



June, 2015
Volume 1
Issue 2

Tutor Talk

A Newsletter for and about the Marinette & Oconto County Literacy Council, Inc.

Literacy and Health

Who knew there was such a connection to health and literacy? Bud Bartel and Judy Sytsma certainly found out when they attended the April Wisconsin Health Literacy Summit in Madison. Take a look at what they learned:

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A subcommittee has been formed by the Board to consider how to implement health care literacy in our programs.

The committee will be using ideas learned from the spring summit

*Looking for a good read?
Hot Dogs and Hamburgers,
Unlocking Life's Potential by
Inspiring Literacy at Any Age by
Rob Shindler.*

A Better Prescription...Improving Health Literacy for All Patients.

1 in 5 prescriptions are abandoned, that's 20% not picked up at the pharmacy. Half of all patients demonstrate non-adherence of medication regime at 3 months across all chronic disease states. \$300 billion annual cost to the US Health System as patients do not understand what is going on with their own health. Many root causes for non-adherence are cost, side effects, poor general health, fatigue, motivation, understanding, memory, complexity, and persistence. We need standardized prescribing and dispensing practices; there are at least 51 ways to prescribe "every day". We need to follow standard medication times and the "pill box" method of taking medications. This is across all income levels.

English for Health: Developing and Promoting Literacy Partnerships

Literacy is the strongest predictor of individual health status. Literacy trumps age, income, education level, employment status and racial or ethnic groups when determining health status in the United States. Basic English skills are needed to maintain good health.

I Know My Number but What Does It Mean?

Numeracy is needed to understand and apply health care instructions if positive outcomes are to be met. One must have basic math and number skills to make better health decisions. One example of is my number good or bad is: "Your 5 year breast cancer risk is 2.6%," is this good or bad? Providing the right number does not always generate the right message.

Health Information Seeking Behaviors of Adults with Low Literacy, Numeracy, and Problem Solving Skills

(Results from Program for International Assessment of Adult Competencies Study).

Health Literacy: "The degree to which people have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and service needed to make appropriate health decision." Only 12% of the US adults have proficient health literacy. Health literacy and general literacy are both needed to comprehend and put to use the practices that are taught or given to a patient in written form. United States ranked in the lower third out of 23 countries studied for literacy, numeracy and post treatment success of treatment.

Understanding Adults as Learners.

The concept of health literacy has two distinct components: 1). the ability of individuals to read, understand, and act upon health related information and 2). the capacity of professionals and institutions to communicate effectively so that community members can make informed decisions and take appropriate actions to protect and promote their health. There are many different types of learning that adults use, the health care professional must recognize how the adult patient can process the information given and then must be able to have the adult patient demonstrate understanding of the information. Handouts are a great source of information, but if the patient has limited reading ability, the hand outs are useless. But if the patient is able to comprehend and put to use the information that is verbally relayed, then we have reached somewhat of a milestone in compliance. Even though an 18 year old is considered an adult, experience plays a huge part in adult learning. A 60 year old has much more life experience to pull from than and 18 year old, thus the teaching must be modified to meet the patient's need.

And there is more.....

Navigating the Healthcare System--Adolescent Health Literacy

The challenge: Adolescents lack skills to navigate the healthcare system and the solution is to empower adolescents to be their own health advocates through skill based learning. Things that teenagers need to know when entering the health care system: terms and definitions, self advocacy, doctor types, emergency room vs. urgent care, family medical history, symptoms, diagnosis, allergies, medications and vaccine records, insurance and privacy/confidentiality, making/navigating your visit, filling out medical forms. Then after the healthcare provider encounter, the adolescent must be able to read and follow a prescription label and or any other instructions given during the visit. Must use technology that is available; every teenager should snap a pictures of their parent's insurance information and store it in their smart phone. Insurance cards are not standardized, and one must know that the identification number may be all letters or a combination of numbers and letters!



---A Looking for a good teaching tip? Shannon shared her hands-on idea at Tutor Time Out---

"I made a replica of a bed with all the parts...pillow, blanket, sheets etc., and my tutor and I make the bed talking about what we are doing."

It's great for vocabulary because when you go through motions with your body, it helps you remember words.

