

Aspirus Health Literacy Initiatives
Council on Library and Network Development
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Aspirus

- Aspirus serves 14 Wisconsin counties and the Western Upper Peninsula of Michigan
- Five affiliated hospitals, including a Level II Trauma Center
- 40 physician clinics, home health and hospice care
- More than 4,200 employees



What is Health Literacy?

“The degree to which individuals have the capacity to *obtain, process, and understand* basic information and services needed to make appropriate decisions regarding their health.”

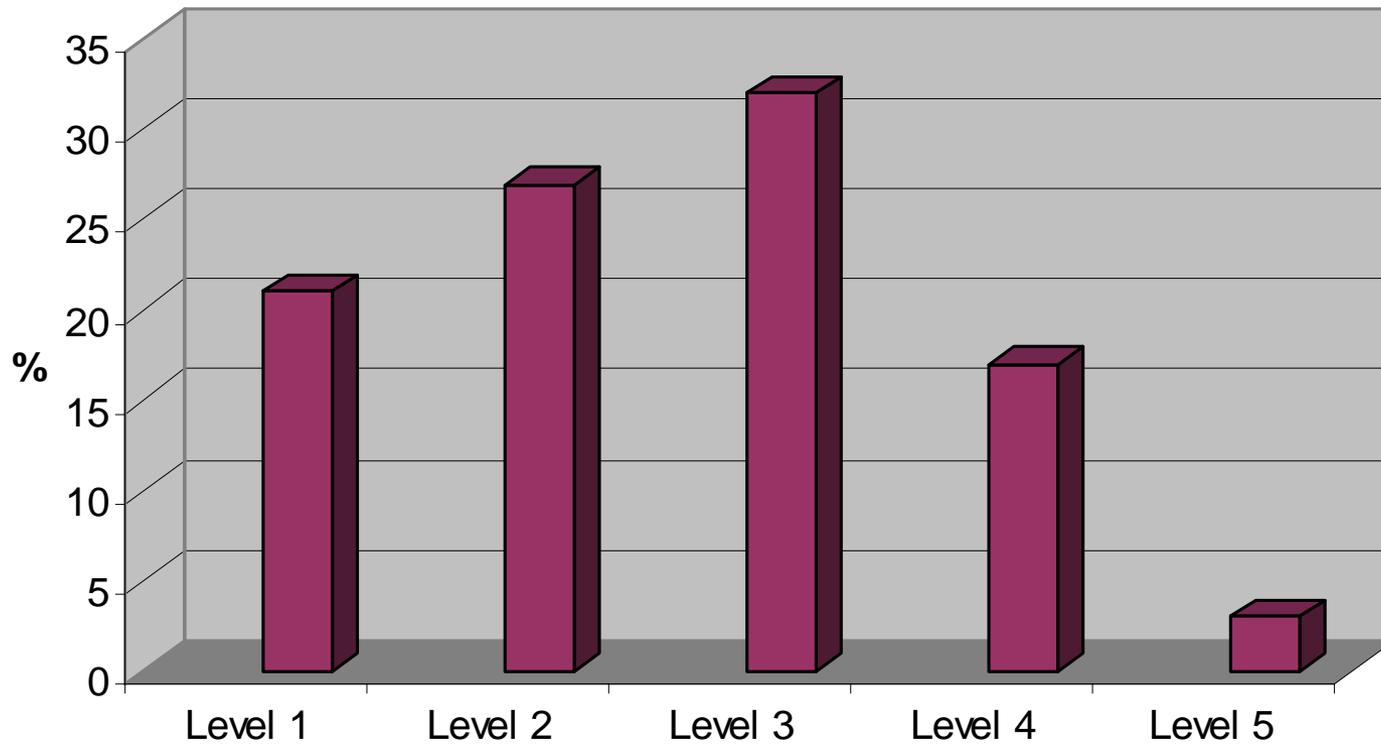
The Institute of Medicine 2004

... this includes

- Provider – Patient communication
- Healthcare system interactions
- Personal home health decisions
 - Medication labels
 - Appointment slips
 - Informed consent
 - Discharge instructions
 - Insurance and billing
 - Nutrition information
 - All health information

