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Chief Content Expert and Multilingual Director
Health Literacy Innovations
September 18, 2025

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About Health Literacy Innovations (HLI)

Mission
Knowing that "literacy" is the single most important indicator of health outcomes, HLI was founded to create tools to help eliminate medical mistakes and confusion due to low health literacy.

Flagship Product
The Health Literacy Advisor (HLA) is the nation's first interactive health literacy software program

Goals
- Streamline the health literacy review process
- Replace inefficiency with technology and knowledge
- Empower communicators with the tools to create, produce, print, display, share, and advertise clear health information

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Today's Webinar Goals

Discuss:	How standards may influence patient communication
Share:	How to adhere to standards for health literacy and plain language
Apply:	How to evaluate consumer materials to meet standards

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About



and why they matter

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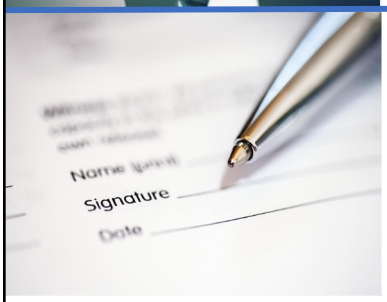
Understanding Standards



Standards:

- **Guide businesses** and others to adopt ethical and effective practices
- **Provide criteria** for testing, accreditation, and certification

https://www.iso.org/home.html#:~:text=ISO%3A%20the%20International%20Organization%20for,better%20–%20for%20everyone%2C%20everywhere.



A standard document:

- Is developed by a recognized body through consensus
- Defines how issues are addressed or implemented
- Provides clear rules, guidelines, requirements, and regulations

https://definitions.uslegal.com/s/standard-document/#:~:text=Standard%20document%20is%20defined%20as,which%20compliance%20is%20not%20mandatory

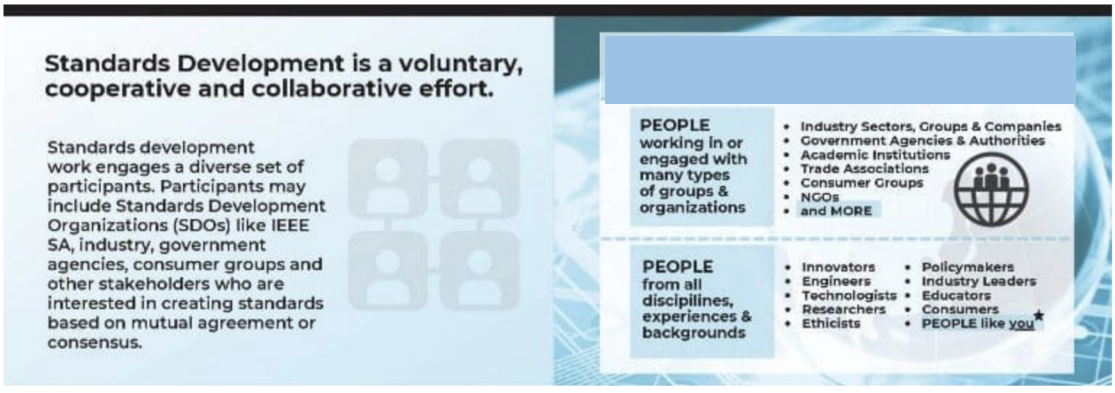
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Standards Development

Standards are developed through cooperation among committees, experts, forums, and government or regulatory organizations.

https://standards.ieee.org/beyond-standards/what-are-standards-why-are-they-important/#:~:text=Standards%20form%20the%20fundamental%20building,minded%20companies%20and%20other%20organizations.



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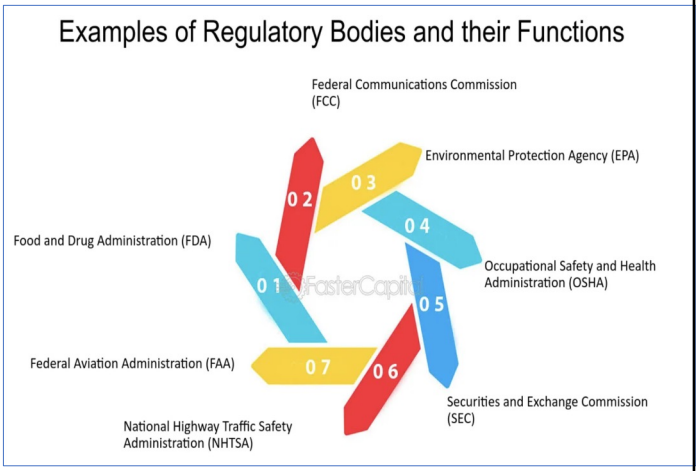
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Types and Examples of Health-Related Standards



Examples:

- **Quality & Patient Safety**
- **Health Data Security**
- **Health Information Technology - Health IT**
- **Patient Privacy Protection - HIPAA**
- **Fraud Prevention**

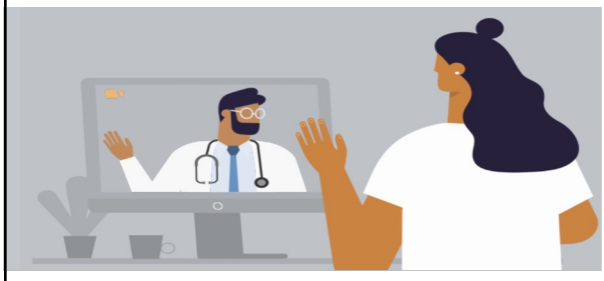


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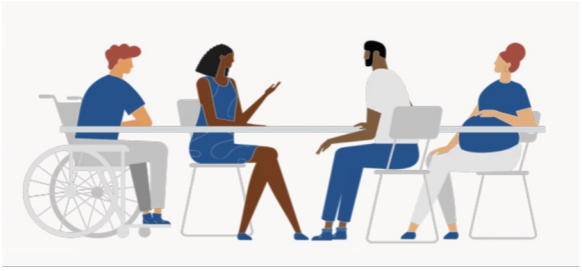
Why Standards Matter

Personal Level



- **Build Trust:** Ensure services are of good quality
- **Boost Safety:** Protect consumers
- **Facilitate Communication:** Between consumers and service providers

Organizational Level



- **Offers an Edge:** Help stay competitive
- **Can Help to Save Money:** May cut costs by improving efficiency and quality
- **Mitigates Risk:** May help to prevent liabilities

https://www.standardscoordinatingbody.org/standards-benefits

https://www.iso.org/iso-and-smes.html

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About



Health Literacy and Plain Language Standards

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Advisory!