Helping Consumers Understand Health Reform

Both families and health care providers need help for those caught in the benefits maze. Patients need access to accurate and timely information. Requires active interaction and follow-up care and requires time and expertise to follow the Affordable Care Act. Must assist the patient with getting some type of coverage, such as BadgerCare Plus, Disability Medicaid, Social Security Disability Benefits, Elderly and Long Term Care Medicaid, Private insurance including the Marketplace and MORE if need. Issues that impact consumers are economic, cultural and knowledge disparities, language, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors, access to insurance and provider network restrictions, Un- or under- insured patients, complicated insurance and legal language, how to get and keep coverage, financial eligibility for coverage or programs, and non-financial eligibility: i.e., immigration status. The health care provider must be able to refer to community agencies for help as health is related to financial status, child care needs, elder care needs and significant other care needs. There is a huge gap between having coverage available and receiving care. Just because you have coverage, does not mean there is a facility that accepts your coverage where you live.

The 60% Challenge; Seniors and Health Literacy:

Only 1 % of seniors 75+ years old are health literacy proficient, 3% of seniors 65+ years old are health literacy proficient and 12% of all adults are health literacy proficient! Seniors are high risk patients due to the fact they are high users of medical services, have twice as many office visits as those 45-64 years old, take more medications than the general population and, 45% of seniors read at the lowest level. Along with age come physical changes such as hearing and vision deficits, psychological changes such as depression and anxiety, short term memory changes as well as intellectual abilities decline. Age affects medication use, risk of interactions, complicated dosage schedules, change in ability to metabolize medications and difficulty of reading labels. Age affects learning. A 60 year old has much more life experience to pull from than an 18 year old, thus the teaching must be modified to meet the patient's need. As the age climbs, so does the ability to read English; there are 381 languages spoken or signed in the United States. Thus the older the person is, the better the chance he or she does not even speak English, but two languages may be spoken in the home. The healthcare providers must use plain language, must not use different words for the same thing such as diet or meal plan or nutritional intake. Seniors must show a return demonstration of their teaching and learning; do not assume they can read or can read the print that is on the hand out. A simple solution may just be large print. Repetition is the key when dealing with seniors, must make sure they can hear and see what is being presented. Also do not assume that all seniors are visually or hearing impaired!

Cha-Ching

There is always need for financial support in any organization, and the M&O Literacy Council treasurer, MaryCarolyn Jagodinski, actively seeks out grants to promote literacy. So far the M&O Literacy Council has been awarded:

- The Greater Green Bay Community Foundation for \$3000
- The Leon and Clymene Bond Grant for \$3000
- ProLiteracy National Book Fund for \$1500 worth of books & training DVD's



Office Kuehnl chats with Mary Jo at the Tutor-Time-Out Appreciation Luncheon held this spring at the Rail House Restaurant in Marinette

Visiting Day at the Jail

Grant Kuehnl, the Correction Officer in charge of inmate programs and education, invited the M and O Literacy Council for a special tour of the Marinette County Jail. Kuehnl oversees 21 different programs for inmates including such topic as job skills, anger management, health, high school diploma and literacy. He showed the tutors rooms that could be used for learning and encouraged them to feel comfortable and safe if they came to the Marinette jail to work with students.

Tutor Gathering

A tutor gathering was held on June 10, at the Stephenson Library for those actively tutoring in the Marinette area. Tutors expressed their concerns and successes with tutoring their students. Tutors attending were: Becky, Shannon, Mary, Chris, Candy, Janet, and Rita. Ideas were exchanged and Candy distributed some forms she felt may be helpful. The purpose of the gatherings was to help student know they are supported.

Calendar of Events:

July 21---Board meeting 1:00 in Coleman
 August 18---Board meeting and Social; 1:00 at Underhill Lake
 August 20-23---Literacy Booth at the Oconto County Fair
 August 27-30---Literacy Booth at the Marinette County Fair
 September 15---Board meeting; 1:00 in Suring

Contact Us

Phone:

(920) 897-4422

Online at

<http://moliteracy.org>

Mailing Address:

W10072 E. Springside Rd
 Coleman, WI 54112

Office:

202 E. Main St
 Coleman, WI 54112

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Putting the **FUN** in Fundraising

Are You Smarter Than a 5th Grader? Spring Competition in Oconto Falls.
Proceeds for books and supplies for tutors & students



Romelle in charge of cookies



Bud and MaryCarolyn, take a chance on those flowers...



Marinette & Oconto Counties
Literacy Council, Inc.
W10072 E. Springside Rd
Coleman, WI 54112



Name
Street Address
City, ST ZIP Code