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.
What that really means....

• Find what I need
• Understand what I find
• Use what I find to meet my needs
Why?

• Leads to a longer life
• Improves quality of life
• Reduces chronic disease
• Saves money
Below Basic

• Identify how often a person should have a specified medical test based on information in a clearly written pamphlet

• Identify what is permissible to drink before a medical test based on a set of short instructions

• Circle the date of a medical appointment on a hospital appointment slip
Basic

• Give 2 reasons a person with no symptoms should be tested for a disease based on information in a clearly written pamphlet

• Explain why it is difficult for people to know if they have a specific chronic medical condition based on information in a 1 page article
Intermediate

• Find a healthy weight range for a person based on a graph of height and weight to body mass index

• Find the age range for children to receive vaccines using a chart

• Identify 3 substances that may interact with an over the counter drug to cause a side effect using the drug label

• Find when to take prescription medications based on the drug label that discusses medication and eating
Proficient

• Calculate employee’s share of health insurance costs for a year using a table that shows how the employee’s monthly cost varies depending on income and family size

• Find the information to define a medical term by searching through a complex document

• Evaluate information to determine which legal document is needed for specific health care situation
Newest Vital Signs
Limited Health Literacy Probability
CHP Patients

*Total possible correct = 6*

- **Adequate Literacy**
  - 4 - 6 correct
  - 69%

- **High Likelihood**
  - 0-1 correct
  - 13%

- **Possible**
  - 2 - 3 correct
  - 18%
Scored 50% or Less Correct by Age Group

- 16-30 yrs: 32%
- 31-55 yrs: 22%
- 56 yrs and over: 60%
Strategies

- Before each visit – tell patients what is needed
- Provide written material at a 7th grade reading level
- Focus on 3 key messages
- Ask the patient to “teach back”
- Encourage note taking
- Encourage patient to bring a family member or friend