

# **Health Literacy**

## **The Intersection between Skills of Individuals & Demands of Health Systems**

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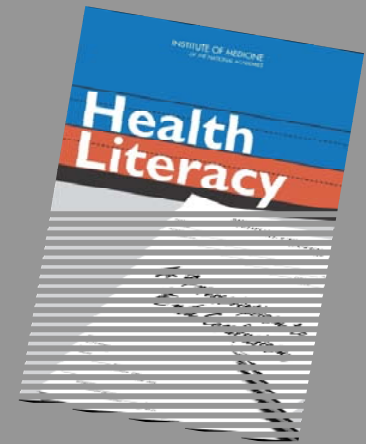
# Introduction

Partnership  
Assumptions

# Partnership

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- Modeling collaborative action: HSPH & LAC
- Perspectives: Skills/Demands
- Building on the IOM report  
Health Literacy: the interaction  
between skills of individuals  
and demands of the health sector



# Assumption: Critical Role of Literacy

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Literacy influences one's ability to access information and to navigate the highly literate environments of modern society

# Assumption: Mismatch

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## Skills

Significant numbers of adults in all industrialized nations are limited in their ability to use everyday materials to accomplish everyday tasks

## Demands

World wide, we see an increased demand from complex health care systems & increased responsibility for individuals interacting with health care systems

Adult Literacy and Lifeskills Surveys, 2003

# Agenda

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- Part 1: Demands of Health Systems
  - Introduction & Overview
  - Change: Example & Discussion
  - Partnerships: Example & Discussion
- Part 2: Skills of Individuals
  - Introduction & Overview
  - Change: Example & Discussion
  - Partnerships: Example & Discussion

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# Part 1

## Demands of Health Systems

# Literacy in Health Contexts

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- Print Skills
  - Reading
  - Writing
- Oral Exchange
  - Speaking
  - Listening
- Calculation
  - Basic math
  - Measures
  - Concepts
- Background knowledge
- Cross cultural communication

# Demands & of Health Sector

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## Overview

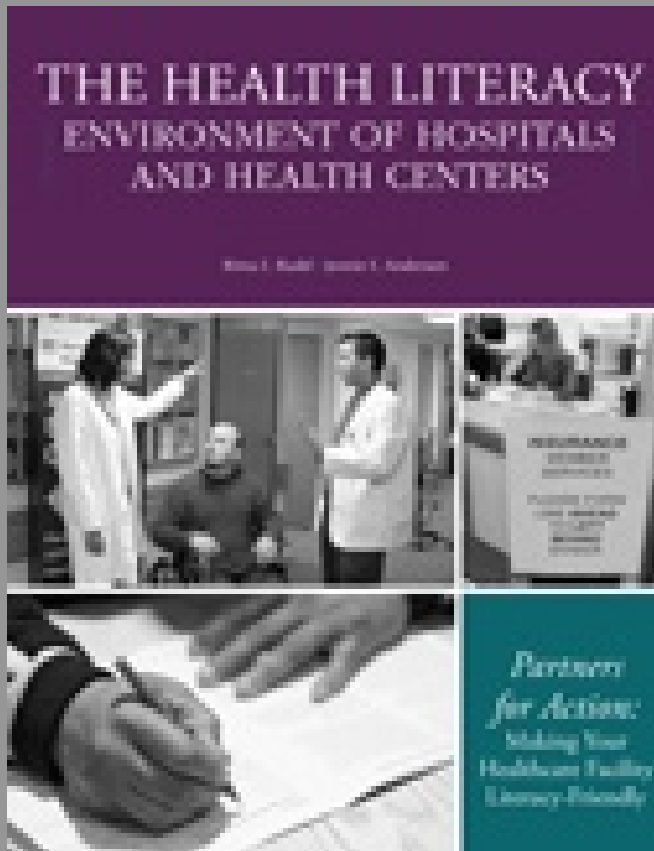
- Literacy environment
  - Needed skills
  - Navigation barriers
- Literacy Friendly Environment
- Ameliorative Action

# Demands of the Health Sector

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## Change

- Example: Walkabout & Assessment Tool
- Discussion Questions:
  - Identify barriers
  - Identify leverage points
  - Identify policy opportunities



- How 'literacy friendly' are healthcare settings?
  - Do words hamper access?
  - Where do we find barriers?
  - Can barriers be removed?
- What ameliorative action can be taken?
  - Staff training & CE

# Demands of the Health Sector

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## Partnerships

- Example: NYC Health Literacy Initiative
- Discussion Questions
  - With whom?
  - To what end?
  - How?

# Partnership Activities

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- Analyze health related activities and concepts
  - Correct faulty assumptions
  - Deconstruct activities
  - Explain concepts
  - Develop appropriate tools
- Build Argument for Change in Practices and Procedures
  - Demystify medicine and public health
  - Shift locus of responsibility
- Advocate for Modified Regulations
- Support education
  - Influence professional training
  - Build skills related to adult activities

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# Part 2

## Skills of Individuals

# Skills of Individuals

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## Overview

- Literacy skills of US adults
- Literacy skills needed for health activities
- Building health literacy skills in the adult education sector

# Skills of Individuals

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## Change


- Example: Health Literacy Study Circles
- Discussion Questions:


# Adult Education: Health Literacy Skills



Health Activities	Tasks	Tools	Skills
<p><b>Systems Navigation</b> e.g. make &amp; keep appointment</p>	<p>Locate agencies Find services Understand rights Advocate</p>	<p>Signs Maps Medical history forms Statements of rights and responsibilities, Informed consent Booklets Instructions</p>	<p>Read &amp; Use Tools Maps Forms Read for relevant information Listen Present Ask questions</p>



Health Activities	Tasks	Tools	Skills
<p><b>Early Prevention &amp; Screening</b></p> 	<p>Determine risk Schedule activities Follow directions Prep Look for results Follow up</p>	<p>Postings Announcements Articles Risk charts Family history forms Risk benefit analysis Letters Calendars</p>	<p>Read Directions Consent Results  Calculate Risk Schedule &amp; keep appointments</p>

Health Activities	Tasks	Tools	Skills
<p><b>Manage a Chronic Disease</b></p> 	<p>Monitor symptoms measure Follow plan</p>	<p>Peak flow meter Asthma plan</p>	<p>Use tools Determine safe range Read plan Locate info •</p>
	<p>Take medicine</p>	<p>Medicine labels</p>	<p>Read Differentiate Calculate Determine dose</p>

# Skills of Individuals

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## Partnerships

- Example: LAC & HHC
- Discussion Questions
  - Points of entry
  - Benefits to institutions
  - Benefits to patients

# Partnership Activities

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- Health collaborative conferences
- Education and workforce development exchanges
- Town/Gown research & program partnerships
- Skill Development
- Community tours
- Walkabouts
- Screening programs
- Grand rounds
- Guest speakers in literacy programs

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# Conclusions

Change Environment  
Increase Skills

# Summary

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Health sector expectations and demands exceed adults' literacy skills

- **Materials:** Most health materials are poorly written and poorly designed [over 800 studies]
- **Skills:** A majority of adults do not have the literacy skills to use health related print materials and tools with accuracy and consistency
- **Challenge:** Health activities demand high level literacy skills

# Teaching and Modeling

## Build Skills & Change Protocols

- Adult Education Teachers: Incorporate health related materials & teach skills, advise health sector
- Health Professionals: Use plain words, check with teach back methods, improve tools, create shame free environments, modify expectations , support education

