Vietnam is located on the Indochina peninsula in Southeast Asia. The 2014 census shows about 1.3 million Vietnamese living in the United States. Many immigrated here following the end of the Vietnam War. Vietnamese culture highly values the elderly. Family, both immediate and extended, may be involved in caring for older members.

Language: As with many Asian languages, Vietnamese is a polytonal language. Use of the four to six tones can completely change the meaning of a word. Modern Vietnamese is written using the Roman alphabet with accent marks used to denote sounds and tones. While the language is usually softly spoken, it does tend to be spoken quite rapidly.

Communication Style: A typical greeting between unacquainted persons would involve exchanging proper names and possibly a gentle bow. This would especially be true when older ones are involved. Eye contact is normally avoided with someone considered to be of unequal status. More personal space is usually desired than we would consider normal in America. Many Vietnamese are not comfortable expressing emotion openly with strangers. Silence may be used to indicate negative emotions or disagreement. This would be a good indicator to a provider that an expanded discussion would be necessary to address the disagreement.

Health and Wellness: In the Vietnamese culture, there is a strong belief in the concept of yin-yang, karma, and the supernatural strongly influence the view of health and wellness. However, many Vietnamese-Americans are very familiar with modern medicine and the benefits of a balanced, healthy lifestyle. Good hygiene is an important part of life for most Vietnamese. It is common for family members to continue to be involved providing care even while in the hospital. Many recent immigrants will continue to use traditional avenues of health care such as home remedies and spiritual intervention. Unfortunately, this can lead to health issues becoming serious before being seen by a medical professional. Most Vietnamese patients are respectful and cooperative.

How much do you recall?

How many tones are in the Vietnamese language?

A. 7-9   B. 1-3   C. 4-6

The first team member to respond with the correct answer will be recognized in a future edition of the Cultural Spotlight newsletter.

Email answers to interpreterservices@musc.edu

November/December - Winner

Teri Lynn Herbert, Assoc. Professor
Did You Know....??

**Interesting Language Facts**

- Over 2,200 of the world’s languages can be found in Asia, while there are approximately 260 in Europe.
- The most widely spoken languages, according to figures from UNESCO (The United Nations’ Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), are: Mandarin Chinese, English, Spanish, Hindi, Arabic, Bengali, Russian, Portuguese, Japanese, German and French.
- The five most difficult languages to learn are Arabic, Cantonese, Mandarin Chinese, Japanese and Korean.
- One quarter of the world’s languages are spoken by fewer than 1,000 people.
- Approximately 2,500 languages are at risk of extinction.

Source: https://www.access2interpreters.com/10-most-interesting-

**MEET THE MEDICAL INTERPRETATION TEAM**

Antwan Walters

**How long have you been an interpreter at MUSC Health?**  I have been with MUSC Health for 5.5 years.

**What do you enjoy about interpreting?**  I enjoy seeing the light in patients’ eyes when they fully understand what is happening around them and feel involved in the conversation and care plan.

**What is your favorite thing to do for fun?**  I enjoy art. My favorite part is drawing portraits. My favorite media are graphite and charcoal.

---

**HOW TO ACCESS INTERPRETATION SERVICES AT MUSC**

**PATIENTS WHO SPEAK SPANISH**

- In-person medical interpretation, 24/7/365
- MUHA Intranet: Service-Hub to request an interpreter.
- Video Remote Interpretation – 24/7/365
  Available on selected patient floors, 24/7/365
  Contact Interpretation Services (via Service Hub)

**SPOKEN LANGUAGES - Telephonic Interpretation**

- Available 24/7/365, over 200 languages
- Call 2-4595
- Request language, including any dialects. Can schedule a time for a phone interpreter for uncommon dialects.

**PATIENTS WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING**

- In-house Medical Interpretation is available Mondays through Fridays, 8:00 am – 5:00pm
- In-Person Interpretation (After-Hours/Weekends)
  Charleston Interpreting Services - 678-446-7780
  ASL Interpreting Services - 843-696-6517
- Video Remote Interpretation – 24/7/365
  Available on selected patient floors, 24/7/365
  Contact Interpretation Services (via Service Hub)

**ALWAYS DOCUMENT ON THE INTERPRETER FLOW SHEET THAT INTERPRETATION SERVICES WERE USED. IF IT ISN’T DOCUMENTED, IT WASN’T DONE!!!**

---

To schedule a department training or provide compliments/complaints about Interpretation Services, please contact Antwan Walters, Coordinator, Interpretation Services at waltea@musc.edu (2-5078) or Stephanie Taylor, Director, Diversity & Inclusion at taylorst@musc.edu or (2-2341).