

# Measuring Health Literacy Comprehension among Clinical Staff

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# Overview

**Personal health literacy:** the degree to which individuals can find, understand and use information and services to inform health-related decisions and actions for themselves and others.

**Organizational health literacy:** the degree to which organizations equitably enable individuals to find, understand and use information and services to inform health-related decisions and actions for themselves and others.

## **Improving staff understanding of health literacy will positively impact care at UVMHN.**

- Aligns with our mission, “improving the health of our community, one person at a time.”
- Aligns with network DEI strategies and helps us communicate in a way that is more inclusive, accessible, understandable and culturally appropriate.
- Supports shared decision making.
- Helps us achieve Patient Centered Medical Home recognition and meet patient communication standards set by The Joint Commission and the National Committee for Quality Assurance;

# Why this project?

HCAPHS/Press Ganey Patient Satisfaction Survey data completed in 2022 revealed that **50%** of our patients reported not knowing what to do after discharge.

## At discharge, patients receive:

- Discharge instructions
- Prescriptions
- Chronic disease management tools
- Dietary restrictions
- Treatment options
- Lab test orders
- ...and more!

**Do they understand it all?**



# Pilot project

## Health literacy education module

- Clinical staff on one unit at Alice Hyde Medical Center participated in a health literacy education module in August and October (health literacy month).

## Survey for effectiveness

- Staff completed a pre- and post-education survey to measure improvements in their understanding of health literacy principles.

### How Well Do Our Patients Understand Their Care?

A new diagnosis, discharge instructions, or how to take their medications correctly...studies show only one in ten people have the skills to manage their health and prevent disease. What about the others?

**9/10**  
PEOPLE  
Lack skills needed to manage health and prevent disease

October is Health Literacy Month. According to the CDC, personal health literacy is the *degree to which individuals have the ability to find, understand and use information and services to inform health-related decisions and actions for themselves and others.*

Learn more about Health Literacy by completing the **Comerstone Health Literacy module**. Everyone who completes both the pre- and post-tests by 10/31 will be entered into a drawing.

**ENTER to Win**

THE University of Vermont HEALTH NETWORK

# Gathering data

**First step:** gathered baseline data on clinical staff's understanding of health literacy concepts and principles.

**Why:** this ensures that health literacy is prioritized in future clinical quality improvement projects and patient education materials.

## Health Literacy Brief Assessment Quiz for UVMHN Staff

We would like to get a sense of the knowledge and understanding you have about health literacy. Please complete this brief quiz that assesses some key facts about health literacy.

1. Limited health literacy is associated with:

- A. Higher mortality rates
- B. Lower levels of health knowledge
- C. Greater use of inpatient and emergency department care
- D. Poor medicine adherence
- E. B and D
- F. All of the above