While numerous studies document the benefits of standards in industries such as manufacturing, engineering, and health care in general, we did not find specific evidence that directly links health literacy standards to improved patient outcomes.

However, research reveals that using health literacy-related standards will improve health literacy.

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Brief Review:
Health Literacy (HL) & Plain Language (PL)



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What is Health Literacy

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Personal

Health literacy is the consumer's ability to:

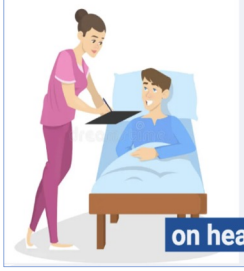


obtain
read
understand
and act
on health information and services

Brochures, consent forms, patient health information on the internet, health videos, etc.

Organizational

Health literacy is an institution's ability to equitably enable consumers to:



obtain
read
understand
and act
on health information and services

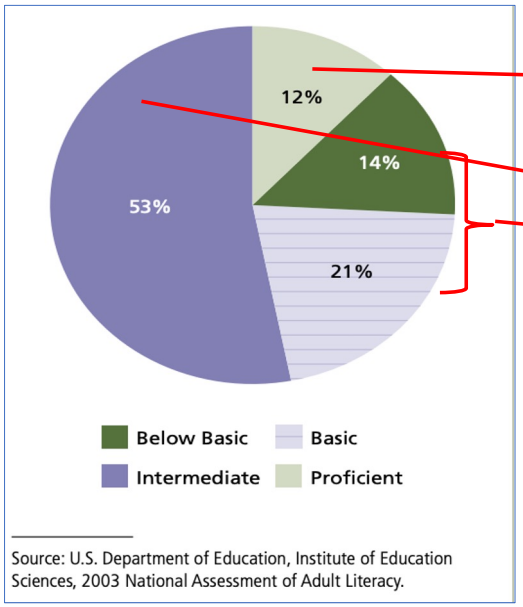
Hospital signage, health plan portal logins, system processes, provider communication skills, etc.

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The Health Literacy Problem



Source: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

12% Proficient

53% Intermediate

35% Low

88% Under the proficient health literacy level

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Low Health Literacy Impact

QUALITY OF CARE GOES DOWN!

Consumers with low health literacy:

- **Use more treatment** and emergency services
- **Have more hospital stays** and readmissions
- **Often cannot follow** their treatment
- **Have higher mortality** rates

Low health literacy keeps consumers from:

- **Preventing** health issues
- **Managing** current health problems
- **Understanding** health insurance forms
- **Engaging** actively in their health care

Low health literacy impacts more vulnerable consumers:

- With lower education levels
- Racial/ethnic minorities
- Uninsured
- Publicly insured
- Elders and people with special needs

Low health literacy is estimated to cost the U. S. $352 billion in 2025

This calculation is based on a 2003 estimate of $238 billion, adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Price Index (CPI) calculator.

HEALTH CARE COSTS GO UP

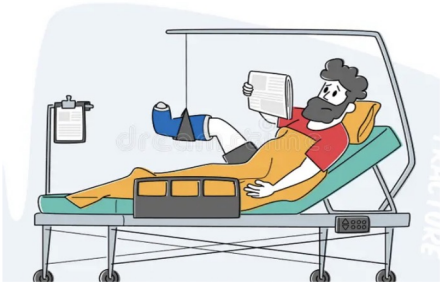
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What is Plain Language?



- Plain language is a form of writing and speaking designed to ensure the reader understands as quickly, easily, and completely as possible



- Plain language is used when a consumer needs to understand information and take action
- **Plain language is a technique to improve health literacy**

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Standards & Their Influence on Consumers



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HL & PL Standards Impact



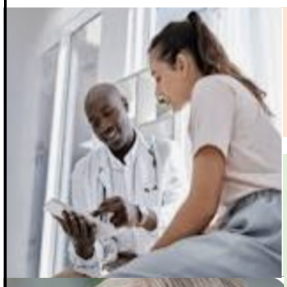
- Implementing HL & PL standards will help to address health literacy
- Health literacy programs help **increase health literacy levels**

People with high health literacy, known as functional health literacy, can understand health information and take action.

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Why are HL & PL Standards Important?





***Incorporating HL and PL standards* will help to create clear communication and health literacy interventions.**

Health literacy interventions increase the health literacy level

In turn, health literacy improvement leads to:

- Enhanced clarity: helps consumers understand their health information and the actions required
- Decreased costs, increased efficiency
- Increase consumer engagement
- Reduced health disparities
- Greater trust between consumers and the health care system
- **More equitable and effective care**
- **Improved patient safety and health outcomes**

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- **Reduces hospitalizations, emergency room visits, and costs associated with a web-based health literacy program**
  https://www.scholars.northwestern.edu/en/publications/reduced-hospitalizations-emergency-room-visits-and-costs-associat?utm_source=chatgpt.com



- **Health literacy–informed communication helps to reduce discharge medication errors in hospitalized children**
  https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2813929?utm_source=chatgpt.com



- **Adding educational HL programs to clinical visits for chronic disease patients increases knowledge, engagement, and healthier behaviors, which leads to better outcomes**
  https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/21925823/

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HL Health Industry Standards



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GOVERNMENT
Medicaid HLI Standards

Medicaid:

- No single federal standard; states set their own goals
- Common target: **3rd to 6th grade reading level**
- Best practices: plain language, visuals, limited key points, teach-back
- Focus on cultural & linguistic access, community partnerships, and user-friendly forms





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California: Medi-Cal Example

DHCS launched a new online experience for Medi-Cal members and potential applicants at my.medi-cal.ca.gov.

