

1.6 Health Literacy Stakeholder Chart: Who's Involved in the Health Literacy Movement?

The table below lists some of the many organizations, professions, and government bodies involved in the U.S. health literacy (HL) movement; health literacy activities each is involved in, and perspectives that guide their involvement in health literacy. ESOL programs can use this information to develop partnership ideas and to inform interdisciplinary discussion and proposal writing.

Stakeholder	HL Activities	Some Goals of HL Work
Health care providers	Learning about health literacy is voluntary for the majority of practicing health care providers. The topic is included in continuing education offerings and some malpractice insurance renewal testing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve patient- provider communication • Improve patient understanding of health education materials • Promote medication safety • Improve treatment adherence • Improve patient understanding of treatment options • Reduce medical errors
Health care provider systems (e.g., hospital systems, managed care systems, primary care practice systems)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary, but influenced by 2012 Joint Commission accreditation requirements on patient-centered communication • Some provider systems (hospitals, primary care practice systems) are training staff on health literacy and examining system practices and print information for patient-centeredness and readability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve patient- provider communication • Improve patient understanding of health education materials • Promote medication safety • Improve treatment adherence • Reduce medical errors • Meet re-accreditation criteria (hospitals) • Comply with federal CLAS standards • Reduce lawsuits



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Medical and nursing schools	<p>Many medical and nursing schools are including health literacy in their curricula so new students are learning about health literacy as they enter practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train new providers in clear health communication techniques as they enter practice • Sensitize new providers to barriers to health information and care experienced by vulnerable populations • Conduct research on effective health literacy interventions
Public health academic programs and health departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the forefront: Health Literacy Studies program at Harvard School of Public Health under leadership of Rima Rudd • Research and publish on the issues that contribute to low health literacy, its scope and impact, and effective interventions • Public health educators strive to provide health information to vulnerable communities in plain language and culturally appropriate formats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase knowledge base on health literacy as a public health challenge; in doing so, discover new ways to improve public health, raise public awareness and inform health policy • Reach vulnerable communities with health education and services to reduce health disparities
Pharmaceutical companies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some pharmaceutical companies have sponsored health literacy education and research initiatives • The pharmaceutical industry is exploring simplification of prescription labeling and print information for consumers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce medication errors • Increase medication adherence • Raise awareness of health literacy and clear communication strategies among health care providers



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Institute of Medicine, National Academies of Science	Published seminal reports on health literacy, among them: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How Can Health Care Organizations Become More Health Literate?</i> (2012) • <i>Health Literacy: A Prescription to End Confusion</i> (2004) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This independent nonprofit organization brings together scholars on health literacy to “provide authoritative advice to decision makers and the public.”
Joint Commission (accrediting body for U.S. Hospitals)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiated new accreditation criteria for hospitals on health literacy in <i>Advancing Effective Communication, Cultural Competence, and Patient-and-Family Centered Care: A Roadmap for Hospitals</i> • Published papers on health literacy and its connection to patient safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain high care standards in U.S. hospitals • Improve patient safety in U.S. hospitals
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS) An Agency for Healthcare research and Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funds health care research relating to health literacy and cultural competency • Publishes articles on these topics online for patients and providers Published <i>Health Literacy Universal Precautions Toolkit</i> for health care providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote safety, quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of health care • Identify best practices and provide information and tools to assist health care, policy makers and the public
US DHHS Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Published the <i>National Action Plan to Improve Health Literacy</i> (2010), which set forth 7 goals for improving health literacy in the U.S. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve U.S. public health through health promotion; prevention of disease, injury, and disability; and preparedness for new health threats

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US DHHS Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funds health literacy research • Maintains health literacy blog and webpage • Educates public health field and others on health literacy • Active leader in interdisciplinary efforts to understand low health literacy and mitigate its negative health impact 	
US DHHS National Institutes of Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funds health literacy research • Promotes health literacy through Clear Communication Initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advance the evidence base on low health literacy's impact and interventions • Improve communication through plain language and cultural competency
National Network of Libraries of Medicine	<p>Member libraries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop partnerships with CBOs, adult literacy and ESOL programs, K-12 schools, programs for the elderly, health care organizations, and others • Provide health literacy trainings for partner organizations and the public • Identify, collect, and provide to public health information resources to meet health literacy needs (e.g., culturally and linguistically appropriate information; information in easy-to read formats) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access to health information so members of the public can make informed health decisions • Raise awareness of health literacy within the public and the health care system • Identify and provide health information resources to assist with health literacy needs (e.g., culturally and linguistically appropriate information; information in easy-to-read formats) • Provide outreach to hard-to-reach populations



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Medical Interpreters	While they don't necessarily call it health literacy work, trained interpreters help LEP patients and their families understand clinical communication with health care providers and navigate health care.	<p>Support CLAS standards</p> <p>Promote clear health communication</p> <p>Promote cultural competency</p>
Public libraries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide access to easy-to-read health information for the general public, including Internet access • Participate in health literacy partnerships and initiatives to raise public health literacy awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote community awareness of health literacy • Identify and provide health information resources to assist with health literacy needs (e.g., culturally and linguistically appropriate information; information in easy-to-read formats)
Adult education programs (public ABE and ESOL programs and literacy organizations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often provide health literacy instruction in their programs • Participate in health literacy partnerships and initiatives in their communities or through national organizations; participate in regional health literacy consortia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve learner understanding of health communication and printed information • Improve learner ability to communicate in health care scenarios • Empower learners to function effectively for themselves and their families in the U.S. health care system



Stakeholder	HL Activities	Some Goals of HL Work
Literacy organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in regional health literacy consortia and partnerships to advocate for learner needs and share learner experiences • Train volunteers in health literacy instruction • Develop health literacy curricula 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help learners improve their lives by improving their functional literacy skills and English language skills
Places of worship	Some places of worship participate in public health initiatives and/or bring health education and services to their congregations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide health education and promote health of congregations
Health insurance companies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some health insurance companies have foundations which have funded health literacy initiatives (including initiatives with adult literacy and ESOL programs). • Health insurance companies have begun to provide consumers with a plain language Summary of Benefits and Coverage and a health insurance glossary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase efficiency and cost-effectiveness of care • Improve health care provider communication • Increase consumers' engagement of self-management of their health care • Improve consumer health status • Comply with provisions of the Affordable Care Act
Health care social workers	While they don't necessarily call it health literacy work, health care social workers advocate for clients' communication needs in various health care settings, help empower clients to identify and advocate for their own needs in health care, help connect clients with needed care resources, and educate clients on health care system navigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide resources and support vulnerable health care clients and families • Empower clients around accessing and navigating health care and related services



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Community-based social service organizations	Many government and non-government social service providers outside of the healthcare system help clients access, navigate, and understand the health care system and communication with health care providers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support vulnerable clients in meeting basic life needs
Health writers/editors	Write simpler health information for the public in the form of articles, brochures, web content, etc., by taking up plain language practices and by evaluating readability levels of text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide clear health information for consumers
Health literacy specialists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From a variety of professional backgrounds in education and health care • Evaluate systems, practices, and publications for health literacy sensitivity • Train health care professionals, government, and the public on health literacy, cultural competency, and clear health communication • Develop health education materials and curricula for health care and education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness of health literacy issues in the health care system and the public • Provide services to support health care and education in health literacy efforts



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