Health Literacy in Dentistry

“Attributes of a Health Literate Organization”
Institute of Medicine, Roundtable on Health Literacy
November 16, 2011
Washington, DC
Health literacy in dentistry is “the degree to which individuals have the capacity to **obtain**, **process** and **understand** basic health information and services needed to **make appropriate oral health decisions.**” 1, 2, 3

Past Activities

- Oral Health in America (2000)
- Healthy People 2010 (2000)
- National Call To Action To Promote Oral Health (2003)
- Institute of Medicine (2004)
- Presentations at NOHC, APHA, AADR IADR, NRHA
ADA Activities

• Council on Access, Prevention and Interprofessional Relations
  – Mission:
    • Promote community outreach, cultural competency and health literacy
    • Foster and maintain liaison with external stakeholders regarding population-based prevention and intervention strategies
    • Plan, develop, implement and evaluate programs that support the ADA’s commitment to optimal oral health for all
  – National Advisory Committee on Health Literacy in Dentistry
  – Health Literacy in Dentistry Action Plan: 2010-2014
Health Literacy in Dentistry Action Plan

Focus Areas

1. EDUCATION AND TRAINING (Change Perceptions of Oral Health)

2. ADVOCACY (Overcome Barriers by Replicating Effective Programs)

3. RESEARCH (Build the Science Base and Accelerate Science Transfer)

4. DENTAL PRACTICE (Workforce Diversity, Capacity, and Flexibility)

5. BUILD AND MAINTAIN COALITIONS (Increase Collaborations)
Organizational Responsibility (1)

- Health literacy programs, policies and research
- Association strategic plan goal
- Action plan to improve health literacy
- National Advisory Committee on Health Literacy in Dentistry
- Assessment of printed educational materials
Inquiry, Innovation and Evaluation (2)

• Baseline survey of dentists and dental team members on communication techniques
• Evaluation of health literacy related continuing dental education courses
• National Advisory Committee on Health Literacy in Dentistry
Measurement and Assessment (3)

- Baseline survey of dentists and dental team members on communication techniques
- Baseline survey of all dental schools about health communication instruction and training
- Other surveys of member and non-member dentists related to dental practice including health communication
Health Literacy Advisory Group (4)

- National Advisory Committee on Health Literacy in Dentistry
  - Policies, Programs & Research
  - Challenges and Solutions
  - Conduit of Information
  - Public and Private Partnerships
  - Identify Resources
  - Health Literacy Expertise
Educational Supports and Resources (5)

- Printed educational materials
- Continuing dental education for dentists and dental team members
- Online resources for oral health professionals and public via ADA.org
Health Information Technology (6)

• Support the development and deployment of health IT programs as tailored educational and support tools for professionals and public
Augmented and Prepared Workforce (8)

- Community Dental Health Coordinator (CDHC)

Patient Navigation

Prevention of Dental/Oral Diseases

Reduce oral health disparities

Improve access to dental care

Health Promotion

Community Engagement

Palliative Care
System Navigation and Social Needs (13, 14)

• Community Dental Health Coordinator (CDHC)
  – Community-based
  – Culturally and linguistically responsive
  – Established linkages with local dental clinics
Promote Question-Asking (15)

- Known best and promising health communication practices are encouraged
  - Create a respectful and “shame-free” environment
  - Periodically assess office/clinic for ways to improve communication
  - Use clear and plain language in talking and writing
  - Encourage question-assembling and dialogue
  - Use “teach-back” or “teach-to-goal” method
  - Offer take-home
Recognize & Accommodate Barriers (18)

- “Think Cultural Health”
- Diversity and inclusion activities
Lower Priority Attributes

- Patient training and assistance with personal health records and health IT tools (7)
- Distribution of resources (9)
- High-risk decision making (10)
- Medication safety (11)
- Health plan and insurance products (12)
- Curricula Development and Skill Mastery (16)
- Assess and document patient skills (17)