Emphasize:

- **Mobile-first** – built for phones, where most users access the web
- **Plain-language** – written at a sixth-grade reading level
- **Multilingual** – in 19 Medi-Cal languages to support California's diverse communities
- **Accessible** – fully usable by people with disabilities and assistive technologies
- **Streamlined** – focused only on member needs, with no extra clutter

This new online page is just the beginning and is part of a broader Web Transformation Project to make DHCS.ca.gov more human-centered, inclusive, and effective

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GOVERNMENT
CHIP HL Standards

CHIP – Children's Health Insurance Program:

- Promotes health literacy through quality improvement and family engagement
- Uses low-literacy applications for enrollment
- Provides culturally and linguistically appropriate services
- Encourages clear provider communication
- Integrates health literacy into care coordination and early literacy programs



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2025 HLI State Medicaid Health Literacy Standards Coming Soon!!!



- **This summer, HLI conducted a comprehensive survey of Medicaid state agencies' standards, requirements, and laws**
- **To receive the full report, please contact us at:**

HLI2025Medicaidsurvey@Healthliteracyinnovations.com

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Preliminary Findings: HLI Medicaid 2025 Survey

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National Survey of Medicaid Guidelines for Health Literacy

Overall, states differ in whether they define the required reading level as "plain language" or as "health literacy."

Select findings:

- About 44% states require anywhere from a 6th to 8th grade reading level
- Less than half, 44%, of states either did not have a required health literacy reading level for Medicaid, or there was not enough information to obtain whether there was a required reading level
- Two states, Washington and California, require a 6th grade reading level or below
- Georgia specifically requires a 7th-8th grade reading level for policy forms, and a 5th grade reading level for member-facing materials (handbooks, notices, brochures)
- Iowa and Kansas recommend an 8th grade and 6th grade reading level, respectively, but it is a recommendation, not a requirement



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Medicare HLI Standards

CMS – Medicare prioritizes usability, using best practices and interactive testing to ensure materials are accurate, accessible, and actionable

CMS Guidance for Beneficiary Communications:

- **Plain Language** – Required under the Plain Writing Act (2010)
- **Plan Materials** – Must be clear, culturally appropriate, and available in alternative formats
- **Language Access** – Translation and interpreter services required
- **Accessibility** – Section 508 ensures digital access for people with disabilities
- **Health Literacy** – Encourages clear tools, readability checks, and patient-centered practices (e.g., teach-back)

Bottom line:
While not labeled as "health literacy rules," these requirements collectively function as Medicare's health literacy standards



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Health & Human Services (HHS): Healthy People

Objectives:

- 2000: Adopted the first HL definition
- 2006: Health Literacy: A National Priority, Richard Carmona, M.D., M.P.H., Former U.S. Surgeon General
- 2010 and 2020: Added a HL definition and specific objectives
- **2030 Revised health literacy objectives:**
  - More adults would have their providers check their understanding
  - Fewer adults would report poor communication with providers
  - More adults would feel involved in care decisions
  - More people would find online medical records easy to understand
  - More adults with limited English proficiency say providers explain clearly
  - Improve overall population health literacy

https://odphp.health.gov/healthypeople/priority-areas/health-literacy-healthy-people-2030

2030, Revised HL Definition Goal:
"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."



https://odphp.health.gov/healthypeople/priority-areas/health-literacy-healthy-people-2030/history-health-literacy-definitions

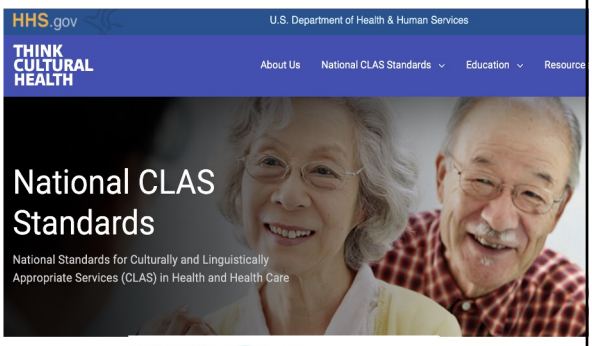
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National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) in Health and Health Care
Office of Minority Health

The 14 standards are intended to promote health, improve quality, and help eliminate health care disparities

Standards 5-8 are about communication and language:

5. Offer language assistance to individuals who have limited English proficiency and/or other communication needs, at no cost
6. Inform all individuals, in writing and orally, of the availability of language assistance
7. Ensure the competence of individuals providing language assistance
8. **Provide easy-to-understand digital and print materials and signage in the languages commonly used by the populations**





https://thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/assets/pdfs/EnhancedNationalCLASStandards_Revised_June2025.pdf

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Other Federal Government HL Initiatives

2004, Health Literacy: A Prescription to End Confusion - The National Academies Press

- Lay a foundation for addressing health literacy and creating guidelines

https://nap.nationalacademies.org/read/10883/chapter/1#xv

2006, Surgeon General's Workshop on Improving Health Literacy:

- Started the movement of standards for HL - The Joint Commission follows the trend
- Set some guidelines for the improvement of health literacy at the government level

https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK44256/#proc-healthlit.discussion.s1

2010, U.S. HHS- Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion:

Published *America's Health Literacy: Why We Need Accessible Health Information* – A summary of the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL)

- It presented the importance of creating guidelines **to close the gap between available health information and people's ability to use it for critical decisions**

https://www.ahrq.gov/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/health-literacy/dhhs-2008-issue-brief.pdf

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Other Federal Government HL Initiatives

- Promoted health literacy since 2000's
- Created "Simply Put" guidelines, health literacy tools, and training
- 2010, Developed the **National Action Plan to Improve Health Literacy**

The vision of this plan is to have a society that:

- Provides everyone with access to easy-to-read, accurate, and actionable health information
- Delivers person-centered services
- Supports lifelong skills to promote good health

https://odphp.health.gov/sites/default/files/2019-09/Health_Lit_Action_Plan_Summary.pdf

