Ask the participants to turn to page 2 of the participant guide.

Review the purpose, objectives and WIIFM with participants. Paraphrase them from the participant guide.

WIIFM is an acronym for, "What's in it for ME."

You may also tell the participants that there will be time for them to share with their current health literacy techniques with the group.
Health Literacy

What Health Care Providers Need to Know

Purpose

In this class participants will become aware of the impact of low health literacy, and learn skills and methods to help successfully communicate to patients who may be challenged by this condition.

WIIFM

Completing this class will help you be knowledgeable about a phenomenon that keeps people from getting the care they need. You’ll also feel more confident in your ability to clearly communicate with people who may have low health literacy.

Objectives

Upon completion of this class you will be able to:

- Define health literacy and describe the magnitude and impact of low health literacy.
- Use communication strategies to ensure that patients who may have low health literacy effectively receive health plan information.
Ask the participants to turn to page 3.

Read the icebreaker exercise to the group.

Start by introducing yourself and sharing a brief story. Make sure you keep your story brief and concise to set a timing example for the participants and keep your presentation on schedule. Your story will also help the participants to think of their story.

Review the class format.
Icebreaker

1. Share your name and position.

2. Share one of the following:

   • A time that you as a consumer had a difficult time comprehending medical or health plan information.

   • A time when a family member or someone you know had a difficult time comprehending medical or health plan information.

   • A time when you struggled with helping a patient understand the information you were imparting.

Class format

This class employs a variety of methods and materials to help you learn:

• Discussion
• Lecture
• Your participant guide
• Video: Help your Patients Understand
What is Literacy?

- "An individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English, and compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job and in society, to achieve one's goals, and develop one's knowledge and potential."
  
  - National Literacy Act of 1991

What is Health Literacy?

- "The degree to which individuals have the capacity, to obtain, process and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions."

  - Healthy People 2010

Refer participants to page 4 in the guide.

Read the quotes, or ask for a volunteer to read the quotes. You could also paraphrase the quotes.

(If you are interested in doing more research on this topic before the training, you can Google "health literacy". A host of helpful web sites will pop up.)
Understanding the Impact of Low Health Literacy

“... there is a wide spread problem that is seriously impacting health care in the United States, and that is low health literacy...” Richard Carmona, US Surgeon General

What is literacy?

General Literacy:
“An individual’s ability to read, write, and speak in English, and compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job and in society, to achieve one’s goals, and develop one’s knowledge and potential.”
National Literacy Act of 1991

What is health literacy?

Health Literacy:
“The degree to which individuals have the capacity, to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.”
Healthy People 2010
True or false?

■ Most people with a literacy problem are poor, immigrants or minorities
■ People will tell you if they have problems reading.
■ The number of years of schooling is a good general guide to determine literacy level.

Ask the participants to turn to page 5.

Read the true or false questions out loud. Pause between each question to allow the audience to shout out what they think the answers are.

(All the answers are FALSE.)

Introduce the five levels of literacy on the pie chart. **There is more detail on the next page of the participant guide and PowerPoint.** The key on this page is that there are high percentages of patients who are in literacy levels one and two:

**Level 1: Functionally illiterate**  
**Level 2: Marginally illiterate**  
Level 3: Functionally literate  
Level 4: Functionally literate plus  
Level 5: High level literacy
**True or false?**

1. Most people with a literacy problem are poor, immigrants or minorities.
2. People will tell you if they have problems reading.
3. The number of years of schooling is a good general guide to determine literacy level.

**Literacy levels in the US population**

(source – National Adult Literacy Survey)
### Examples of tasks on the National Adult Literacy Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>- Sign name</td>
<td>- Functionally illiterate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Find a country in a short article</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Find expiration date on license</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Locate one piece of information in a sports article</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>- Enter background information on a Social Security application</td>
<td>- Marginally illiterate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Find intersection on street map</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Locate two pieces of information in a sports article</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>- Write a brief letter explaining an error on a credit card bill</td>
<td>- Functionally literate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Enter information into an automobile maintenance record</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Identify information from a bar graph</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>- State in writing an argument made in a lengthy newspaper article</td>
<td>- Functionally literate +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Explain difference between two types of employee benefits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Compare two metaphors used in a poem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>- Summarize the way lawyers may challenge prospective jurors</td>
<td>- High-level literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Compare approaches stated in a narrative on growing up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Use table comparing credit cards to write about the differences between them</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ask the participants to turn to page 6

Review the five levels of literacy.
## Examples of tasks on the National Adult Literacy Survey

| Level 1 | • Sign name  
• Find a country in a short article  
• Find expiration date on license  
• Locate one piece of information in a sports article | **Significance**  
• Functionally illiterate |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Level 2 | • Enter background information on a Social Security application  
• Find intersection on street map  
• Locate two pieces of information in a sports article | **Significance**  
• Marginally illiterate |
| Level 3 | • Write a brief letter explaining an error on a credit card bill  
• Enter information into an automobile maintenance record  
• Identify information from a bar graph | **Significance**  
• Functionally literate |
| Level 4 | • State in writing an argument made in a lengthy newspaper article  
• Explain difference between two types of employee benefits  
• Compare two metaphors used in a poem | **Significance**  
• Functionally literate + |
| Level 5 | • Summarize the way lawyers may challenge prospective jurors  
• Compare approaches stated in a narrative on growing up  
• Use table comparing credit cards to write about the differences between them | **Significance**  
• High-level literacy |