



Minnesota Health Literacy Partnership

Working Together to Improve the Health of All Minnesotans through Clear Communication

<http://healthlit.themlc.org>

The **Minnesota Health Literacy Partnership** is a collaboration of health care consumers, health care organizations, and literacy groups in Minnesota. An independently funded program of the Minnesota Literacy Council, the Partnership was formed in January 2006 to help coordinate health literacy efforts across the state.

We believe that:

- Low health literacy affects everyone in Minnesota.
- Patients should be empowered to ask questions of health care professionals and systems so they can make informed choices about health care.
- Clear communication increases patient safety.
- Health literacy is a strong predictor of health status.
- Educational strategies and techniques increase clear communication with patients.
- Health literacy principles and programs can have greater impact when tailored to the needs of all communities.

We value:

- The power of collaboration with health care organizations to help promote health literacy
- The support of community organizations who strive to improve the health literacy of their communities
- Evidence-based approaches to health literacy

Our mission is *to improve the health of all Minnesotans through clear communication.*

Goals:

- Educate health care providers about health literacy
- Empower consumers to ask for clear health communication
- Share health literacy resources

Responding to the problem

We know that health literacy can predict health status and that educational strategies and techniques to increase understanding with all patients will make a difference. When patients do not understand the information health care providers are giving them, patient safety is compromised. When patients do not understand, they are often unable to speak up about their care, be advocates for themselves, or make informed choices about their health care.

By uniting in a statewide collaborative effort with monthly networking and educational meetings, MHLP members call attention to the challenge of low health literacy in a coordinated and cost-effective fashion. Together we can increase understanding and lead people towards better health.

Our members and supporters include:

Allina Hospitals and Clinics	Metropolitan Health Plan
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota	Midwest Medical Insurance Company
Independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association	Minnesota Alliance for Patient Safety
Center for Cross Cultural Health	Minnesota Department of Health
Centra Care Health System	Center for Health Promotion
Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota	Minnesota Literacy Council
Fairview Health Services	Olmsted Medical Center
Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare	Park Nicollet Health Services
Health Law Institute,	Pediatric Home Service
Hamline University School of Law	Stratis Health
HealthPartners	UCare
Hennepin County Medical Center	United Health Group
Hennepin Faculty Associates	University of Minnesota Health Sciences Library
Medica	Way to Grow, Minneapolis

MHLP accomplishments include:

- Increased **health literacy awareness** within member organizations
- Organized presentations from local experts and produced **best practice white papers** on these topics:
 - Low Health Literacy: Implications for Safe Medication Use
 - Creating a Business Case for Health Literacy
 - Health Literacy and Informed Consent
- **Published articles** in MN Health Care News and MN Physician
- Gained **national exposure** through distribution of fact sheet to America's Health Insurance Plans (AHIP) Health Literacy Task Force
- Created a **website** that includes information about the partnership, health literacy resources, best practices, white papers, etc.
- One of first recipients of **Building Healthier Communities Award** from StratisHealth
- Piloted **consumer awareness program** based on AskMe3 with ESL learning at the Minnesota Literacy Council
- Piloted **provider training program** based on AMA Help Patients Understand materials with staff at Way to Grow, Minneapolis
- Recipient of **National Libraries of Medicine grant** for Health Literacy Program for Minnesota Seniors (HeLP MN Seniors) a joint effort with University of Minnesota Medical Libraries and senior living community
- Awarded one **AmeriCorps* VISTA** to explore ways to utilize social media to empower patients and increase awareness of health literacy and MHLP

For more information, visit our website at <http://healthlit.themlc.org>, or contact MHLP chair, Alisha Ellwood at 651-662-0986 or by email at Alisha_Ellwood@bluecrossmn.com.