Health Literacy Universal Precautions Toolkit:

A tool to structure health information and services that **simplifies communication and confirms understanding for everyone:**

- Making offices and the health care system easier to navigate
- Supporting consumer efforts to improve their health
- Contains 23 guidelines to create easy-to-read materials

https://www.ahrq.gov/health-literacy/improve/precautions/index.html

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Clear and Simple

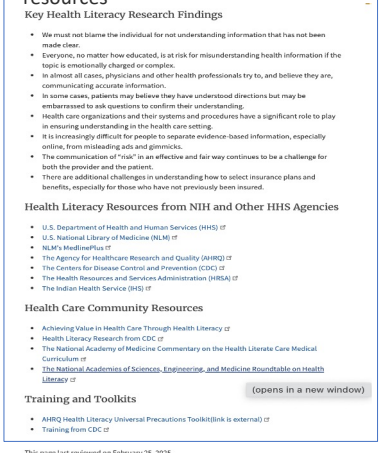
Outlines five standard steps for developing health information materials

Step 1: Define the Target Audience
Step 2: Conduct Target Audience Research
Step 3: Develop a Concept for the Product
Step 4: Develop Content and Visual Design Features
Step 5: Pretest and Revise Draft Materials

https://www.nih.gov/institutes-nih/nih-office-director/office-communications-public-liaison/clear-communication/clear-simple

Health Literacy

Provides definition, background, and resources


Key Health Literacy Research Findings

- We must not blame the individual for not understanding information that has not been made clear.
- Everyone, no matter how educated, is at risk for misunderstanding health information if the topic is emotionally charged or complex.
- In almost all cases, physicians and other health professionals try to, and believe they are, communicating accurate information.
- In some cases, patients may believe they have understood directions but may be embarrassed to ask questions to confirm their understanding.
- Health care organizations and their systems and procedures have a significant role to play in ensuring understanding in the health care setting.
- It is increasingly difficult for people to separate evidence-based information, especially online, from misleading ads and gimmicks.
- The communication of "risk" in an effective and fair way continues to be a challenge for both the provider and the patient.
- There are additional challenges in understanding how to select insurance plans and benefits, especially for those who have not previously been insured.

Health Literacy Resources from NIH and Other HHS Agencies

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
- U.S. National Library of Medicine (NLM)
- NLM's MedlinePlus
- The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)
- The Indian Health Service (IHS)

Health Care Community Resources

- Achieving Value in Health Care Through Health Literacy
- Health Literacy Research from CDC
- The National Academy of Medicine Commentary on the Health Literate Care Medical Curriculum
- The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Roundtable on Health Literacy

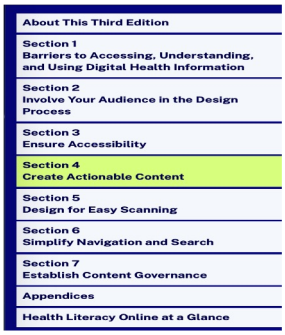
(opens in a new window)

Training and Toolkits

- AHRQ Health Literacy Universal Precautions Toolkit(link is external)
- Training from CDC

Digital Health Literacy

It centers on people-first design, accessibility across digital devices, and setting standards


About This Third Edition
Section 1
Barriers to Accessing, Understanding, and Using Digital Health Information
Section 2
Involve Your Audience in the Design Process
Section 3
Ensure Accessibility
Section 4
Create Actionable Content
Section 5
Design for Easy Scanning
Section 6
Simplify Navigation and Search
Section 7
Establish Content Governance
Appendices
Health Literacy Online at a Glance

https://odphp.health.gov/healthliteracyonline

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INDUSTRY
The Joint Commission
An accreditation organization for health care organizations and programs

The Joint Commission

Since 2006:

- Integrates standards into **existing rules on communication,** health literacy, and patient-centered care
- Emphasizes clear, understandable communication for all patients



https://www.jointcommission.org/en-us/accreditation/accreditation-360

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The Joint Commission

SPECIFIC HL & PL Standards

Patient-Centered Communication Standards (2024 Updates)

PC.02.01.21: Hospitals must communicate effectively, address **health literacy, language, and sensory or cognitive needs.**

- Use Plain language in:
  - Emergency alerts
  - Informed consent
  - Telehealth programs
  - Accessible health materials
- Document patient communication needs and preferred language in medical records
- Adapt content to patient needs, such as using visuals, large print, or audio
- Apply teach-back to confirm the patient's comprehension
- Apply health equity practices

https://www.jointcommission.org/en-us/accreditation/accreditation-360

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Utilization Review Accreditation Commission

Accreditations/Certifications set of standards applicable to a certain function(s) for health care organizations and health plans

Specific HL & PL Standards

- **Plain Language: Patient materials must be written in simple, easy-to-understand language at a 6th to 8th-grade reading level**
- **Staff Training:**

  Health care staff who interact with consumers receive relevant training and guidance on health literacy principles
- **Cultural & Linguistic Sensitivity:**

  Services and materials must accommodate a diversity of patients
- **Consumer Empowerment**:

  Ensure patients receive and understand the information they need to promote their health
- **Health Equity Integration:**
  Health literacy is seen as a core component of health equity

https://www.urac.org/accreditation-cert/health-equity-accreditation/

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The National Committee for Quality Assurance

Accreditation for health plans, health care providers, and practices

SPECIFIC HL & PL Standards

CM 04 - The care plan is written at a health literacy level accessible to the patient

- **Data collection of characteristics like race, ethnicity, and language**
- **Patient-centered care that meets the cultural and linguistic needs of patients**
- **Community engagement with services and practices that are culturally and linguistically appropriate**

- Include health information that is understandable and actionable
- Improve health literacy and enable individuals to make informed health decisions
- Ensure that the patient understands his/her condition(s), goals, and plans to improve their health

