



In the Know:

Health literacy news and best practices

October 2019

Health literacy: the foundation for health equity

Happy national Health Literacy Month! To celebrate, each year we launch a new campaign with helpful resources to assist you in your work to improve health literacy.

The theme for this year's Health Literacy Month campaign is [health literacy and health equity](#).

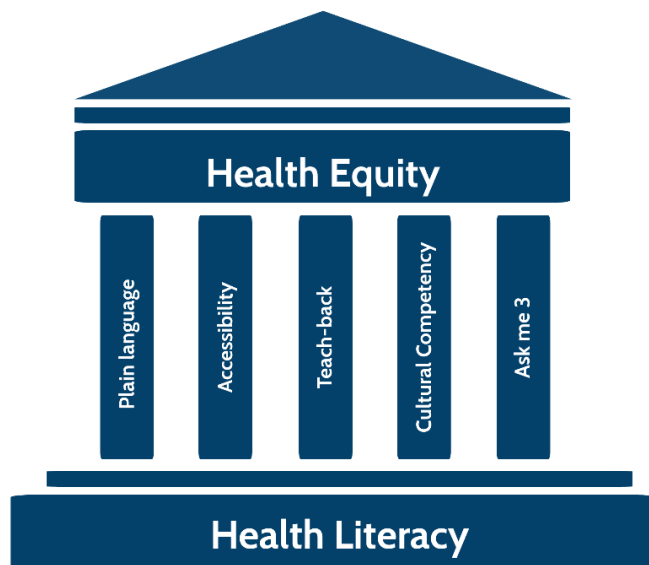
Health equity is about removing unfair differences in health status or health resources between groups of people – whether they are divided based on education, age, race, language or socioeconomic status. Health equity is crucial for overall public health, but it isn't attainable without improving health literacy.

The two concepts are closely tied. People most likely to experience low health literacy are also most likely

to experience health disparities. It's important to understand both equity and literacy, and how the two are interconnected.

As a part of this campaign, we have developed a [Health Literacy and Health Equity Toolkit](#) that shares key messages, talking points, helpful statistics and resources that you can use. We also created a [poster](#) for internal use at your organizations, which can be posted in your office or a common space.

Thank you for all you do to improve health literacy throughout the year. We hope that these campaign materials support you and your efforts to improve people's health and understanding of the health care system.



Health literacy lays the foundation for achieving health equity.

Did you know?

Compared to only 9% of Whites who had below basic health literacy:

- 24% of Blacks had below basic health literacy
- 25% of American Indians and Alaska Natives had below basic health literacy
- 41% of Hispanics had below basic health literacy

The Health Literacy of America's Adults: Results from the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy, 2003.

Additional tools

To support your health literacy and health equity efforts, we offer the following free, easy-to-access resources:

[Plain Language Campaign](#) – The plain language strategy is all about using simple, easy-to-understand words across all verbal, written and visual communications.

[Numeracy and Health Literacy](#) – Numeracy is an aspect of health literacy that includes the quantitative skills necessary to understand numerical directions such as medication adherence or measuring blood sugar levels.

[Ask Me 3®](#) – A program that encourages patients to ask providers specific questions to better understand their health.

Applying health literacy best practices to advance health equity

There are many health disparities across Minnesota. In fact, a [report released in 2015 by MN Community Measurement](#) found that our state has some of the largest racial, ethnic and geographic inequities in health status and incidence of chronic disease in the country.

Everyone deserves a chance to lead a healthy life, regardless of their background, socio-economic status or other factors. Knowing that these sorts of health disparities exist, health equity efforts focus on trying to provide the highest level of health care for all people.

As we know from our [Health Literacy and Health Equity Campaign](#), a key component of achieving health equity across different populations is health literacy. As described in one of the [Minnesota Health Literacy Action Plan's](#) Priority Areas, it's important to invest in language and cultural resources so that health information is clear to people of many different backgrounds and cultures.

A good example of this work is HealthPartners' recently launched Hmong Stroke Initiative. In partnership with the American Stroke Association, the initiative team integrated health literacy best practices into English versions of patient education materials on stroke-related topics. These materials were then translated into Hmong. Limited English proficiency has a profound impact on health literacy, so creating materials in different languages helps even the playing field for patients who speak different languages.

