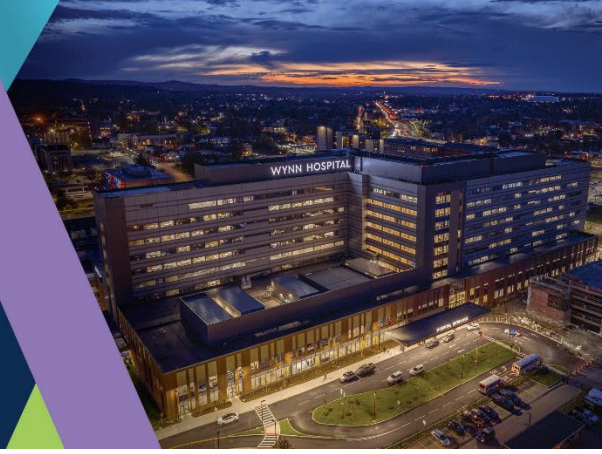
Just the Facts

MVHS & WYNN HOSPITAL

There's so much happening in healthcare in our region – at times it's hard to stay updated! That's why Just the Facts is being reinvigorated. This weekly publication, published on Tuesdays, will provide you with the latest information about MVHS and the Wynn Hospital!



TOPIC FOR TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2025:

Department Spotlight: Language Services

Each year on September 30, healthcare organizations worldwide recognize the essential contributions of medical interpreters on International Interpreter Appreciation Day. This meaningful celebration highlights the dedicated professionals who ensure every patient receives quality care, regardless of language barriers.

What does the Language Services department do?
Language Services bridge language and cultural gaps so that patients with limited English proficiency, or who are deaf or hard of hearing, can communicate effectively, understand their care and make informed healthcare decisions.

They assist patients in a wide range of languages, with Spanish, Burmese, Karen, Bosnian, Russian, Ukrainian and Arabic accounting for about 85 percent of volume for the past few years. Through in-house, in-person and remote interpreters, they support about 50 languages monthly, ensuring everyone in our community can communicate effectively and receive quality care.

How many interpreters work in the Language Services department?
They have approximately 30 in-house interpreters qualified in the most frequently requested languages, which are Spanish, Burmese, Karen, Bosnian, Russian, Ukrainian, Arabic, Somali and MaayMaay.

How many patients do you assist each year?
Language Services meets high daily demand, with 250 to 300 in-person appointment requests and 120 to 150 phone call requests each day, plus tens of thousands of minutes of phone and video interpreting each month. Over the past 12 months, they have averaged 6,305 in-person appointments per month helping patients and providers overcome language and cultural barriers to communicate clearly and make informed healthcare decisions.

What is a typical day like?
A day in the life of a Language Services interpreter is never typical. The office staff coordinates phone calls, tracks where interpreters are and adjusts schedules when needed, while interpreters move throughout MVHS service area responding to a wide variety of patient needs.

An interpreter might start their day in the ICU assisting a patient who is terminally ill or a patient who is steadily recovering – then assistant with an emergency surgery and a doctor's consultation. By the afternoon, they could be helping a new parent and their newborn get discharged from the Maternity unit, supporting a palliative family conference or calming an anxious patient in their native language. Moving quickly between situations, interpreters uphold professional ethics and give every patient a voice, ensuring clear communication, understanding and support in every encounter.