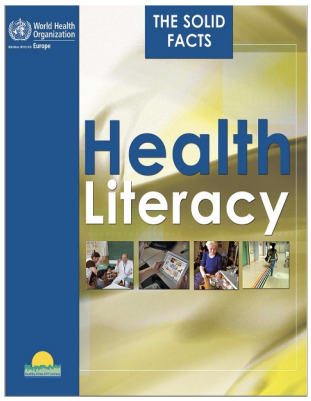
https://www.ncqa.org/programs/health-care-providers-practices/patient-centered-medical-home-pcmh/faqs/all/?faq=000023169

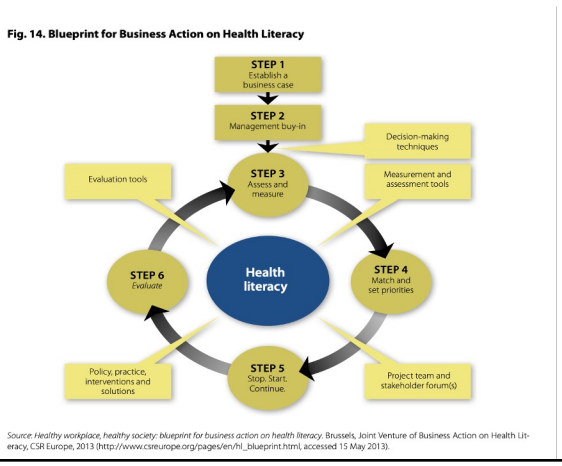
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World Health Organization (WHO) Health Literacy the Solid Facts

Emphasize a broad understanding of health literacy that goes beyond individual skills to include the role of health systems, media, and society

https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/health-literacy - :~:text=Health literacy requires inclusive and,to and use health information



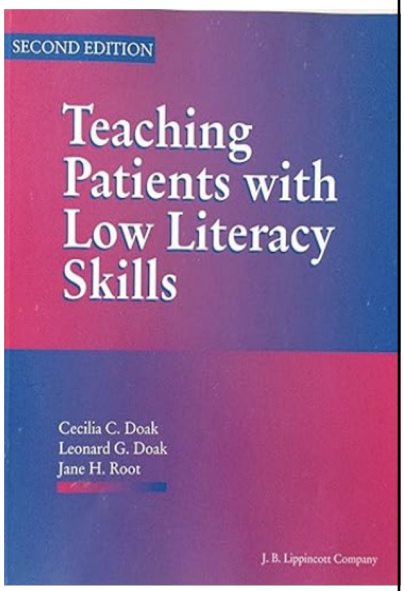


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Guidelines by Health Literacy Leaders

- 1980 – Cecilia (Ceci) and Leonard (Len) Doak's work helped the health literacy movement to evolve
- Books: *Teaching Patients with Low Literacy Skills, first (1985) and second (1995) editions with Jane Root:*
  - Lays the main foundation and adds guidelines on how to improve patient-provider communication:
    - Simplify Language
    - Utilize Visuals
    - Write Clearly
      - **Assess Readability and Suitability (why the HLA includes both)**
    - Assess Comprehension
    - Be Patient-Centered



https://www.healthliteracyinnovations.com/resources/industry_publications/

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Plain Language Laws



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Public Law 111 - 274 - Plain Writing Act of 2010

Requires:
All U.S. federal agencies to use plain language in documents that the public needs to understand to obtain benefits or services, such as:

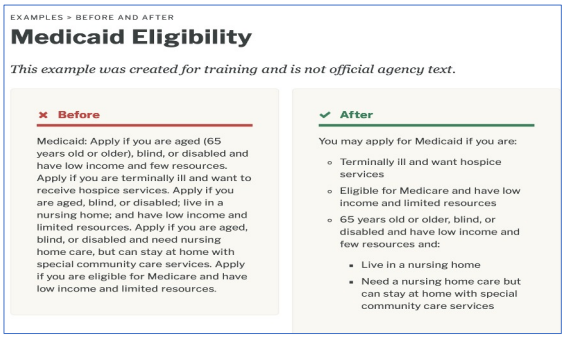
- Using health care, i.e. the Veterans Administration health care
- Paying taxes
- Reading the *Federal Register*

Intent:

- Writing clearly so that people can easily find, understand, and use government information and services.
- Improve government effectiveness by making communication accessible to everyone
- Makes government information and services more accessible to the public

Important Websites:

- **Plain Language Website:** https://www.plainlanguage.gov/
- **Plain Language Act of 2010:**
- **https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/PLAW-111publ274**
- **Plain Language Guidelines:**
https://www.plainlanguage.gov/media/FederalPLGuidelines.pdf



EXAMPLES > BEFORE AND AFTER

Medicaid Eligibility

This example was created for training and is not official agency text.

Before

Medicaid: Apply if you are aged (65 years old or older), blind, or disabled and have low income and few resources. Apply if you are terminally ill and want to receive hospice services. Apply if you are aged, blind, or disabled; live in a nursing home; and have low income and limited resources. Apply if you are aged, blind, or disabled and need nursing home care, but can stay at home with special community care services. Apply if you are eligible for Medicare and have low income and limited resources.

After

You may apply for Medicaid if you are:

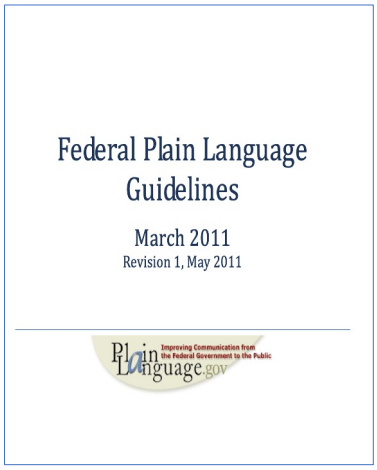
- Terminally ill and want hospice services
- Eligible for Medicare and have low income and limited resources
- 65 years old or older, blind, or disabled and have low income and few resources and:
  - Live in a nursing home
  - Need a nursing home care but can stay at home with special community care services

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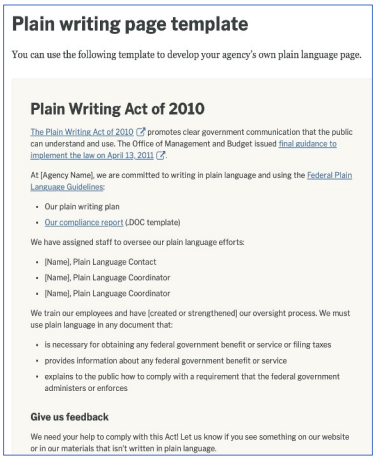
Plain Writing Act of 2010
Templates to Use

PL Guidelines in Writing



https://www.plainlanguage.gov/media/FederalPLGuidelines.pdf

Template of PL Website



Plain writing page template

You can use the following template to develop your agency's own plain language page.