Hloov Cov Kev Ua Neej (Lifestyle) Txhawm Rau Thaiv Mob Ua Rau Hlwb Puas (Stroke)

Koj ua tau ntau yam kom lub phev thiab cov hlab nraha (blood vessels) muaj kev noj qab hau hee (Healthy), tab txawm dia koj tau muaj stroke. Kev ua lub nroov kom muaj kev noj qab hau hee yooj ib qho txawm ceeb hee loj pab kev koj yam muaj feem txawv txhawv ua tau ntau mob qhaab (disability) thiab kev tau sim neeg loj ntau mob (stroke) thiab mob phev nroov txawv.

Huv yuav ua li cas kom kuv ua lub nroov muaj kev noj qab hau huv dua?

Ntau nroov yooj ib co qh thiab koj ua tau kom muaj kev noj qab hau hee dua thiab tau tau qhov muaj feem kaus txhawj los ntau mob stroke:

- Tis tab xov loj kaus yeeb. Huv dabo ntau nroov kev noj qab hau yeeb kev ntau hluas (second hand smoke). Second hand smoke yooj cov pa kaus yeeb ntau nroov kev ntau nroov hluas kaus yeeb kev noj qab hau ntau nroov muaj txawv xa pa.
- Txawm khi koj cov cov paem noj hauv. Noj cov khoom uas muaj noj txawv (saturated fat), cov khoom noj kaus noj khob (trans fat), kaus ntau nroov (sodium) thiab cov khoom noj tau muaj piam thaj ntau nroov txawv xa pa.
- Siv lub cov ua sib no.
- Noj kev cov (blood) ntau nroov kev kaus yeeb (diabetes) cov noj qhaab.
- Ntau nroov muaj kev noj qab hau ntau nroov (blood pressure) tau si. Noj qhaab kev cov ntau nroov ntau nroov, thiam ntau nroov kev kaus yeeb kev noj qab hau ntau nroov.



Yooj tau koj muaj ib qho yam ntau nroov mob zoo tshu qab (chronic medical condition), muaj kev koj tug kev kaus muaj ua ntau nroov kev noj qab hau hee ntau nroov.



- Ua kom tau thiab txawv qhov ntau nroov kev noj qab hau hee.
- Tau koj qab kev noj qab hau hee.
- Ntau nroov kev pab txhawv xab ntau nroov (emotional support) ntau nroov kev noj qab hau hee.
- Ntau nroov muaj kev noj qab hau hee.

Huv yuav tau teeg kev kaus yeeb tau li cas?

- Thawj kaus yeeb tau teeg kaus yeeb tau teeg thaj yooj los ntau ntau ntau - thiab tag ntau ntau cov lus yuav tau ntau ntau.
- Noj kev kaus yeeb tau teeg muaj kev noj qab hau hee, cov khoom kaus thiab cov txhawj uas koj zaum yuav pab tau.
- Kaus yeeb tau teeg uas yooj kev muaj rau koj chaw kaw tau pab - hluas kaus yeeb. Uas tau kev noj qab hau hee cov nroov uas hluas kaus yeeb.
- Rau ntau ntau uas koj yam uas yuav hluas kaus yeeb tau ntau ntau, xws li ua hauj kev qab vug tab txawv.
- Ceeb toom rau tau ntau ntau thiab dia kev hluas kaus yeeb yooj ib yam tau ntau ntau kev noj qab hau hee, sim kev pias tau ntau ntau thiab yooj ib yam tau ntau ntau.
- Thawj kev ntau ntau cov qhov yooj koj pab txhawv koj.

A HealthPartners handout on stroke prevention created specifically for the Hmong population.

HealthPartners also took it a step further by making these materials culturally appropriate for the Hmong population. This involved working with members of the Hmong community when developing the materials to ensure the messaging and images would reflect their values and beliefs. For instance, because of this outreach, materials that list physical activity include examples popular within the community like gardening and walking. The materials also include photos of Hmong people, so readers can see themselves reflected in the resources.

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Supported by

Upcoming events

Minnesota Health Literacy Partnership meetings

Minnesota Literacy Council | Saint Paul
 (10:30 a.m.-noon, first Wednesday of the month)

- November 6
- December 4

The [Minnesota Health Literacy Partnership website](#) will be updated in case a meeting is canceled or rescheduled.

International Conference on Communication in Healthcare

Academy of Communication in Healthcare and the International Association for Communications in Healthcare | San Diego, CA

- October 27-30

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