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THE ALC ADDRESSES CONGRESS ABOUT LANGUAGE ISSUES IN HEALTH CARE

Arlington, VA – December 21, 2004 – Kathleen Diamond, Chair of the Association of Language Companies' (ALC) Advocacy Committee, joined a panel of five constituents from the health care system to brief staff members of the House and Senate on problems encountered due to lack of language service availability for patients with limited English proficiency.

Diamond and the others called on Congress to “do the American thing” and provide health care funding for interpreting services for these patients who amount to 18% of the US population or nearly 47 million people. Testimony was given that providing English-only services to this population not only damages the delivery of quality healthcare, but also results in higher delivery costs. Title Six of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 specifically calls on the Federal Government to provide services to its citizens despite race, or national origin and this has been defined by the courts to include providing language appropriate services.

Ms. Diamond pointed out that professional translation and interpreting companies play an important role in bringing together qualified non-staff interpreters and limited English speaking patients. These services include on-call interpreters, telephonic and video interpretation, staff training and written translations to thousands of people nationally.

The Association of Language Companies (ALC) is recognized worldwide as a trade organization representing the interests of language services companies in the United States. For more information, visit the ALC website at www.alcus.org, or call 800-338-4155.