Plain Writing Act of 2010

The Plain Writing Act of 2010 promotes clear government communication that the public can understand and use. The Office of Management and Budget issued final guidance to implement the law on April 13, 2011.

At [Agency Name], we are committed to writing in plain language and using the Federal Plain Language Guidelines:

- Our plain writing plan
- Our compliance report (.DOC template)

We have assigned staff to oversee our plain language efforts:

- [Name], Plain Language Contact
- [Name], Plain Language Coordinator
- [Name], Plain Language Coordinator

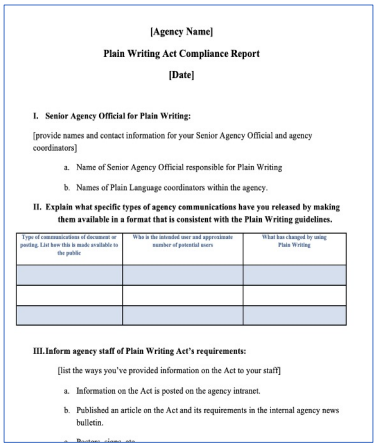
We train our employees and have [created or strengthened] our oversight process. We must use plain language in any document that:

- is necessary for obtaining any federal government benefit or service or filing taxes
- provides information about any federal government benefit or service
- explains to the public how to comply with a requirement that the federal government administers or enforces

Give us feedback

We need your help to comply with this Act! Let us know if you see something on our website or in our materials that isn't written in plain language.

Template of PL Compliance Report



[Agency Name]

Plain Writing Act Compliance Report

[Date]

I. Senior Agency Official for Plain Writing:

[provide names and contact information for your Senior Agency Official and agency coordinators]

a. Name of Senior Agency Official responsible for Plain Writing

b. Names of Plain Language coordinators within the agency.

II. Explain what specific types of agency communications have you released by making them available in a format that is consistent with the Plain Writing guidelines.

Type of communications or document or posting. List how this is made available to the public	Who is the intended user and approximate number of potential users	What has changed by using Plain Writing

III. Inform agency staff of Plain Writing Act's requirements:

[list the ways you've provided information on the Act to your staff]

a. Information on the Act is posted on the agency intranet.

b. Published an article on the Act and its requirements in the internal agency news bulletin.

https://www.plainlanguage.gov

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Putting It All Together:
How to Use HL/PL Standards, Guidelines, & Laws To Improve Health Literacy



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Easy Steps: Adhering to Standards for Health Literacy and Plain Language



- **Create and use your own HL & PL standards**
- **Use industry and government laws, standards, and guidelines as a baseline**
- **Use established, vetted tools to test readability and suitability**

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Health Literacy Innovations™

Creating Your Own HL & PL Standards



Ensure they are:

- **Relevant to health literacy:**
  - Provide specific value to benefit a consumer
- **Singular:**
  - Focus on a specific concept
- **Unambiguous:**
  - Are not subject to multiple interpretations
- **Consistent:**
  - Do not conflict with other documents within its family of standards
- **Auditable (measurable):**
  - Include a quantitative criterion showing that the standard was followed

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Applying Existing HL & PL Standards

Set standards to improve consumer skills:

- **Functional Literacy:**
  Work with consumers' reading, writing, speaking, and numeracy levels to process health information
- **Interactive Literacy:**
  Help consumers to apply their knowledge and use information to make informed decisions
- **Critical Literacy**
  Aid consumers in analyzing information quality and relevance
- **Communication Skills:**
  Assist consumers in accessing health care services and becoming engaged
  - https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC3292515/?utm_source=chatgpt.com
  - https://journals.lww.com/jinm/fulltext/2024/06040/understanding_the_concept_of_health_literacy__a.9.aspx?utm_source=chatgpt.com



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Applying Existing HL & PL Standards

Create standardization and consistency in health care organizations

Organizational Goals:

- Embed health literacy into mission, operations, and workforce
- Ensure clear communication at all levels
- Provide easy navigation
- Prioritize safety and quality
- Clearly explain coverage and costs

Apply the 10 Attributes of a Health Literate Organization



https://nam.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/BPH_Ten_HLit_Attributes.pdf

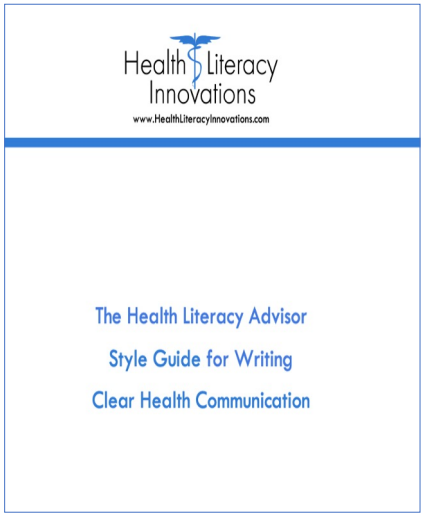
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Apply Plain Language Techniques

Health Literacy Innovations' 10 Plain Language Principles

1. Identify, involve, and write for the target audience
2. Define the behavioral objective(s) of the material
3. Organize content to guide readers logically with the important point first
4. Use simple language and short sentences
5. Avoid passive voice
6. Find and replace jargon and complex words
7. Check and document readability so it is at or lower than an 8th-grade level
8. Apply design to make content easy to find and understand
9. Guide the audience to take action
10. Adapt to your target diverse groups
    - Translate
    - Incorporate an acceptable design and visuals
    - Test with the target users

