

# HEALTH LITERACY

## TECHNIQUES TO SUPPORT EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

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# WHO WE ARE



# THE INSTITUTE FOR FAMILY HEALTH



## Who We Are:

- The Institute for Family Health (IFH) is a federally-qualified community health care network serving over 90,000 patients at 27 locations through-out New York State. Many IFH patients come from low literacy communities such as East Harlem and the South Bronx
- We are accredited by the Joint Commission and recognized by the National Committee for Quality Assurance as a Level 3 patient-centered medical home, the highest recognition available

## Our Services:

- We offer primary care, mental health, dental care, social work and many other services to patients of all ages.

# WHAT IS HEALTH LITERACY?



# HEALTH LITERACY



## Health Literacy:

- The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010, Title V, defines health literacy as the degree to which an individual has the capacity to obtain, communicate, process, and understand basic health information and services to make appropriate health decisions.
- <http://www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/Learn/index.html>

# WHY FOCUS ON HEALTH LITERACY?



## **Health Literacy:**

- Affordable Care Act (put in what article)
- Accountable Care Organizations (put in what)
- Patient Centered Medical Home (Shared Decision Making)
- eHIVQual Standards (2013)

# 10 ATTRIBUTES OF A HEALTH LITERATE CARE ORGANIZATION



- Has leadership that makes health literacy integral to its mission, structure, and operations.
- 2. **Integrates** health literacy into planning, evaluation measures, patient safety, and quality improvement. It is an effort on every level of care.
- 3. **Prepares the workforce** to be health literate and monitors progress.
- 4. **Includes populations** served in the design, implementation, and evaluation of health information and services. mychart.
- 5. Meets the needs of populations with a range of health literacy skills while avoiding stigmatization. Universal Precautions.
- 6. Uses health literacy strategies in interpersonal communications and confirms understanding at all points of contact. Teach-Back & Shared Decision Making
- 7. Provides easy access to health information and services and navigation assistance. Our lobby design and patient centered medical homes.
- 8. Designs and distributes print, audiovisual, and social media content that is easy to understand and act on. Everything goes through communications with white space rules.
- 9. Addresses health literacy in high-risk situations, including care transitions and communications about medicines. Brown bagging and utilizing navigators.
- 10. Communicates clearly what health plans cover and what individuals will have to pay for services. Affordable Care Act information.



# CHALLENGES ALONG THE WAY



# HEALTH LITERACY ASSESSMENTS



- We were following a mandate by the eHIVQUAL standards
- We were looking at Health Literacy as deficits in individuals. Not at what we may have been doing.
- East Harlem is home to one of IFH's largest sites, The Family Health Center of Harlem (FHCH) In East Harlem, 17% of adults 25 and older never completed 8th grade, and another 16% never graduated from high school.
- In the Bronx, where IFH has multiple sites, 30% of people over 25 years of age never earned a High School diploma.
- Making informed health care decisions requires that patients comprehend the facts about their health and the choices in terms of care that they have.
- The "Rapid Estimate of Adult Literacy in Medicine-Short Form" (REALM-SF) is a validated assessment tool that can be used by clinicians to assess an individual's reading comprehension in a medical context. The 7-item validated word recognition test measures the degree to which individuals obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.
-

# OUR APPROACH TO HEALTH LITERACY NOW



# OUR APPROACH TO HEALTH LITERACY



## Health Literacy Universal Precautions:

- Health literacy is the ability to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate decisions. Over a third of patients have limited health literacy, which results in their not understanding what they need to do to take care of their health. Limited health literacy is associated with poor management of chronic diseases, poor ability to understand and adhere to medication regimes, increased hospitalizations, and poor health outcomes.
- Universal precautions refers to taking specific actions that minimize risk for everyone when it is unclear which patients may be affected. For example, health care workers take universal precautions when they minimize the risk of bloodborne disease by using gloves and proper disposal techniques. Health literacy universal precautions are needed because providers don't always know which patients have limited health literacy.
- <http://www.ahrq.gov/professionals/quality-patient-safety/quality-resources/tools/literacy-toolkit/index.html>

# HEALTH LITERACY UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS: THE IFH APPROACH



- Health center signage
  - Interior, exterior
- Materials promoting services
  - Brochures, posters, flyers, palm cards, etc.
  - Digital displays at practices
  - Social media and web content
- Educational materials
  - Decision aids
  - Website features
  - Brochures, posters, flyers, palm cards, etc.
- Giveaways for events

COMMUNICATIONS  
Department  
Drives most of our  
Health Literacy work  
and all print work  
here comes through  
them including  
many slides

# HEALTH LITERACY UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS: THE IFH APPROACH



- Multidisciplinary
  - EHR analysts, medical providers, communications associate
- Meeting Style
  - Bi-weekly meetings where we meet
  - and can see what others are working on .
- Goals
  - To improve patient activation
  - Clear communication

The Patient  
Engagement.  
MyChart  
Group

# HOW DO WE DO THIS?

- The communications department uses tools, guidelines and professional services to create materials that are:

Clear

Factually  
accurate

Culturally  
sensitive

Thoughtfully  
formatted

Useful

Literacy  
appropriate (6<sup>th</sup>  
grade reading  
level whenever  
possible)

Professionally  
translated

Consistent in  
design to  
reinforce brand  
recognition

# HEALTH CENTER SIGNAGE



## Entryway and Waiting Room

"I didn't know that. That makes sense to me."

