Independence Day
July 4, 2013

The Birth of American Independence

When the initial battles in the Revolutionary War broke out in April 1775, few colonists desired complete independence from Great Britain, and those who did were considered radical. By the middle of the following year, however, many more colonists had come to favor independence, thanks to growing hostility against Britain and the spread of revolutionary sentiments such as those expressed in Thomas Paine’s bestselling pamphlet “Common Sense,” published in early 1776. On June 7, when the Continental Congress met at the Pennsylvania State House (later Independence Hall) in Philadelphia, the Virginia delegate Richard Henry Lee introduced a motion calling for the colonies’ independence. Amid heated debate, Congress postponed the vote on Lee’s resolution, but appointed a five-man committee—including Thomas Jefferson of Virginia, John Adams of Massachusetts, Roger Sherman of Connecticut, Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania and Robert R. Livingston of New York—to draft a formal statement justifying the break with Great Britain.

On July 2nd, the Continental Congress voted in favor of Lee’s resolution for independence in a near-unanimous vote (the New York delegation abstained, but later voted affirmatively). On that day, John Adams wrote to his wife Abigail that July 2 “will be celebrated, by succeeding Generations, as the great anniversary Festival” and that the celebration should include “Pomp and Parade...Games, Sports, Guns, Bells, Bonfires and Illuminations from one End of this Continent to the other.” On July 4th, the Congress formally adopted the Declaration of Independence, which had been written largely by Jefferson. Though the vote for actual independence took place on July 2nd, from then on the 4th became the day that was celebrated as the birth of American independence.

Early Fourth of July Celebrations

In the pre-Revolutionary years, colonists had held annual celebrations of the king’s birthday, which traditionally included the ringing of bells, bonfires, processions and speechmaking. By contrast, during the summer of 1776 some colonists celebrated the birth of independence by holding mock funerals for King George III, as a way of symbolizing the end of the monarchy’s hold on America and the triumph of liberty. Festivities including concerts, bonfires, parades and the firing of cannons and muskets usually accompanied the first public readings of the Declaration of Independence, beginning immediately after its adoption. Philadelphia held the first annual commemoration of independence on July 4, 1777, while Congress was still occupied with the ongoing war. George Washington issued double rations of rum to all his soldiers to mark the anniversary of independence in 1778, and in 1781, several months before the key American victory at Yorktown, Massachusetts became the first state to make July 4th an official state holiday.

After the Revolutionary War, Americans continued to commemorate Independence Day every year, in celebrations that allowed the new nation’s emerging political leaders to address citizens and create a feeling of unity. By the last decade of the 18th century, the two major political parties—Federalists and Democratic-Republicans—that had arisen began holding separate Independence Day celebrations in many large cities.

Fourth of July Celebrations July 4th Becomes A National Holiday

The tradition of patriotic celebration became even more widespread after the War of 1812, in which the United States again faced Great Britain. In 1870, the U.S. Congress made July 4th a federal holiday; in 1941, the provision was expanded to grant a paid holiday to all federal employees. Over the years, the political importance of the holiday would decline, but Independence Day remained an important national holiday and a symbol of patriotism.

Falling in mid-summer, the Fourth of July has since the late 19th century become a major focus of leisure activities and a common occasion for family get-togethers, often involving fireworks and outdoor barbecues. The most common symbol of the holiday is the American flag, and a common musical accompaniment is “The Star-Spangled Banner,” the national anthem of the United States.
Understanding Idioms

What is an Idiom?

An idiom, or idiomatic expression, is a phrase or term whose meaning cannot be guessed from a literal definition of the words. The phrase seems to make sense if you look up the individual words, but other people seem to mean something totally different when they say it, or the phrase makes no sense along with the rest of the conversation.

Idioms exist in every language. An idiom is a word or phrase that is not taken literally, like “bought the farm” has nothing to do with purchasing real estate, but refers to dying. Idiom also refers to a dialect or jargon of a group of people, either in a certain region or a group with common interests, like in science, health, music, art, or business.