1992 National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS)

47-51% of Americans in levels 1 and 2



What NALS levels 1 and 2 can do

Level 1

- sign name on a document
- identify a country in a short article
- total a bank deposit slip

Level 2

- identify YTD gross pay on a paycheck
- determine price difference between tickets for 2 shows

What NALS levels 1 and 2 cannot do

Level 1

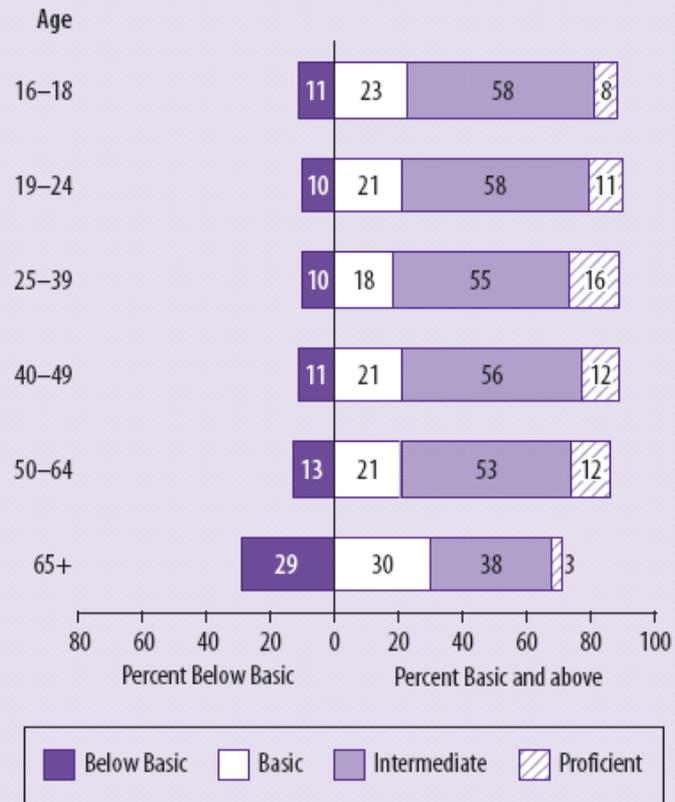
- find intersection on map
- calculate the total cost on an order form
- fill out social security application

