

(PRINTED ON INTERPRETER SERVICES LETTERHEAD)

## “Help! I Can’t Understand My Doctor...”

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Imagine the following scenario...

You wake up one night with a terrible headache, so you go to the nearest Emergency Room.

But when you get there, you can’t understand a word anyone says – and nobody can understand you!

You gesture helplessly as technicians run tests and nurses ask you questions you can’t comprehend. You try to explain your symptoms, but they just shake their heads and shrug. Then the doctor arrives.

He launches into a long monologue, a grave look on his face. You can’t understand him, so you just nod in silence. He gives you a piece of paper (that you can’t read) and sends you home.

You feel confused and scared. Are you seriously ill? Are you supposed to take some kind of medicine? What should you do if the pain gets worse?

### A Deadly Problem – And the Michigan Solution

This scenario might sound like a bad dream. But for Limited English Proficient (LEP) patients, the inability to communicate with medical providers is a harsh reality. And sometimes, it has tragic results.

- A 22-year-old year old LEP man was left quadriplegic after a single misunderstood word led to a serious misdiagnosis.
- A 10-month-old girl was hospitalized with a drug overdose, after her LEP parents misunderstood her prescription and gave her 13 times the correct amount of medicine.
- A 13-year-old girl died of a ruptured appendix, all because her LEP parents didn’t understand her doctor’s instructions.

**The saddest part of these accidents is that they could’ve been avoided with the help of a medical interpreter.**

That’s why the University of Michigan Health System provides trained, professional interpreters in all our clinics and departments - 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. We interpret in more than 140 languages, and cover over 2,000 appointments a month in clinics from Livonia to Ann Arbor. Our mission is simple: to ensure that language barriers will never compromise an LEP patient’s care.

## Help Us Keep Communication Open

But though we've created one of the top medical interpreter programs in the country, our future may be at risk. It's expensive to provide interpretation to thousands of providers in eight different cities. And the current recession has caused budget cuts that could force us to limit our services.

That's why we're reaching out to caring members of our community – people like you. We know you believe that quality medical care should be available to all people, regardless of their language. You may even know someone who has used our services – and who'll need them again in the future.

**To help ensure that Michigan's LEP patients will never face the dangers of a language barrier, could you support Interpreter Services with a tax-deductible donation?**

Your generosity could literally save a life, and it's impossible to put a price on that. But in tough times like these, any size gift will make a huge difference. Just \$100 could pay for a full day of interpretation in many languages.

Whatever you donate, your gift will help us continue to provide top-quality interpretation to all LEP patients in the U of M Health System. It will allow us to meet the growing demand for our services in clinics throughout Southeast Michigan. And it will help us ensure that here in Michigan, LEP patients will never have to guess what their doctors are saying.

Or worry about how to take their medicine.

Or wonder when to seek further care.

Thank you for your support of Interpreter Services. We couldn't do this without you.

Sincerely,

Signature

WRITE NAME HERE

**P.S. Save time and postage by donating online! Go to our secure credit card donation page at (WE SHOULD INCLUDE A LINK TO THE DONATION PAGE ON OUR WEBSITE, TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR THEM TO FIND IT). Thanks again for supporting Michigan's LEP community!**

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

Your donation will help us keep communication open for all UMHS patients, regardless of their English abilities. Please fill out the short form below.

I would like to support UMHS Interpreter Services with a donation of:

- \$25
- \$50
- \$100
- Other Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

**REMEMBER:** If you work outside the home, please ask your employer if they have a matching funds program for employee donations. If so, they may have other documentation that you must submit. If you need it for your records, our Tax ID # is ???

There are two easy ways you can donate:

**CHECK/MONEY ORDER:** If you're paying by check or money order, feel free to use the self-addressed envelope included with this letter. Make checks payable to: UMHS Interpreter Services Program.

**CREDIT CARD:** If you'd like to make a donation with VISA or MASTERCARD, go to our secure online donation page at \_\_\_\_\_ . Or call (734) 936-7021 to process the transaction over the phone.

Thank you again for your generosity. Interpreter Services couldn't succeed without your kind support!