

Three in Four Healthcare Leaders Would Turn to AI When Interpreter Waits Hit 5 Minutes

For routine, lower-risk conversations, patience for a human interpreter runs out fast, a new Boostlingo and Fierce Healthcare survey finds.

AUSTIN, TX, UNITED STATES, July 14, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- When a human interpreter is not available within five minutes, most healthcare leaders say they would consider AI instead. That is the central finding of [AI Interpreting in Healthcare 2026](#), a new report from Boostlingo produced in partnership with Fierce Healthcare, based on a survey of 123 healthcare leaders.



Only 1 in 5 respondents said they would use AI immediately, even with the right safeguards in place. Once a wait passes five minutes, that number rises to roughly 3 in 4. More than 8 in 10 leaders said longer waits would make them more likely to evaluate AI at all.

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*Dr. Julie Mills, CNE at
Boostlingo*

The shift reflects where the pressure is coming from. Delays in care were the top consequence named when an interpreter is not available, cited by 60% of respondents, ahead of patient dissatisfaction and communication errors. Managing cost ranked as a top challenge for 54%.

"Organizations want high-quality interpreting services, but often select the lowest-cost provider," said Merrie Wallace, MN BSN, Chief Revenue Officer at Boostlingo. "There is a

trade-off point between cost and quality that needs to be explored."

Trust, not cost, is the bigger barrier to using AI. Doubt that it will hold up in real conversations was the top concern, named by 59% of respondents, ahead of accuracy, compliance, and liability concerns.

Comfort with AI depends heavily on the interaction. Scheduling and billing conversations, with a human interpreter available as backup, were acceptable to 85% of respondents. Comfort drops sharply for emergency and sensitive care, where most leaders still prefer a human interpreter by default.

"Instead of asking questions like, 'Should we use AI or human interpreters?' the better question becomes 'What is the right modality with the right safeguards for this specific interaction?'" said Dr. Julie Mills, CNE at Boostlingo.

Taken together, the findings point to a hybrid approach. [AI interpreting](#) has a role in healthcare, according to 95% of respondents, and 61% say they are open to piloting it within the next 12 months.

The full report, AI Interpreting in Healthcare 2026, includes use-case risk and pilot design checklists for teams evaluating AI interpreting. It is available for download at: <https://boostlingo.com/resources/ai-interpreting-healthcare-2026/>.

Methodology

The findings come from a survey of 123 healthcare respondents, fielded with Fierce Healthcare from April 6 to May 6, 2026. Results are directional and are not intended as a statistically representative benchmark of the healthcare market.

About Boostlingo

Boostlingo is an interpreting technology company based in Austin, Texas. Its platform provides organizations with video, phone, and AI interpreting, plus scheduling, management, and reporting tools to run them, all in one place. The goal: communicate without barriers.

Learn more at boostlingo.com.

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