Health Literacy Iowa



Our Mission: Promote and facilitate the ability of all Iowans to use effective communication to optimize their health.

What Do We Do?

- Create action to improve health literacy throughout Iowa
- Demonstrate the critical role of health literacy in health care reform
- Involve people, communities, and organizations to improve health literacy
- Help health care providers and students learn and use skills that support health literacy
- Help organizations identify and address their top health literacy needs
- Share health literacy tools and resources
- Participate in projects that improve health literacy
- Participate in health literacy research
- Collaborate with local, state, regional, and national partners

Who Can Help?

Doctors, nurses, and other health professionals can help by:

- Talking with patients and families in a way they understand
- Giving clear, simple health information
- Understanding and respecting differences in cultures
- Having trained interpreters for those who need them
- Providing health materials in accessible formats
- Using patient-friendly procedures and signs

Employers, payers, and policy-makers can help by:

- Using Plain Language principles when talking and writing about health
- Using strategies to support clear health communication

Patients, families, and the public can help by:

- Asking questions when talking with their doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health provider
- Explaining information back to health providers to be sure they were clear
- Sharing suggestions to make health communication better

What is Health Literacy?

Health literacy is finding, understanding, evaluating, communicating, and using health information to make good health decisions. Anyone can have trouble with health information, depending on the circumstances. More than one out of three lowans do not have the reading, writing, or life skills to do this well. Low health literacy contributes to poor health outcomes.



By improving communication and participating in innovative programs, *Health Literacy lowa* is working to improve the health of all lowans.



For more information, contact: Mary Ann Abrams, MD, MPH Ph: (515) 471-9788 abramsma@ihs.org

Supported By: Des Moines University;
DeskActive; Iowa Department of Education;
Iowa Department of Public Health; Iowa
Geriatric Education Center, University of Iowa;
Iowa Healthcare Collaborative; Iowa Health
System; Iowa Hospital Association; Iowa
Medical Society; Iowa Nurses Association;
Iowa Pharmacy Association; Iowa/Nebraska
Primary Care Association; Mercy Clinics, Inc.;
New Readers of Iowa; Principal Financial
Group; University of Iowa Center for
Disabilities and Development; University of
Northern Iowa Center on Health Disparities;
Wellmark Foundation