Digital Signage Boards

"Oh great, I can take this with me so I know how to reach you after hours."

Handouts and Literature

"OK, I understand why they want this information..and how to fill this out."

Forms and Paper

"This is easy and fast."

Interactive kiosk

"I know where I am."

Wayfinding Signage





# PATIENT INPUT: THE PATIENT PORTAL

## Patient's improving the Patient Portal



# INTERNAL POLICIES



## Plain Language and Teach Back

### Plain Language Policy



#### Policy: Plain Language Policy

Subject	Plain language policy and guidelines
Department	Planning and Development Department
Applicable to	Institute employees
Prepared by	Planning and Development Department, Communications Office
Approved by	Maxine Golub, SVP
Date	3/11/14

#### 1. Purpose

This policy exists to assure that all materials are written clearly and can be understood by patients at varying literacy levels. The Institute is committed to improving patients' health literacy. This is a service provided by the communications office, and ALL communications materials that will be publicly displayed or distributed should be reviewed by the communications office for health literacy.

#### 2. Scope

The plain language policy applies to all Institute employees that would like to produce written materials for patients. This includes forms, flyers, brochures, web content, etc.

#### 3. Policy

All documents to be read by patients should be written in plain language. Materials should be written at a 6th grade reading level whenever possible and should never exceed an 8th grade reading level unless clinical accuracy would be sacrificed. Please email Kate Fahy, director of development communications, at [kfahy@institute2000.org](mailto:kfahy@institute2000.org), to request a plain language edit.

#### 4. Definition

### Teach Back Policy



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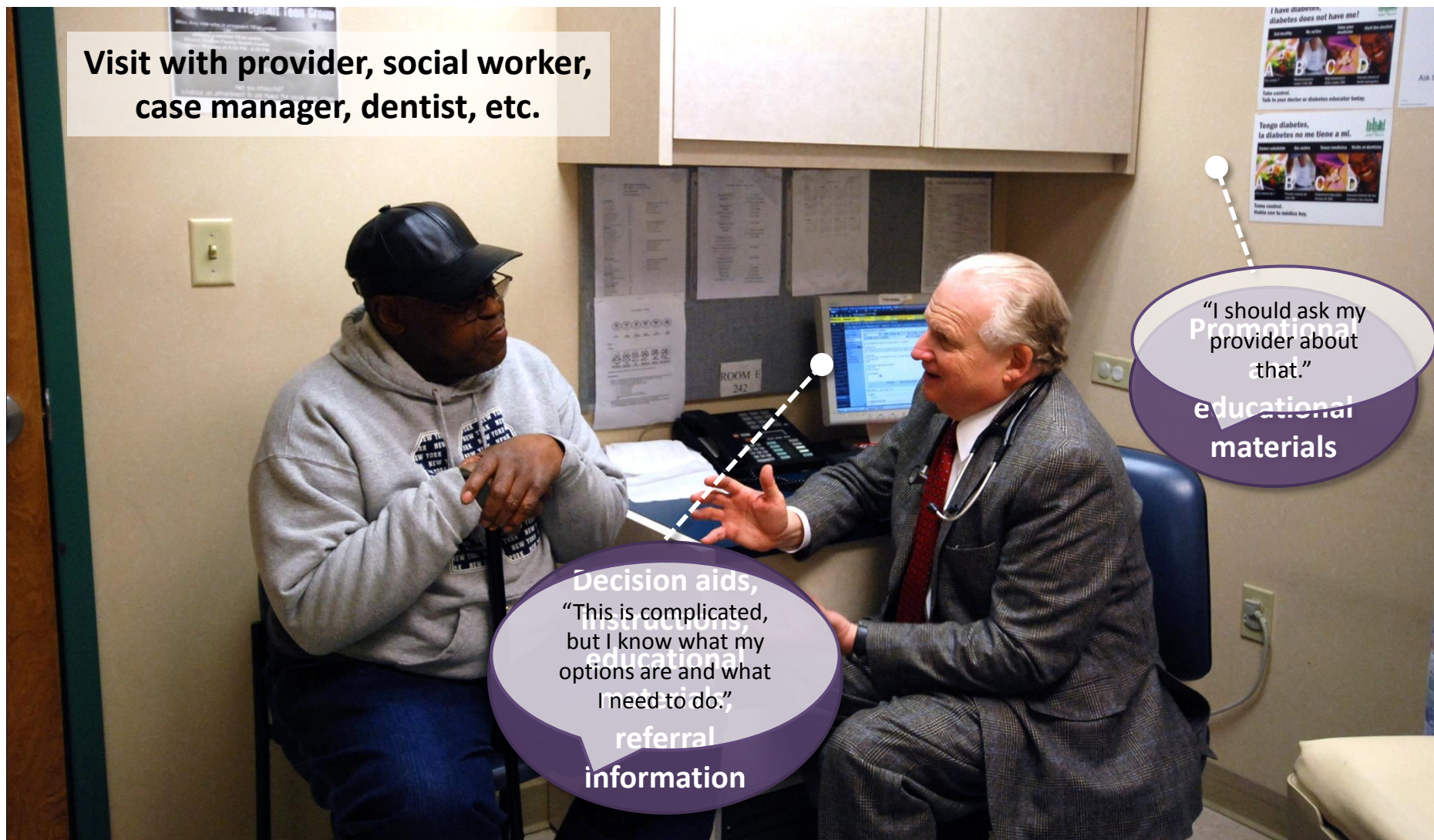
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#### 4. Definition