The HLA software includes a health literacy guide

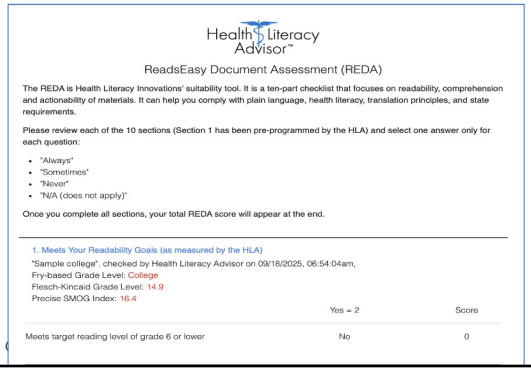


https://www.healthliteracyinnovations.com/products/pricing

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Apply Health Literacy Principles

- Use clear communication (oral) and simple education to help consumers navigate health information
- Ensure consumer health information is written at or below a **6th-grade reading level**
- The Health Literacy Advisor includes a complete suitability checklist for evaluating health literacy and plain language principles



Health Literacy Advisor™

ReadsEasy Document Assessment (REDA)

The REDA is Health Literacy Innovations' suitability tool. It is a ten-part checklist that focuses on readability, comprehension and actionability of materials. It can help you comply with plain language, health literacy, translation principles, and state requirements.

Please review each of the 10 sections (Section 1 has been pre-programmed by the HLA) and select one answer only for each question:

- "Always"
- "Sometimes"
- "Never"
- "N/A (does not apply)"

Once you complete all sections, your total REDA score will appear at the end.

1. Meets Your Readability Goals (as measured by the HLA)

"Sample college", checked by Health Literacy Advisor on 09/18/2025, 06:54:04am,
Fry-based Grade Level: College
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level: 14.9
Precise SMOG Index: 16.4

	Yes = 2	Score
Meets target reading level of grade 6 or lower	No	0

Make it easy to read and limit the amount of information:

- Break content into short sections with clear headings and bullets
- Avoid complex statistics, and keep it focused — less is more
- Check readability so it is at or lower than a 6th-grade level

Help readers find what they need:

- Highlight key points with summaries
- End with clear action steps — tell readers what to do next

Create content that motivates and connects:

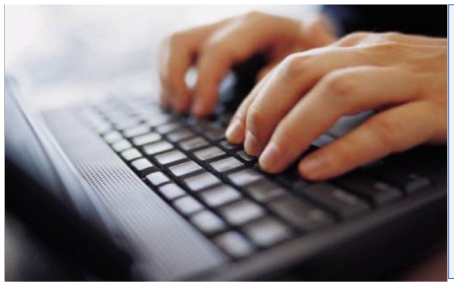
- Include relatable images so the audience sees themselves
- Share stories that reflect the audience's experiences and will draw people in
- Check appropriateness (suitability)

Motivate readers to take action:

- Use clear examples and explain why the information matters
- Tell readers exactly what to do - use action-oriented language
- Break steps down clearly and simply
- Keep the tone positive — focus on what to do, not what to avoid

A Tool to Assess and Improve

Readability + Usability + Health Literacy + More



One comprehensive solution!

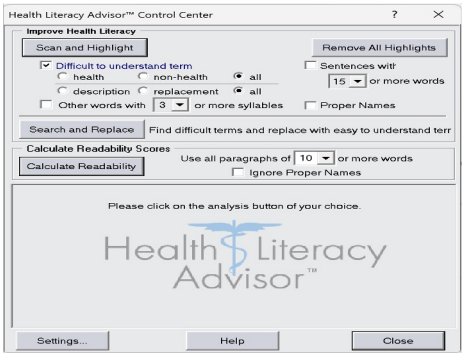
Health Literacy Advisor

https://www.healthliteracyinnovations.com/products/pricing

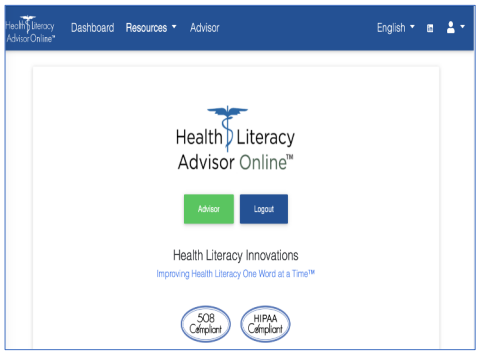
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The Health Literacy Advisor Two Platforms

HLA Desktop (Add-in to Word)



HLA Online (Web-based version)



Cleans documents before scoring readability, assuring accurate readability scores

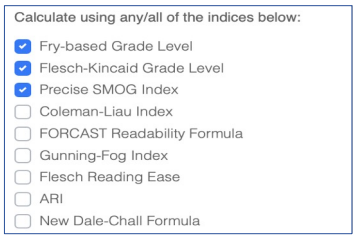
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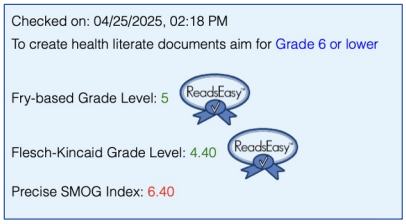
Health Literacy Advisor Features

Calculates Readability:

- Uses nine different readability indices in English and six in Spanish.
- Creates detailed reports
- Stamps results on the document
- Rewards users with a "ReadsEasy" stamp for achieving the 6th-grade reading level or lower

Assesses principles of plain language using the REDA – Reads Easy Document Assessment, a suitability tool.





