

October is Health Literacy Month
Why Health Literacy?

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Newsletter Number 3 - October 2017

October is Health Literacy Month

There are many things we can do every month to advance health literacy, in our organization or among our friends and colleagues. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Tell one other person about the importance of health literacy.
- When talking about health, use [plain language](#) that is easy to understand.
- Identify a technical term or difficult word you often use, and replace it with something easier: “adverse event” → bad reaction
- Revise a document / handout you use with clients or patients.
- Promote “[Ask me 3](#)” – three questions that help a person understand their medical information

There is a website for [Health Literacy Month](#), created by Helen Osborn, a long-time supporter of health literacy. There is a logo you can use with the motto “Finding the right words for better health.” Tools posted on this website include an article on libraries and health literacy, plus a link to “What lawyers need to know about health literacy” in the Michigan Bar Journal.

Arizona Health Literacy Coalition

The most important goal for the AZ Health Literacy Coalition is increasing awareness of health literacy in Arizona: why is it important, and what can we all do to improve health literacy. This includes health care providers using proven techniques, such as teach-back and plain language. It also includes tools for everyone, such as knowing what questions to ask. Special topics we are addressing include hospital discharge/care transitions and Do Not Resuscitate directives (DNR/orange form).

We continue to have regular conference calls every other month. Everyone interested in health literacy is invited to participate; contact us for details.

Next conference call: Tuesday December 10, 2017 (2 pm).

Learn more about the [Arizona Health Literacy Coalition](#).

Please forward this newsletter to others; to subscribe, visit www.azhealthliteracy.org/join or subscribe [here](#).

Health Literacy Basics: Why take time for health literacy?

When talking about health and health care, always begin with the idea that the other person does not know anything. People do not get offended if you use plain language and avoid technical jargon. You can adjust your language to each individual as you get to know them better. Remember:

- Over a third of adults may have difficulty with common health tasks, such as following directions on a prescription drug label.
 - Limited health literacy affects all racial and ethnic groups.
 - Even adults with a college degree can have limited health literacy.
 - All adults get more health information from radio, TV, family, friends and health professionals than from print. Keep printed messages short and easy to read! (Adapted from: [Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion: America's Health Literacy](#).)
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Events - News

Open house at the Caregiver House, November 4, 2017

[FSL, Phoenix AZ](#)

IHA 17th Annual Health Literacy Conference May 9-11, 2018

[Irvine, California](#)

AZ Health Literacy Coalition Newsletters:

March 2017: Ask me 3; What is health literacy

June 2017: Health Literacy and Older Adults, What is Plain Language

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