence in Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) hospitals in July.

Once qualified, a number of the interpreters will be tasked to support the students as they work with patients from among the local population and the diverse expatriate community.

Shifting populations, changing needs

A professional medical interpreter provides an immediate, accurate translation as the doctor – or medical student – takes a patient history, gives commands or explains procedures during the physical examination, and discusses treatment options. The interpreter also communicates discharge and medication instructions as required.

“The idea of training professional medical interpreters and translators is to get a verbatim translation of the written language and interpretation of the spoken language,” says Dr. Nounou Taleghani, assistant professor of medicine and Associate Dean of Clinical Curriculum, who is overseeing the implementation of the CCHCP training program at WCMC-Q.

Dr. Taleghani notes that family members and health care professionals are not generally suitable to fulfil this role.

Relatives may sift information out, or lack the expertise to translate accurately, while health-care professionals tend to allow their medical knowledge to interfere with a verbatim translation, adding a gloss to what the patient is saying.

Hospitals in the US are required to have qualified medical interpreters available in order to meet the requirements for accreditation with the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Organizations (JCAHO). However, the growth of medical interpreting services is also a response to changing needs, as people migrate across the globe.

Building a team

With an emphasis on learning through discussion and role-play, “Bridging the Gap” covers training in interpreting skills, instruction in medical terminology and health care systems, and professional and communication skills development.

The program leads to certification in medical interpreting upon successful completion of a theoretical and practical examination.

WCMC-Q’s medical students will also receive training to prepare them to use interpreters in the correct way, Dr. Taleghani confirms. They should maintain eye contact with the patient, and use brief sentences to allow the interpreter to proceed with translation, thereby easing the flow of the patient encounter.

While WCMC-Q is providing for training of an initial group of 25 interpreters, ahead of this summer’s start of the clinical clerkships, the longer-term aim is to create a pool of trained personnel who would be available to provide translation and interpretation services whenever needed, she says.

Ends

NOTES TO EDITORS

Established in partnership with the Qatar Foundation, WCMC-Q is part of the Weill Medical College of Cornell University, the first American institution to offer its M.D. degree overseas. WCMC-Q offers a complete and integrated educational program, comprising the two-year Pre-medical Program, followed by the four-year Medical Program, with teaching by Cornell faculty. There are separate admission processes for each Program, guided by the standards of admission in use at Cornell University in Ithaca, and its Medical College in New York City.

Website: www.qatar-med.cornell.edu

The Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development is a private, nonprofit, chartered organization founded in 1995 aiming to develop and utilize human potential through a network of centers and campuses. In 1997 the Foundation set out on a strategic plan to create an Education City that is composed of a number of research centers, branch campuses of world-class educational institutions and a Science Park that acts as an incubator for research, responds to the immediate needs of industry and anticipates future necessities for development. In October 2003, Education City was officially inaugurated and it is now home to branches of some of the world's leading universities and research centers.

Website: www.qf.org.qa

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