

## Opinion

Tuesday, March 18th, 2008

# Letter to Editor - Language barriers

Tara Martin

Last week while sitting in the waiting room of the Brandon Clinic, I witnessed something that I thought to be quite sad.

A Spanish-speaking patient was trying his best to communicate with clinic staff regarding his treatment. The gentleman was obviously confused with the terms being used, such as "referral" and "physiotherapy" and "interpreter."

An English-written letter was handed to the man, which he looked at and repeated: "No English." He promptly left, visibly upset.

I had to sit and wonder why more of an attempt wasn't made to assist this patient in understanding his upcoming treatment. You'd think that someone on staff would speak enough Spanish to help him realize what was needed. If not, why not?

If we are to be a culturally diverse city, we need to make changes to make our new citizens feel valued and receive the proper medical attention they deserve.

I would hope our health authorities would look into matters like this and wake up to the new faces of Brandon and accommodate accordingly.

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