Consequences

**Did you know...?**

**This results in....**
- Lower health knowledge and less healthy behaviors
- Greater health costs
- Poorer health outcomes

Ask the participants to turn to page 7.

Ask the audience to read the consequences on page 7. Pick out a few consequences to highlight for the group.

Paraphrase the consequences.
Consequences

Did you know…?

• 54% of seniors didn’t understand taking medication on empty stomach.

• One study found that 26% of patients could not read their appointment slips.

• Informed consent language is usually at the 12th-17th grade level. The average American reads at an 8th grade level.

• 48% of seniors with low health literacy didn’t understand ‘taking medicine every six hours.’

• 76% of patients didn’t understand following instructions for an upper GI test (written at a fourth grade level).

• Most health education materials are written at a 12th grade level or above.

• 100% of low literacy seniors didn’t understand Medicaid rights written at a 10th grade level.

• Fewer than half of low-literacy diabetics knew the symptoms of hypoglycemia.

• The majority of low-literacy asthmatics could not demonstrate the proper use of an inhaler.

• Low literacy parents were less likely to know how to read a thermometer.

• Low-literacy patients with hypertension were less likely to know that weight loss and exercise lower blood pressure.

• Patients with average reading levels are unable to understand most of the content of consent forms used for research studies for cancer drugs.

• Highly literate, well-educated adults also report difficulty understanding information provided to them by clinicians.

This results in:

• Lower health knowledge and less healthy behaviors
• Greater health costs
• Poorer health outcomes
Ask the participants to turn to page 8.

Walk the participants through the age related factors. Health literacy declines with age.

Ask the audience: "Why do you think low literacy tends to decline with age?"
Question for discussion: why do you think low literacy tends to increase with age?
The cost of low health literacy

We All Pay!

- Cost is estimated to exceed $50 billion per year.
- Exacerbations of the problem

Ask the participants to turn to page 9.

Read or paraphrase, “The cost of low health literacy” and “Exacerbations to the problem.”

Obviously, the $50 million is a very rough estimate.
The cost of low health literacy

We all pay!

Cost is estimated to exceed 50 billion per year.

- 39% paid by Medicare (FICA taxes on workers)
- 17% paid by employers
- 16% paid by patients, out-of-pocket
- 14% paid by Medicaid
- 14% from other public and private sources

Exacerbations to the problem

- Reliance on the written word for patient instruction
- Increasingly complex healthcare system
  - More medications
  - More tests and procedures
  - Growing self-care requirements
  - Esoteric language
- An aging population
- A more culturally diverse patient population
Show the video.

After the video, ask participants for their initial reaction to the video. The video is 23 minutes long. Allow 5 to 10 minutes for discussion.

The video is available on the internet. Just click on the link in the PowerPoint. A member of the AMA can receive a copy of the Health Literacy kit from the AMA for free. The kit from the AMA includes “Ask me. I can help.” buttons for an ongoing program for your organization.

The AMA web site also includes a second health literacy video called, "Low Health Literacy: You Can't Tell By Looking ." You could send a link to this second video as a follow up to training.
“Help Your Patients Understand”

While watching note the barriers to access, diagnosis and treatment/care depicted in the video.

*Question for discussion: what kinds of barriers to our organization’s services might our patients encounter?*
Exercise: What's it Like to Have Low Literacy

- GNINAELC – Ot erussa hgh ecnamrofrep, yllacidoirep naelc eht epat sdaeh dna natspac revenehw uoy eciton na noitalumucca fo tsud dna nworb-der edixo selcitrap. Esu a nottoc baws denetsiom htiw lyporposi lohocla. Eb erus on lohocla sehcuot eht rebbur strap, sa ti sdnet ot yrd dna yllautneve kcarc eht rebbur. Esu a pmad tholc ro egnops ot naelc eht tenibac. A dlim paos, ekil gnihsawhsid tnegreted, lliw pleh evomer esaerg ro lio.

Ask the participants to turn to page 11.

Ask participants to spend about 3 minutes trying to read the document. How does it feel?

Here is the first sentence: “To assure high performance, periodically clean the tape heads and capstan whenever you tape notice an accumulation of dust and red-brown oxide particles.”
What's it Like to Have Low Literacy?

Introduction

- The following passage simulates what a reader with low general literacy sees on the printed page
- Read the entire passage out loud
- You have one minute to read
- (Hint: The words are written backwards and the first word is “cleaning”)

GNINAELC – Ot erussa hghi ecnamrofrep, yllacidoirep naelc eht epat sdaeh dna natspac revenehw uoy eciton na noitalumucca fo tsud dna nworb-der edixo selcitrap. Esu a nottoc baws denetsiom htiw lyporposi lohocla. Eb erus on lohocla sehcuot eht rebbur strap, sa ti sdnet ot yrd dna yllautneve kcarc eht rebbur. Esu a pmad tholc ro egnops ot naelc eht tenibac. A dlim paos, ekil gnihsawhsid tnegreted, lliw pleh evomer esaerg ro lio.

Ask the participants to turn to page 12.

Break into groups of two or three, and find plain language for each word. Lead the large group in reviewing preferred word choices. There are no right or wrong answers—the point of the exercise is to use plain language if possible.

- Analgesic—Pain Killer
- Anti-Inflammatory—Lessens swelling and irritation
- Benign—Not Cancer
- Carcinoma—Cancer
- Cardiac Problem—Heart Problem
- Cellulitis—skin infection
- Contraception—birth control
- Enlarge—Get bigger
- Heart failure—Heart isn't pumping hard enough
- Hypertension—High blood pressure
- Infertility—Can't get pregnant
- Lateral—Outside
- Lipids—Fats in the blood
- Menopause—Stopping periods, change of life
- Menses—Period
- Monitor—Keep track of, keep an eye on
- Oral—by mouth
- Osteoporosis—Soft brittle bones
- Referral—Send you to another doctor
- Terminal—Going to die
- Toxic—Poisonous
Translating Medical Terms into Plain Language

Exercise:

With a partner, think of alternative words that more clearly substitute for these terms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medical or Health Plan Term</th>
<th>Plan Language Substitute</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analgesic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anti-inflammatory</td>
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<td>Benign</td>
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<td>Contraception</td>
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<td>Participating provider</td>
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<td>Care system</td>
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<td>Cardiac problem</td>
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<td>Deductible</td>
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<td>Enlarge</td>
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<td>Referral</td>
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