



Friends of the Russian Bilingual Services Program Newsletter

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF SERVICE

Compassionate Care, Strong Community, Exceptional Staff

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**Русская
Программа
HSL**

As the Director of the Bilingual Russian Program, I am delighted to share with you that in **2025**, our program is turning **25 years old!** It is a milestone worth celebrating as well as a great moment to share our accomplishments and pay tribute to our staff. We are proud of the community we have built and the care we provide to our patients. Currently, the program is serving over 140 Russian-speakers – 38% of the total patient population at Hebrew Rehabilitation Center in Roslindale. The Bilingual Russian Program is widely known and enjoys an excellent reputation in the community. The program has also been highlighted as one of the most innovative cross-cultural health care efforts nationally. Over the years, it has extended to our post-acute care units, adult day health program, and senior living community in Brookline.

We have achieved and exceeded our goals and expectations. A few of them seem most significant to me, as I look back at my time as the program’s director from its inception:

1. *We have created a unique welcoming environment for both patients and their families. It includes providing cultural and linguistic comfort on all levels – from essential daily care and activities to complex medical decisions.*
2. *Beyond excellent medical services, the program offers a strong sense of community. Our Russian-speaking staff deserve the utmost respect for the exceptional work they do every day.*
3. *Over the years, we have established a close relationship between HRC and the Russian-speaking community. We are extremely proud and appreciative of the work and support by our volunteers and donors. You seek us for your family members’ care and we rely on your support to do more for those who live here.*

The money you have given us has been used to enhance your loved ones’ quality of life by giving them more choices and enriching their lives and their environment. The volunteering has been priceless in giving our patients many joys and many celebrations!

Thank you for your trust and support. I believe that when we are together – anything is possible. Our deep gratitude goes to the leadership of Hebrew SeniorLife for their unwavering commitment to this great cause. The program reflects the vision of HSL: to reexamine and redefine the experience of aging, encouraging people to see their golden years from a new perspective.

Stay tuned for more information about the events we are planning to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the program. We hope you will celebrate with all of us!

Alexandra Dashevskaya, Director, Russian Bilingual Services Program



INTERPRETER SERVICES SUPPORT AT HSL

Language and cultural issues are becoming increasingly prevalent as our demographics change and the population becomes more diverse. By the year 2050, ethnic and racial minorities will comprise 35% of the 65+ population.

The increasing diversity of the growing elderly population has significant implications for health care providers. That is why language support becomes crucially important. It ensures that patients can explain their symptoms accurately and understand their treatment options, leading to better care and fewer mistakes.

In addition, language support promotes cultural sensitivity. It acknowledges the diverse needs of patients from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds and ensures that they receive the same quality of care as English-speaking patients.



*“What would we do without interpreters?
Communication is a challenge when you do
not know the language”.*



*“It is such a joy to speak in your own language.
I can express myself so much better!”*

At HSL Interpreter Services program has evolved into a quite sophisticated system over 17 years of its existence. We support multiple languages by adopting various approaches: staff education/n, technology, engaging with the community through various outreach programs, etc. Annual Survey Monkey, monthly documentation audits as well as patient satisfaction assessment ensure that quality of services is measured to identify necessary interventions.

By investing in process improvement, we can address language barriers effectively, enhance patient-provider communication, and provide equitable and high-quality care to all our non-English speaking patients.

SUPPORT US FINANCIALLY - HELP IMPROVE OUR PATIENTS' LIVES

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- **Donate in memory of a loved one**
- **Give to help us honor special occasions like birthday & holidays**
 - ⇒ **Give online (make a quick, secure online donation).**
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 - ⇒ **Double your gifts through Matching Gifts**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

Check our website at: www.hebrewseniorlife.org/giving or www.hebrewseniorlife.org/russian

JOYS OF SUMMER

Patients' Testimonials



It's lovely that we often spend time in the backyard, listening to music and relaxing there. I wish we could stay all day out in the fresh air.

I truly enjoyed the music festival. The decorations and performers were excellent. I also liked that the staff sang, danced and treated us with gifts. Everything was very well organized. Every morning lana comes in and tells us what activities are planned for the day. It is clearly thought out so that we are always busy with interesting things. It's great that we often go outside. lana tries to make sure that we spend as much time outdoors



I moved in here 2 months ago. So, everything is new to me and I am settling in. Twice I had a chance to participate in a physical exercise activity organized by a girl from Israel. In my opinion, these exercises are useful and necessary and it would be great to have on a regular basis.



At HRC we play games and take walks. I find all activities interesting. The concerts at synagogue are wonderful, always fun and interesting. The staff are good and try to make our lives enjoyable. I must admit that we are always happy and look forward to the next activity or a concert at the synagogue.

I am soooo happy to be outside enjoying the weather with my friends! Fresh air is better than any medication.



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BILINGUAL RUSSIAN PROGRAM IS A MODEL FOR SUCCESS IN DELIVERING CULTURALLY COMPETENT CARE TO SENIORS WITH DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS



Of more than 37 million adults in the U.S. who speak a language other than English, some 18 million people - 48 percent - report that they speak English less than “very well.” Research has consistently shown that language and communication barriers can affect the amount and quality of health care received and lead to patient dissatisfaction and poor quality of care.

Cultural competence is a combination of sensitivity, skills, training and knowledge that allows an organization to establish and maintain a meaningful relationship with the community it serves. Hiring staff with shared cultural backgrounds enables better communication and reduces avoidable negative health care outcomes. Cultural competence skills are also essential as a matter of simple respect for the patients.

Twenty five years ago, Hebrew SeniorLife made an organizational commitment to support the Greater Boston Russian-speaking community by providing a home to aging Russian-speaking patients needing high levels of care. The program was not only designed to provide culturally and language appropriate care in the long-term chronic care hospital setting, but also to strive to create a home-like environment, stimulating activities, and a sense of community belonging for its patients. There are very few programs of this quality and magnitude in the country. The program was highlighted and recognized nationally by the GSA (Gerontological Society of America) as **“a model for success”** in addressing the growing diversity among seniors and one of the most innovative of its kind in the United States.