# PROVIDER VISITS

Visit with provider, social worker,  
case manager, dentist, etc.



"I should ask my  
provider about  
that."

Promotional  
educational  
materials

Decision aids,  
instructions,  
educational  
materials,  
referral  
information

# REQUEST!



As part of our designation as an Accountable Care Organization we began creating Decision Aids to be given to patients during the summer of 2014.

# KEY QUESTIONS

- Who is the audience?
- What is the main message?
- What is the “ask” or the “call to action” of the material?
- How will this be distributed?





# ANSWERS!

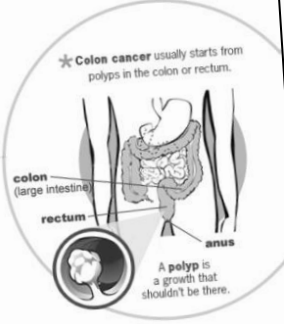
- **Who is the audience?**
  - Anyone eligible for a colon cancer screening.
- **What is the purpose of the material?**
  - To educate people about their colon cancer screening
- **What is the “ask” or the “call to action” of the material?**
  - What is the colon?
  - **What is colon cancer?**
  - Who should be screened?
  - What are your options?
- **What is the best format for this information?**
  - On paper
  - Driven by Electronic Medical Record

# POINT-OF-CARE EDUCATION

## GETTING SCREENED FOR COLON CANCER

### 1 WHAT IS Colon Cancer?

Colon cancer is cancer of the colon or rectum. The colon is the large intestine or large bowel. The rectum is the passageway that connects the colon to the anus. Colon cancer usually starts from polyps in the colon or rectum. A polyp is a growth that shouldn't be there.

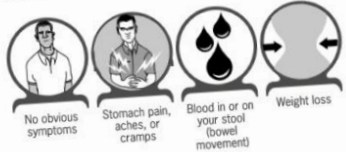


\* Colon cancer usually starts from polyps in the colon or rectum.

colon (large intestine)  
rectum  
anus

A polyp is a growth that shouldn't be there.


### What are the SYMPTOMS?



- No obvious symptoms
- Stomach pain, aches, or cramps
- Blood in or on your stool (bowel movement)
- Weight loss

! You can also have polyps or cancer without feeling any symptoms.

### WHO should get screened?




Screening is recommended for men and women between 50 and 75 years old.

! Some people younger than 50 and older than 75 may benefit from screening tests. Talk to your provider about getting screened.

#### Screening can find

- ✓ polyps, so they can be removed before they cause cancer
- ✓ cancer early when it is easier to cure



Shared Decision Making Tool

# TEAM CARE – PATIENT CENTERED MEDICAL HOME



## Family Health Center of Harlem

1824 Madison Avenue  
(at 119th St.)  
New York, NY 10035  
(844) 434-2778 *for appointments*  
(212) 423-4500



Red  
Team

Equipo  
Rojo

**My Primary Care Provider:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Mi Proveedor de Atención Primaria*

**My Patient Services Representative:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Mi Representante de Servicios al Paciente*

(212) 423-4500 x \_\_\_\_\_

**My Nurse:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Mi Enfermera*



# THINGS TO CONSIDER



- Everyone struggles with Health Literacy!
- It's an approach every corner of the organization must take

THANK YOU!  
QUESTIONS?