Level 2

- use bus schedule
- balance a check book
- write a letter of complaint

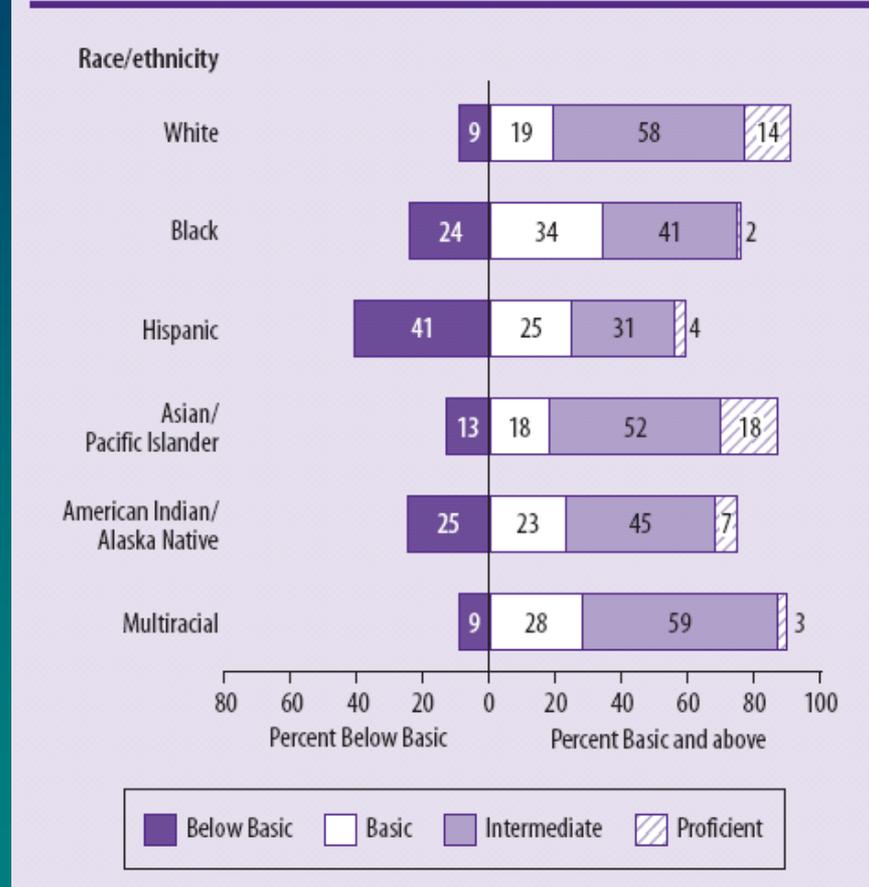
Age - NAAL 2003

Figure 2-7. Percentage of adults in each health literacy level, by age: 2003



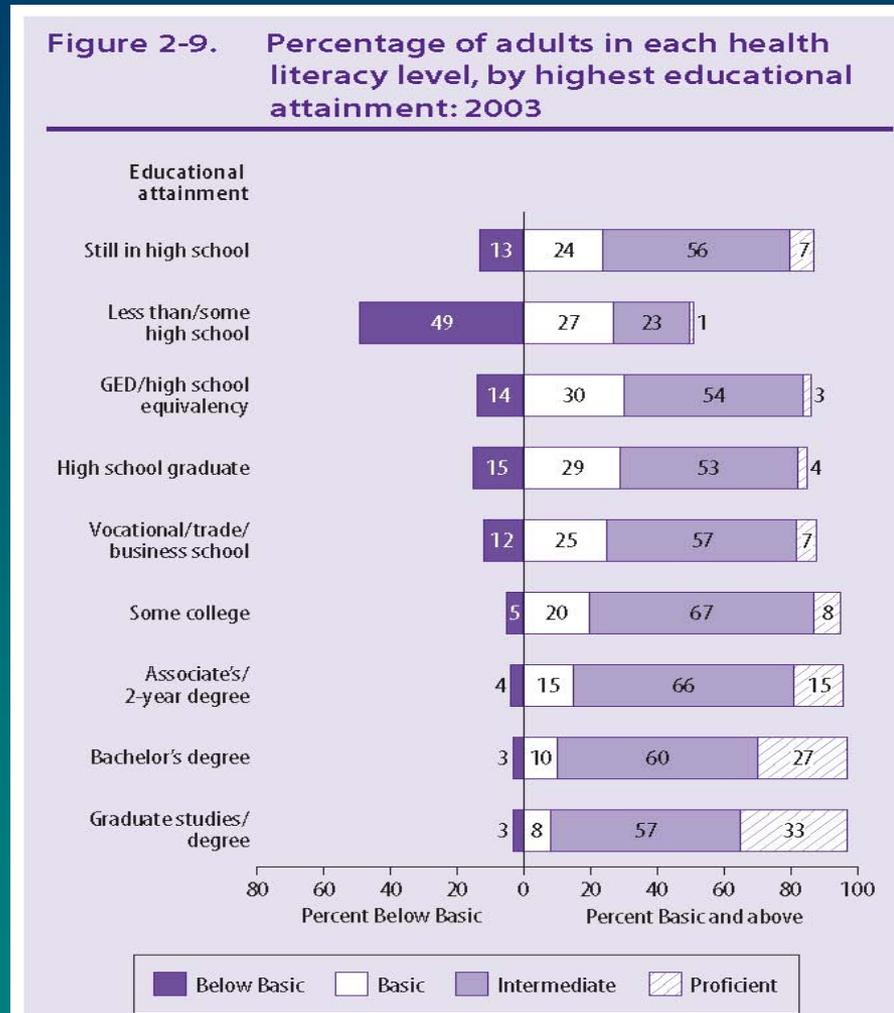
Race/ethnicity (NAAL 2003)

Figure 2-5. Percentage of adults in each health literacy level, by race/ethnicity: 2003