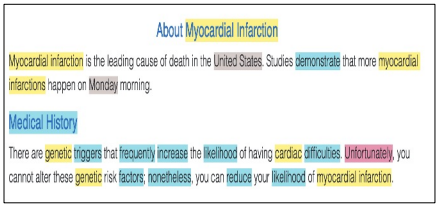
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Health Literacy Advisor Features

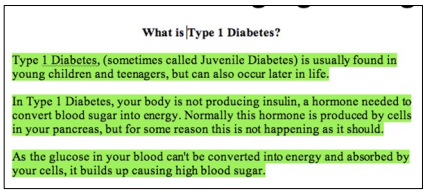
Highlights Words

- Long words by database
- Long words by syllable count
- Medical terms and jargon
- Proper names/nouns



Highlights Long Sentences

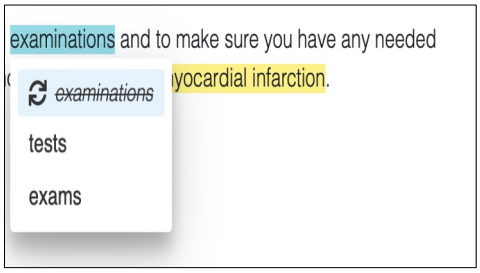
Long sentences with 10 words or more

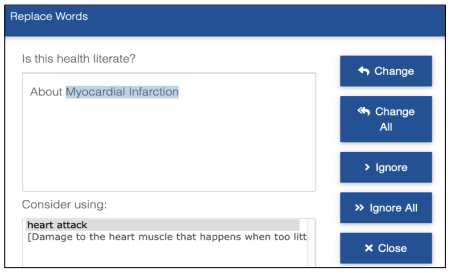


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Health Literacy Advisor Feature

- **Search difficult terms and replace** them with easy-to-understand choices right on your document
- Includes definitions for health terms and non-health terms





On average, it lowers reading level with replacements, at least 4 grades

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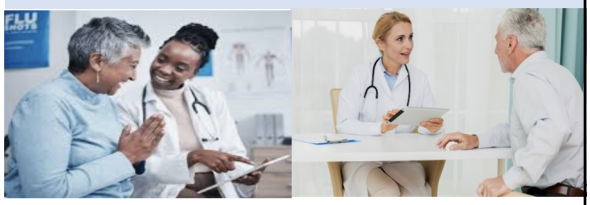
Summary
How To Apply HL & PL Standards

Organizations must implement:

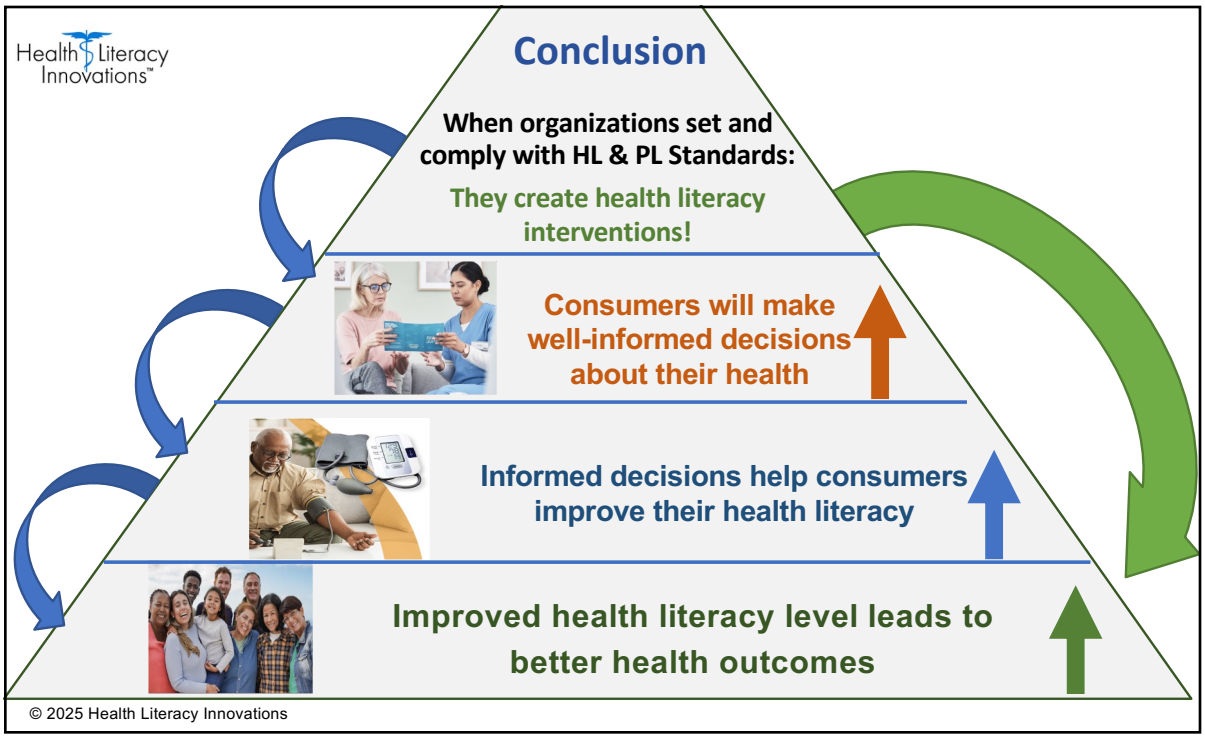
1. **Clear Communication:**
   - Provide information in a way that is understandable, equitable, and respectful of diverse needs
2. **System Design:**
   - Support an organization's design with easily accessible infrastructure, policies, and processes to help people access services
3. **Culturally Competent Care:**
   - Acknowledge and address diverse cultural beliefs, practices, and languages
   - Support health equity and the reduction of health disparities

Benefits:

- **Build Trust:** Ensure quality services
- **Boost Safety:** Protect consumers
- **Facilitate Communication:** Between consumers and providers
- **Offers an Edge:** Help stay competitive
- **Can Help to Save Money:** May cut costs by improving efficiency and quality
- **Mitigates Risk:** May help to prevent liabilities



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The Big Question

As we have seen, there are dozens of different industry regulations, laws, and standards.

They are from the government, private industry groups, such as the Joint Commission and URAC, from health leaders, and health literacy advocates, among others.

But there is not one specific standard for health literacy
How can we resolve this as an industry?

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20% off all new HLA licenses

To schedule a demo—or try the Health Literacy Advisor Contact us:

301-230-4966

Sales@HealthLiteracyInnovations.com

Health Literacy Advisor

To try the HLA Online (free trial) use this link:

www.healthliteracyadvisor.com

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