



# Minnesota Newspaper & Communications Guild TNG-CWA Local 37002

*Established 1933*

May 13, 2026

Hennepin County Board of Commissioners  
2400 Hennepin County Government Center  
300 S. Sixth St.  
Minneapolis, MN 55487

## **Dear Commissioners,**

The Minnesota Newspaper and Communications Guild represents over 500 workers, including around 80 professional language interpreters at HCMC. We have navigated significant challenges with our outsourced interpretation vendors in recent years and believe it is important for our elected officials to be aware of the issues that we and our patients face.

Currently, we interact with LanguageLine Solutions (LLS) in our work serving the people of Hennepin County. Our contract with LLS is limited to what is referred to as “third-ring” coverage: this means that all landline, cellphone, iPad-originating, and PC-originating voice and video calls are meant to go through HCMC Interpreter Services Department staff first, then Voyce + Martii interpreters. If neither of those two resources is available, the calls go to LLS. Additionally, select parts of the scheduling load of phone calls (such as in the front-desk areas) go directly to LLS.

The contract with our “second ring” coverage provider, Voyce + Martii, is expiring this summer and HCMC management are seriously considering contracting with LanguageLine Solutions to take their place.

We have experienced service quality problems with LanguageLine, including a lack of enforcement regarding disconnection (which results in billing for time not actively being interpreted), dropped calls, interpreters who are visibly overworked, as well as a difficult working relationship with their IT and customer service departments (lack of follow-up or clear and concise action plans to correct outstanding issues).

We are pleased to learn that interpreters at LanguageLine are organizing a union with the Communications Workers of America (CWA), which is also our parent union. These interpreters are organizing to address low pay, a stressful environment characterized by back-to-back calls, and inadequate training, as documented in a recent study conducted by CWA:

<https://cwa-union.org/language-line-interpreters-speak-out>

While there is a limited role for outsourced vendors to play at HCMC, we firmly believe that in-house interpreters provide the best care for our patients. We were the ones who showed up during the COVID pandemic. We were the ones who comforted and protected terrified patients during Operation Metro Surge. We live in this community and serve it with utmost dedication. And we have been showing up at the Capitol to lobby for a funding solution for HCMC, a critical statewide asset with a desperate financial outlook.

Accelerating corporate consolidation of the interpretation industry impacts our ability to provide high quality service, because if LanguageLine drags down wages and working conditions for the industry, employers like HCMC will feel compelled to outsource more of our work – or pay us less.

High labor standards benefit us all. We support the right of LanguageLine workers to form a union to improve their wages and working conditions.

To improve the service quality of interpretation services for residents and agencies who rely on Hennepin County's contract with LanguageLine Solutions, we call upon the county to:

- Write a letter to LanguageLine CEO Simon Yoxon-Grant at [sgrant@languageline.com](mailto:sgrant@languageline.com) to request that LLS and parent company Teleperformance respect the right for LanguageLine workers to unionize with CWA and honor the global framework agreement on social responsibility that Teleperformance has signed on to; and
- Conduct a review of LanguageLine's record of service for the County to inform future contracting, including the impact of working conditions at LLS on service quality for our patients and Hennepin County residents, as these issues are inherently connected.

Please let us know if we can provide you with any further information. We look forward to your response.

Regards,

*s/Debbie Prokopf*

Debbie Prokopf

Executive Officer

Minnesota Newspaper and Communications Guild, TNG-CWA 37002