

## Mental Health Awareness Month 2025

Source: <https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/mental-health-awareness-month/>

### What is Mental Health Awareness Month?

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, an annual observance established by Mental Health America in 1949 to emphasize the importance of mental wellbeing. Each May, we bring additional attention to the challenges faced by those with mental health conditions and the need for a supportive, understanding environment. Across the country, people unite to raise awareness, spark conversations and advocate for improved resources. Keep reading to learn how you can prioritize your mental health!

### Why is Mental Health Awareness Important?

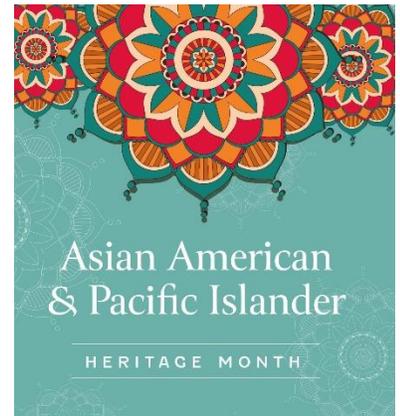
Despite recent strides in how our society approaches mental wellbeing, many Americans still don't have access to the high-quality, comprehensive treatment and care they need. Just take a look at some of the staggering data about mental health in the United States:

- 1 in 5 U.S. adults experience mental illness each year.
- Only 47.2% of U.S. adults with mental illness received treatment in 2021.
- 1 in 20 U.S. adults experience serious mental illness each year.
- Only 65.4% of U.S. adults with serious mental illness received treatment in 2021.
- 1 in 6 U.S. youth have a mental health condition, but only half receive treatment.
- 50% of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14, and 75% by age 24.

### Where Can I Find Mental Health Resources?

Help is out there, and hope is possible. Here are some free resources to lean on if you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health and/or substance use crisis:

- [SAMHSA's National Helpline](#) is a 24/7 treatment referral and information service.
- [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#) offers 24/7, confidential support for people in distress.
- [FindTreatment.gov](#) helps people seek treatment for mental and substance use disorders.
- [National Institute of Mental Health](#) outlines additional mental health services.



### May 2025 Calendar

*National Foster Care Month  
National Women's Health Awareness Month*

- 1 – National Day of Prayer (US)
- 2 – Brothers and Sisters Day (International)
- 5 – African World Heritage Day
- 5 – Cinco de Mayo (International)
- 6 – National Nurses Day (US)
- 7 – National Interpreter Appreciation Day (US)
- 11 – Pesach Sheni (Judaism)
- 11 – Mother's Day (International)
- 11-17 – National Hospital Week
- 12 – Buddha Day, Vesak (Buddhism)
- 26 – Memorial Day (US)
- 28 – International Day of Action for Women's Health
- 29 – Ascension Day (Christianity)

## How Can We Make Sure Technology Bridges Healthcare Gaps - Not Widens Them?

Source: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-can-we-make-sure-technology-bridges-healthcare-gaps-crcyc/?trackingId=GQHMX%2FVn4DChSXni4rXujA%3D%3D>



At the recent HIMSS 2025 Conference, one question dominated the conversation: How do we ensure technology bridges healthcare gaps rather than widens them?

With over 28,000 healthcare leaders from 88 countries gathered in one place, an urgent theme surfaced among those with whom we spoke: As digital health advances, so does the risk of leaving non-English-speaking patients behind.

AI-driven language tools, digital inclusion, and the role of language in health equity emerged as critical topics —each shaping the future of patient care.

### Will AI Translation Be Enough in the Exam Room?

In hospitals, language barriers can mean the difference between a correct diagnosis and a life-threatening mistake. HIMSS showcased a wave of AI-powered translation tools, from real-time interpretation apps to smart devices capable of converting speech into text.

But the excitement was tempered by a stark reality: AI isn't perfect. While automated interpreting is improving, it still struggles with dialects, cultural nuances, and complex medical terminology. A small error—for example, misinterpreting “feeling dizzy” as “feeling lighthearted”—could lead to the wrong treatment.

Wearable AI devices may soon offer real-time translation directly to patients, displaying subtitles on smart glasses or delivering whispered interpretations through earpieces. However, these tools must be tested rigorously for medical accuracy before they can be relied upon in clinical settings.

The consensus was that AI will be a powerful tool in breaking language barriers, but it won't replace human oversight for critical healthcare patient interactions.

In fact, one of the most important capabilities that emerged from the AI discussions at HIMSS is the critical need to enable seamless escalation to live medically qualified interpreter when the need arises, 24/7.

### The Digital Health Divide: Who Gets Left Behind?

As telehealth, mobile health apps, and AI chatbots become standard, a new challenge is emerging: many patients can't access these tools at all. For non-English speakers, the problem isn't just translation, it's that most digital health platforms were never designed with them in mind.

Imagine trying to schedule a telehealth appointment when the interface is only in English, or attempting to understand medication instructions from an AI chatbot that misinterprets your native dialect. For millions, digital health is not an entry point to care—it's a barrier.

At HIMSS, healthcare leaders called for culturally competent tech development:

- AI that adapts to regional dialects, not just standardized translations.
- Voice-based AI for patients with limited literacy.
- Chatbots designed with cultural norms in mind.

Regulations already require language accessibility in telehealth; however, further regulation is needed that ensures all digital platforms and health apps meet the needs of diverse populations. Without these changes, health care's digital transformation risks excluding millions of non-English speakers.

## Language Access as a Social Determinant of Health

This idea was pervasive at HIMSS: Language is not just a communication issue; it's a health risk factor. Patients who struggle to communicate with their doctors are less likely to seek preventive care, more likely to be misdiagnosed, and at greater risk for medication errors.

Despite this, language access remains an afterthought in many health systems. Studies show that patients with limited English proficiency are twice as likely to experience an adverse medical event, yet few hospitals prioritize language services in their digital health strategies.

The message among health professionals was resounding: Language access isn't a luxury; it's a matter of health equity. Without addressing it, digital health will only deepen existing disparities.

## The Future Must Be Multilingual

HIMSS 2025 made one thing clear: The future of health care must be multilingual. AI-powered translation, culturally competent digital tools, and language-conscious policy changes are not optional add-ons, they are fundamental to making health care truly accessible.

In the rush to modernize, the healthcare industry must ensure that no patient is left behind simply because they speak a different language.

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## New Staff Profile: Fazalminallah Qaderi



Fazalminallah, also known as Fazal to his family and friends, is the newest staff member to join our Farsi, Dari, Pashto team. Fazal is multilingual, speaking five languages in total: Farsi/Dari, Pashto, Uzbeki, Urdu, and English. For Fazal, Dari is his native language, while Pashto and Uzbeki were learned during his childhood through interactions with friends in Afghanistan. His proficiency in English and Urdu developed through a passion for Hollywood and Bollywood films, which he avidly watched as a child.

Fazal's first interpreting job was with the U.S. Army in Afghanistan, where he translated and taught military training materials to the Afghan army while also accompanying U.S. troops on combat missions. This role provided him with valuable learning experience, allowing him to engage with people from diverse ethnic backgrounds, explore unfamiliar regions of his country, and gain a deeper understanding of different cultures. He is proud to become a part of the MIS team, where he can contribute by providing interpreting services and assisting others through his linguistic expertise.

During his free time, Fazal prioritizes spending time with his parents and family. He enjoys gardening and being in nature, and when time permits, he either plays or watches cricket, a sport he is passionate about. He never misses a cricket match, especially when the Afghanistan team is playing.

Welcome to the UC Davis Health Medical Interpreting team, Fazal!

