



Health Literacy Program for Minnesota Seniors
HeLP MN Seniors

HeLP MN Seniors: An Evidence-Based Health Literacy Program for Seniors

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Health Literacy

- The degree to which individuals can obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services they need to make appropriate health decisions¹

Health Literacy

- People with low health literacy typically:
 - Fail to seek preventive care
 - Are less likely to follow treatment plans
 - Have increased rates of hospitalization and use of emergency services
 - Have difficulty understanding written and oral communication
 - Stay in the hospital longer than someone with higher health literacy²

Health & Seniors

- There are over 36 million adults over the age of 65 in the U.S.³
- Seniors make up 13% of the population, but 36% of all hospital stays⁴
- 25% consider themselves in fair or poor health³

Health & Seniors

- Seniors have lower health literacy levels than all other age groups⁵
- Limited health literacy in seniors has been associated with a 2 fold risk of death⁶
- As of 2009, 38% of seniors are turning to the Internet for information, up from 18% in 2007 and 7% in 2001⁷

HeLP MN Seniors

- NN/LM GMR Consumer Health Subcontract
 - Awarded in February 2009
- Goal
 - To develop an evidence-based program to improve the health literacy of seniors in Minnesota
- Objectives
 - Design and pilot a health literacy training program
 - Develop and reproduce a training guide
 - Expand HeLP MN Seniors across Minnesota

Key Partners

- University of Minnesota Health Sciences Libraries
- Minnesota Health Literacy Partnership
- Boutwells Landing Senior Living Community
- Public Health Consultants

Project Overview

- Year One
 - Conduct needs assessment
 - Develop training and workshop evaluation materials
 - Hold workshops
 - Complete outcomes assessment
- Year Two
 - Analyze evaluation results
 - Revise training materials
 - Promote training program
 - Facilitate implementation of program throughout Minnesota

Workshop Details

- Two, 1 ½ hour workshops
 - Health Literacy: Communicating Effectively with Health Care Providers
 - Finding Accurate and Reliable Health Information on the Internet
- Each workshop offered six times, for a total of 12 workshops
- Offered in September, October, and November 2009

Workshop Details

- Advertised through postcards, closed circuit television station, posters, and fliers
- Registration at the senior facility's front desk, or at the monthly activity sign-up event
- Fifty-two participants, representing 33 individuals

Workshop I: Communicating with Providers

- Define health literacy
- Tips for communicating effectively with health care providers, including:
 - Asking questions
 - Creating a visit plan
 - Knowing the answer to 3 questions (Ask Me 3)
- Discuss current health topics

Workshop II:

Finding Health Information

- Evaluating information on the Internet
 - MedlinePlus Guide to Healthy Web Surfing
- Hands-on demonstrations
 - MedlinePlus
 - My Health Minnesota -> Go Local
 - NIH Senior Health
 - Agency for Healthcare Quality and Research: Questions are the Answer
- Using health information
- Accessing Personal Health Records

Findings: Needs Assessment

- Evaluation Method
 - Focus groups
- Findings
 - All see providers regularly
 - Many concerned about staying informed
 - Many worried about others' ability to self-advocate
 - Main sources of information are providers, information sheets, and Internet resources
 - Many concerned about drugs, healthcare costs, and access to personal health information
- Actions
 - Revised content to include current health topics and drug information

Findings: Workshop Evaluation

- Evaluation Method
 - Pre- and post-tests
- Findings
 - Multiple choice tests too time consuming
 - Results show increases on every post-test measure
 - Participants indicate they know what questions to ask and will ask questions until they understand
 - Participants report increased comfort in finding and evaluating online health information
- Action
 - Revised tests to Likert-scale format with added questions on content, format, and delivery

Findings: Outcomes Evaluation

- Evaluation Method
 - Survey, 55% response rate (initially planned as a focus group)
- Findings
 - Overall positive experience with workshops
 - More or same amount of information requested for each workshop
 - Both workshops would be recommended to friends
 - Several, but not all, workshop tools and tips were used by participants

Findings: Outcomes Evaluation

- Results show increases in every post-test measure, including:
 - Taking notes during medical appointments
 - Knowing what questions to ask, and asking questions until information is understood
 - Looking for, finding, and evaluating online health information
 - Discussing information with healthcare providers

Program Adjustments

Workshops:

- Removed redundant content, information on unused tools and tips, background information, and current topics in health
- Formatted workshop presentations and supporting materials to increase readability and visual appeal

Program Adjustments

- Supporting Materials:
 - Created program guide that includes lessons learned from evaluation findings and program implementation
 - Created a Demonstration Guide for websites used in Workshop II

Website Materials

www.healthliteracymn.org/resources/help-mn-seniors

- Website materials include:
 - A program guide with helpful tips
 - A needs assessment focus group guiding questions
 - Workshop presentations with instructor scripts
 - Workshop handouts and pre- and post-tests
 - A post-workshop survey
 - A website demonstration guide
 - Contact information

Program Promotion

- Presentations
 - Institute of Healthcare Advancement Health Literacy Conference
 - Annual Minnesota Geriatric Care Conference
 - Medical Library Association
 - Boutwells Landing Celebration Event
 - Midwest Chapter/Medical Library Association
- Exhibits
 - Minnesota Library Association
 - Aging Services of Minnesota Institute

Celebration Event

- 32 Attendees
 - Public health, health care, health literacy, and health education
 - Boutwells Landing residents
- Presentation
 - Brief overview of workshops
 - Findings
 - How others can get involved
- Networking opportunity

Questions?

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