The National Action Plan to Improve Health Literacy: Examples from the Field

Sandra Cornett, RN, Ph.D.
Director, AHEC Clear Health Communication Program
The Ohio State University College of Medicine
http://go.osu.edu/OSUHealthLiteracy

Objective
Discuss the National Action Plan for Improving Health Literacy and examples from the field for implementing the 7 goals

Why a National Action Plan?
- Identify and define key issues
- Establish priorities and key actions
- Connect diffuse sectors and organizations around common goals
- Create a blueprint for regional and local efforts
- Provide a focal point for the field of health literacy

Federal Definition of Health Literacy
Health literacy is the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.

Basic Principles and Vision for the NAP
- Basic Principles as a Foundation
  - Everyone has the right to health information that helps them make informed healthcare decisions
  - Health services should be delivered in ways that are understandable and beneficial to health, longevity, and quality of life
- Vision: A society that ... 
  - Provides everyone access to accurate & actionable health information
  - Delivers person-centered health information & services
  - Supports life-long learning and skills to promote good health

Goal 1
- Develop and disseminate health and safety information that is accurate, accessible and actionable
  - Applies to all organizations or individuals involved in developing or disseminating health information
    - Healthcare providers
    - Public health officials
    - Healthcare facilities
    - Payers
    - Media
    - Consumer libraries
Examples / Strategies Goal 1

- Involve members of target population (persons with LEP), in planning, developing, implementing, disseminating and evaluating health and safety information
- Ensure that all consumer health communication (forms, applications, benefits info, rights and responsibilities, letters, health & wellness) incorporate health literacy principles
- Ongoing HL training that focuses on improving clear communication and information design practices.

Examples / Strategies Goal 1

- OSU Medical Center Library for Health Information in the Atrium

Examples / Strategies Goal 1

- Health Literacy Missouri (HLM)
  - Website of more than 7,000 resources – www.healthliteracymissouri.org
  - HLM News service provides local health stories to 300+ media outlets.
  - Videos to teach clear health communication to the public aired on TV in St. Louis
  - Using social media (Facebook, Twitter) to reach out to professionals, consumers, practitioners around the world.

Goal 2

- Promote changes in the healthcare delivery system that improve health information, communication, informed decision-making and access to health services

  - Applies to any organization or individual who manages, delivers, or oversees healthcare services
    - Healthcare providers
    - Administrators
    - Regulators
    - Educators who provide professional training
Examples / Strategies Goal 2

• Providers:
  • Use programs such as AHRQ’s Questions Are the Answers, JC Speak Up series, or AskMe3 to prepare patients/providers for visits and structure communication
• Administrators:
  • Increase awareness/compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act, and other laws to ensure that those with limited English can access medical care
• Licensing/Credentialing:
  • Include assessment of HL and CLAS skills in licensure requirements for all health professions

Ask Your Doctor, Nurse or Pharmacist

Ask Me 3 – Good Questions for Your Good Health — At Your Next Health Care Visit Ask:

What Is My Main Problem?
What Do I Need To Do?
Why Is It Important for Me to Do This?

Joint Commission Health Literacy Recommendations

“What Did the Doctor Say?” Improving Health Literacy to Protect Patient Safety

• Make effective communications an organizational priority to protect the safety of patients
• Incorporate strategies to address patients’ communication needs across the continuum of care
• Pursue policy changes that promote improved practitioner – patient communications
• www.jointcommission.org/Public Policy/health_literacy.htm

Easy-to-Read NYC

Guidelines for Clear and Effective Communication

Advancing Effective Communication, Cultural Competence, and Patient- and Family-Centered Care

A Roadmap for Hospitals
Goal 3

- Incorporate accurate, standards-based and developmentally appropriate health and science information and curricula in child care and education through the university level
  - Applies to anyone administering or providing educational services to children, adolescents and young adults
    - School administrators
    - Managers
    - Teachers
    - Policymakers

Examples / Strategies Goal 3

- Promote health literacy by including the National Health Education Standards in school curriculum reform initiatives
- Incorporate health education into existing science, math, literacy, social studies, and computer instruction in grades K-12 by embedding health-related tasks, skills, and examples into lesson plans
- Require health education coursework for all students preparing for career in early childhood education

Examples / Strategies Goal 3

- Seed-to-Table Project provides helps elementary school students with a garden curriculum where there is hands-on exploration of food and nutrition, healthy good/lifestyle choices, and promoting value of cooperation & teamwork.
- Iowa Health System and Reach Out and Read Iowa prepares young children for school success by partnering with doctors to prescribe books and encourage families to read together.
- www.yoomagazine.net initiative for middle and high schoolers.
Goal 4

