



20<sup>th</sup> May 2009

## **Deaf awareness on the agenda at Primary Care 2009**

For the first time SignHealth, the healthcare charity for Deaf people will be exhibiting at Primary Care 2009 at the Birmingham NEC from the 20<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> May.

Medical professionals are invited to visit stand A45b to watch a demonstration of the charity's SignTranslate technology. This FREE internet-based translation website converts English to British Sign Language (BSL) as well as 12 foreign spoken languages. SignTranslate also provides access to live online interpreters for more complex medical situations when a face-to-face BSL interpreter is not available. The demonstration will be available on both days of the exhibition.

SignTranslate aids communication with people who have difficulty in understanding English, whether they are Deaf and use BSL, or are non-English speaking ethnic minorities. It is an easy way for GPs and hospitals to improve their communication with minority groups.

SignHealth is committed to energising change to improve the healthcare and equality of service provision to Deaf people in the UK. The charity offers medical professionals support in fulfilling the needs of their Deaf patients such as deaf awareness training and free access to the SignTranslate website.

Steve Powell, Chief Executive of SignHealth had this to say:

*"We are looking forward to meeting colleagues from the primary care system to share crucial information about how to improve services for Deaf people."*

*"There is so much more that can be done to make Deaf people's lives easier and Primary Care 2009 offers an excellent opportunity to share best practice."*

**-Ends-**

### **Notes to editors**

#### **About SignHealth and SignTranslate**

SignHealth is the healthcare charity for d/Deaf people and is committed to bringing better healthcare and equality of service provision to d/Deaf people in the UK.

SignHealth has developed SignTranslate ([www.signtranslate.com](http://www.signtranslate.com)), a web-based program which can provide almost immediate online interpreting for short notice and same day GP appointments as well as visits to hospitals and A&E. The programme is currently free of charge for GPs in England.

#### **Meaning of Deaf and deaf**

Written with a lower case d 'deaf' refers to a person who is hard of hearing or cannot hear at all.

Many deaf people whose first language is sign language consider their deafness to be central to their identity, rather than a disability. Termed as Deaf with a capital D, these people are more suitably defined as a minority ethnic group than a type of disabled person. This group is bound together by language, culture and ways of experiencing the world.

#### **For more information please contact**

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