Health Literacy and Best Practices for Population Health

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Overview of Today

• 30 minutes:
  • Defining health literacy
  • Best practices
  • Available tools
  • Horowitz Center’s work

• 20 minutes: Discussion
Let’s take stock
patient-centered care

equity

informed

sustainability

social determinants

population health

healthy living

culture of health
But there’s a **GAP**

Community-level health literacy infrastructure
What We Can Achieve

• More people engaged in prevention
• More patients & caregivers prepared to learn about & take care of their conditions
• Higher quality, safer & equitable care systems
• System-level changes for population health
Health literacy issues are often invisible
Health Literacy Issues Too Often Off-Loaded on Most Vulnerable

- Lower education
- Lower income
- Older adults
- Racial and ethnic minorities
- Non-native speakers of English
Why is health literacy a healthcare and public health problem?
Confusion Accessing & Participating in Care Processes

Patient’s continuum of confusion

- Pre-visit Scheduling the appointment
- Pre-visit Visit reason, obtain records, directions
- In office, PP Registration, new forms, insurance
- In office, PP Problem, health status, history
- See Clinician Med list, sources of care
- See Clinician Adjust/Add med, new Tests or referrals
- With Clinician Adjust/Add med, new Tests or referrals
- Checkout New tests, samples, instructions
- Checkout Schedule f/u, referrals, insurance, billing

Health Literacy and Patient Safety, AMA Foundation, 2007
Marylanders Speak

• UMD students and campus visitors reflect on health literacy issues

• https://sph.umd.edu/center/hchll/voices-health-literacy
Healthy People 2030

• Health literacy occurs when a society provides accurate health information and services that people can easily find, understand, and use to inform their decisions and actions.

www.healthypeople.gov
What to Do

• We take responsibility for making it easy for the public, patients, families, caregivers to understand and get what they need
Best Practices: Organization Level

- Assess programs for health literacy barriers
- Partner with local services to learn about community information needs
- Enact and enforce policies and practices
Best Practices: Day-to-Day

• Follow plain language and health literacy guidelines
  – Federal Plain Language Guidelines
  – Clear Communication Index

• Get feedback from your audience
  – Materials
  – Oral communication
  – Programs
Best Practice Tools – Organizations

- **HLE2 The Health Literacy Environment of Hospitals and Health Centers**
- **AHRQ Health Literacy Universal Precautions Toolkit**
- **Always Use Teach-back!**
- **Building Health Literate Organizations: A Guidebook to Achieving Organizational Change**
Best Practice Tools – Day-to-Day

- Federal Plain Language Guidelines
- CDC Clear Communication Index
- CMS Toolkit for Making Written Material Clear and Effective
Horowitz Center’s Work

• 3 arms: research, education, service
• Health Literacy Maryland
  – LHIC visits
• PreventionLink
  – Diabetes and heart disease prevention
• HealthyMe/MiSalud
  – Smartphone app for disease prevention and health promotion
More Information

• Horowitz Center for Health Literacy: www.healthliteracy.umd.edu

• Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) health literacy website: www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy

• Federal plain language website: www.plainlanguage.gov
Let’s discuss!

Health literacy in Cecil County