- Support and expand local efforts to provide adult education, English language instruction, and culturally and linguistically appropriate health information services in the community
- Applies to any individual or organization delivering services in the community
  - Adult educators
  - Community service providers
  - Healthcare teams
  - Health information and library professionals

Examples / Strategies Goal 4

- Adult Educators / Community Svs Providers
  - Integrate health curriculum into ABE/ESL education
  - Teach skills, such as computer, to help people in acquiring credible health information

- Healthcare Facilities
  - Invite adult education students to speak at meetings, do a ‘walk around,’ or test materials

- Health Information and Library Professionals
  - Become familiar with information and literacy resources in community and refer consumers

St. Louis Chinese Community Service Center
- Conferences for health providers & adult learners with panel discussions/presentations, health screenings, medication reviews, and navigational interviews
- Adult learners participate on health literacy-related workgroups and committees of health professions organizations

Examples / Strategies Goal 4

Adult educators
- Health information and library professionals
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Goal 5

- Build partnerships, develop guidance and change policies
  - Applies to any organization funding, guiding or overseeing health literacy-related activities, programs and investments
    - Philanthropic
    - Nonprofit
    - Voluntary
    - Advocacy
    - Academic
    - Professional organizations
    - Government agencies

Examples / Strategies Goal 5

- Government Agencies
  - Review, analyze and propose changes to laws, policies, & regulations that makes health information difficult to use
  - Public discussion about health information and services needed in communities to support better health outcomes
- Private Sector and Non-Profit Organizations
  - Include HL in strategic plans, RFP, grant awards, programs & educational initiatives
  - Educate policymakers and other decision-makers about HL and its contributions to improved health outcomes and decreased costs

Ohio Collaborative for Clear Health Communication

- [http://go.osu.edu/OhioHealthLiteracy](http://go.osu.edu/OhioHealthLiteracy)
- Organizations: ODH, OHA, OLN, OHLA, OSU Extension, OACHC, OMH, OSUMC, AHEC
- The mission is to provide education, resources, and outreach & engagement activities to empower Ohioans to make informed health decisions and choices, and for healthcare professionals and organizations to effectively communicate for improved health outcomes.

Goal 6

- Increase basic research and development, implementation and evaluation of practices and interventions to improve health literacy
  - Applies to any individual or organization involved in research, evaluation and intervention development
    - Researchers
    - Funders
    - Evaluators
    - Public health professionals

Examples / Strategies Goal 6

- Researchers:
  - Develop methods to measure full range of health professionals’ and organizations’ health literacy skills
  - Develop comprehensive individual & population measures of health literacy
- Public Health Professionals:
  - Include HL measures in public health data
  - Increase support for systems and community-based research in health literacy improvement
Examples / Strategies Goal 6

- NIH & AHRQ sponsoring HL research:
  - Development / testing of interventions designed to improve (1) pts. understanding of their health conditions (2) their ability to take appropriate actions.
  - Implementation research
  - Development of HL tools
  - Address priority populations
  - Contribute to reduction or elimination in disparities

Goal 7

- Increase the dissemination and use of evidence-base health literacy practices and interventions
  - Applies to any individual or organization involved in sharing information about more effective health information / communication and services
    - Researchers publishing / speaking
    - Academic organizations – continuing education
    - Health information and library professionals
    - Professional associations
    - Advocacy groups
    - Funders

Examples / Strategies Goal 7

- Professional Assoc, Advocacy Groups & Funders:
  - Increase funding for dissemination and implementation research of evidence-based health literacy interventions
  - Develop guidance on how to change practice as a result of research findings

- Academic Organizations/Journals & Health Information and Library Professionals:
  - Use variety of channels/formats to disseminate EBR findings to target audiences
  - Explore mechanisms to pull together and share data and research findings

Examples / Strategies Goal 7

- Health Literacy Universal Precautions Toolkit – University of North Carolina/ AHRQ
  - Focus on 4 drivers of health care
    - Effective oral communication
    - Effective written communication
    - Self-management and empowerment
    - Supportive systems
  - 20 tools with overview, purpose, actions, & tracking progress
  - www.ahrq.gov/qual/literacy

Six Principles for National Action

- Plan crosses disciplinary boundaries
- Be strategic and evidence-based in actions
- Evaluation common thread
- Continuously educate the public
- Include laws, policies, advocacy and other institutional factors
- Involve communities most affected by limited health literacy

What Can You Do?

- Identify the most relevant goals / strategies for your organization
- Brief your colleagues and propose possible action steps
- Plan and implement approved actions
- Evaluate their effectiveness in improving health literacy
- Share your finding widely!
Contact Information

Sandra Cornett, RN, Ph.D., Director
AHEC Clear Health Communication Program
Sandy.Cornett@osumc.edu
PH: 614-688-3327