Education (NAAL 2003)

Figure 2-9. Percentage of adults in each health literacy level, by highest educational attainment: 2003



The impact of low literacy on health

- 26% did not understand when their next appointment was scheduled
- 44% did not understand the exact nature of the operation to be performed (Informed Consent)
- Only 50% take medications as directed
- Adults remain in the hospital nearly two days longer
- Annual health care costs are four times higher than for those with higher literacy skills

... increased costs

This is due to:

- Low literacy individuals are less likely to pursue preventive care: immunizations, cholesterol tests, mammograms, cancer screening

They have more difficulty with:

- following physician's orders
- adhering to medication schedules
- filling out registration and insurance forms
- understanding how to use the healthcare system efficiently

Aspirus Health Literacy Council

strong consensus for non-print options



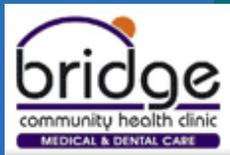
Communication
Techniques
Ask Me 3,
Speak Up! etc.



Medication
Education



Dental Health –
Marathon
County



Aspirus - Top Initiatives

- Aspirus Medication Mondays
- Health Literacy Tracers
- Aspirus Health Literacy Ambassador Program
- Geriatric Health Literacy

Aspirus Medication Mondays

- 3rd Monday of every month
- Free
- One-to-one interaction with Aspirus pharmacist
- Pharmacist will discuss medications patients are taking, answer questions, assist with medication organization and storage, discuss cost effective ways to obtain medications, and work with providers and pharmacies to provide an accurate list of medications for the patient
- Health Literacy Council – Aspirus Wausau Hospital Pharmacy – and the Aspirus Senior Health Team
- Medical Director: Julie Luks, MD

Target population

- recently released from the hospital
- recently changed medications
- have several health conditions
- are taking over 4 or 5 medications
- are taking un-prescribed over-the-counter medications in addition to prescribed medications
- are taking mail order medications
- have questions about or problems with the medications they are taking
- are taking medications that require lab test monitoring
- want to reduce expenses related to medications
- have multiple medical providers or specialists
- obtain their medications from more than one place

Health Literacy Tracers

The Health Care Literacy council surveyed patients **to determine if they received answers** to the “Ask Me Three” questions:

- What is my main problem?
- What do I need to do?
- Why is it important for me to do this?

Who

- Patients who visited the Aspirus Walk-In Clinic
- Random sample
- No age restriction

How

- Patients were contacted via telephone
- One surveyor, Aspirus Wausau Hospital Patient Relations Coordinator
- Three attempts were made to contact them
- It was explained to the patient that healthcare information could be confusing

Health Literacy Tracers - results

Aspirus' goal is that the providers will communicate in a way that the patient can understand the information.

Results

- None of the patients were aware or remembered the “Ask Me Three” information
- All of the patients except one left knowing what their main problem was. One patient did not know because the provider was not sure what the problem was and needed more time
- All of the patients knew what they needed to do
- All of the patients knew why it was important for them to do it

Medical Director: Claire Reed, MD

Aspirus Health Literacy Ambassador Program

- First Thursday of every month, 1:00-2:00 pm
- Members:
 - Marathon County Literacy tutors and students
 - Elderly volunteers
 - Aspirus clinical staff and myself
- Open discussion and review:
 - Day Surgery Plus Discharge Instructions
 - Patient Surgery Instructions
 - Informed Consent, DNR
 - Letters to the community
 - IRB – Institutional Review Board (Lori Scheller, BS, CCRP, IRB Coordinator/HRPP Administrator)

Geriatric Health Literacy

(included in our ACE Program)

- Aspirus Senior Health Services
- ACE (Acute Care of Elderly) and NICHE (Nurses Improving Care in Healthsystems Elders) implementation throughout Aspirus
- Program began after identifying the need for education regarding geriatric care
- Annually offer GRN (Geriatric Resource Nurse) and GRA (Geriatric Resource Aide) classes
- 63 RNs and 41 CNAs (CAN - GRA 8 hour day, RN - GRN 4 - 4 hour classes - 16 hours)

Thank you!

janak09