Some idioms are used by most people that speak English; others are used by a more select group. This is partly due to the use of idioms and would also depend of which region of a country you were in. Idiom usage is not just regional, but also varies according to people’s interests and social groups.

The best way to pick up on the meaning of certain idioms would be to converse with people and ask them for a clarification of the idiom if you are not clear about the idiom they used. There are also sites on the Internet which will help explain the meaning of idioms.

Common Health Care Idioms:

• alive and kicking - to be well and healthy
• as fit as a fiddle - to be healthy and physically fit
• as pale as a ghost - extremely pale
• back on one’s feet - physically healthy again
• black-and-blue - bruised, showing signs of having been physically harmed
• break down - to lose control of one’s emotions, to have a nervous collapse
• break out in a cold sweat - to perspire from fever or anxiety
• bundle of nerves - a very nervous or anxious person
• catch a cold - to get a cold
• check-up - an examination of a patient by a doctor
• clean bill of health - a report or certificate that a person or animal is healthy
• come down with (something) - to become sick with something, to catch an illness
• cough doctor - a psychoanalyst or psychiatrist who puts his patients on a couch to talk to them
• flare up - to begin again suddenly (an illness or a disease), a sudden worsening of a health condition
• go under the knife - to have an operation in surgery
• have a physical (examination) - to get a medical check-up
• in labor - a woman going through childbirth
• kick a habit - to break or stop a bad habit
• lapse into a coma - to go into a coma
• nothing but skin and bones - to be very thin or emaciated
• in remission - a disease that seems to be getting better
• pull through - to recover from a serious illness
• run in the family - to be a common family characteristic
• take a turn for the worse - to become sicker
• take a turn for the better - to begin to improve or get well
• flare up - to begin again suddenly (an illness or a disease), a sudden worsening of a health condition
• clean bill of health - a report or certificate that a person or animal is healthy
• come down with (something) - to become sick with something, to catch an illness
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Tips for Providers and Interpreters when Dealing with Idioms:

One of the biggest challenges that interpreters have to contend with is the use of idioms by the provider or the patient. Idioms are combinations of words that have a figurative meaning that is separate from their literal meaning. They are common expressions that cannot be properly understood by simply analyzing the meaning of the individual words. Idioms exist in all languages and we all use idioms in our daily speaking. They are important tools in communicating with others, and often add flavor and enhanced meaning to our communication. However, they can present the interpreter with cultural and linguistic challenges.

So, how should the interpreter react when faced with idioms?

- Ideally, the interpreter will be familiar with the idiom that is used by the patient or the provider, and fully understands its meaning in the original language. He or she will also know if there is a direct equivalent in the other or target language.

Now, let’s examine the two possibilities:

- There is no direct equivalent idiom in the target language. However, the interpreter understands the idiom in the original language and can accurately explain it in the target language.

- The worst case scenario is when the interpreter does not know what the idiom means in the original language; does not know of an equivalent expression, and thus has no idea how to accurately interpret it into the target language.

What should the interpreter do in this last scenario? He/she cannot simply omit the phrase because it could be important for the other party, and the interpreter is responsible for rendering everything that is said in one language accurately into the other. The interpreter should immediately tell the other party that the person who just spoke used an idiom that the interpreter is unfamiliar with and the interpreter will now ask that person to explain what the idiom means. The interpreter will then tell the person who used the idiom that he/she didn’t understand it and request a clarification. This is done to ensure “transparency” so that all parties know exactly what is going on.

What can providers and patients do to facilitate their interactions? One possibility would be to refrain from using idioms as much as possible. However, if they do use them, then they should verify that the interpreter has fully understood them and not be surprised if the interpreter requests a clarification.

The interpreter can mention the use of idioms during the pre-session briefing with the patient and provider.

http://examples.yourdictionary.com/idiom.html
http://silouanhealthblog.com/2013/01/02/tips-for-providers-and-interpreters-on-dealing-with-idioms/