2. You can tell how health literate a person is by knowing what grade he or she completed in school.

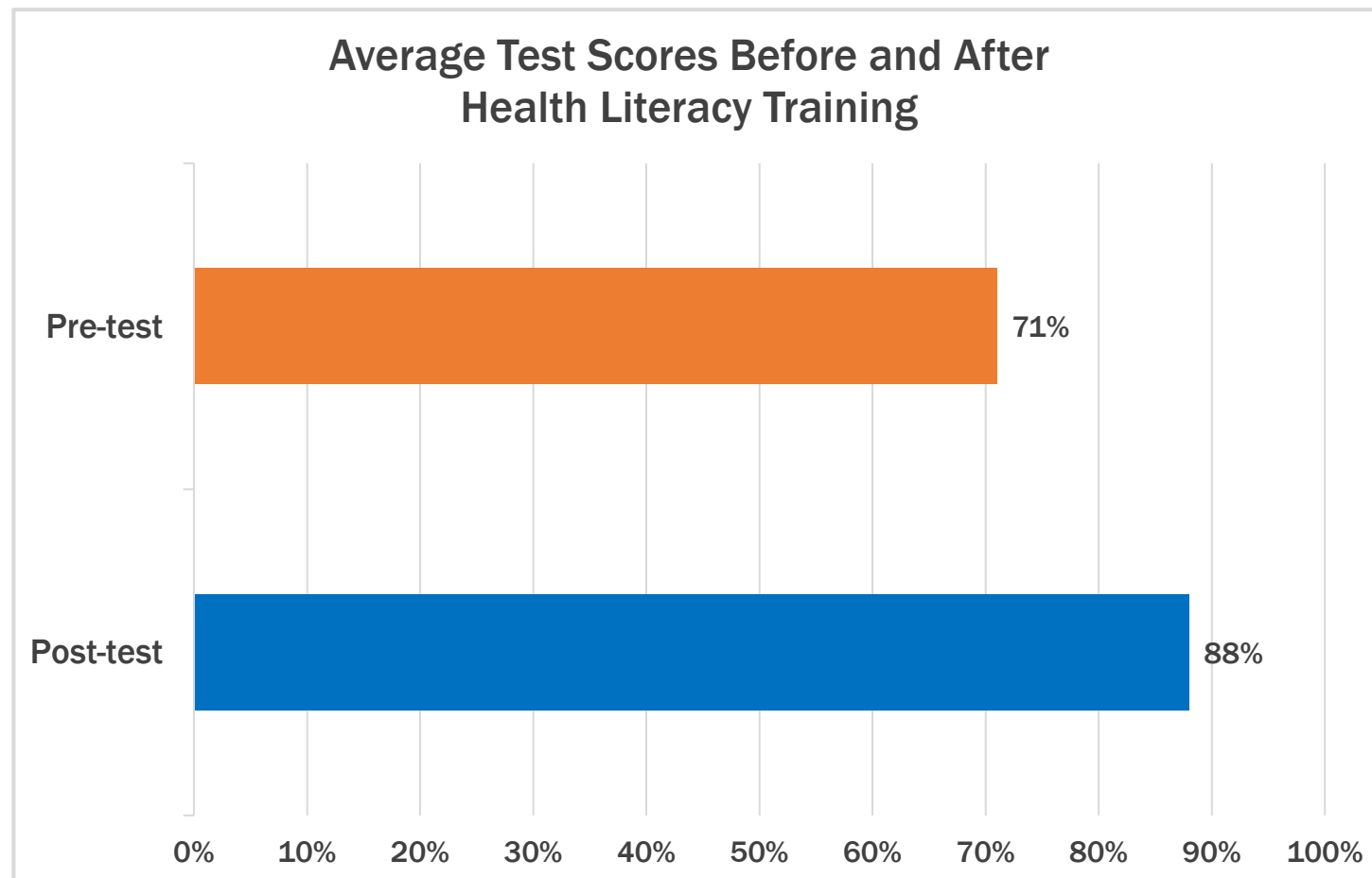
- A. True
- B. False

3. Which of the following skills are considered to be components of health literacy?

- A. Ability to understand and use numbers
- B. Reading skills
- C. Speaking skills
- D. Ability to understand what is said
- E. Writing skills
- F. All the above

# Staff response

Clinical staff members' understanding of health literacy improved after completing the education module.



# Successes and challenges

## Successes:

- Health literacy month roll-out; prizes!
- Collaboration with Alice Hyde education department for the creation of the education module.
- Leadership buy-in.
- Building relationship with the Alice Hyde readmissions team.

## Challenges:

- Deciding who would have access to the education module.
- Staff participation.
- Data.
- Staff capacity.

# What's next?

## Focus on Press-Ganey patient satisfaction data related to health literacy.

- Improving survey scores for “information about medications.”
  - Did hospital staff ask you to describe how you were going to take your medications when you were at home?
  - Did hospital staff tell you who to call if you had questions about your medications?

## Scale health literacy education across the network.

- Create mini modules for administrative and clinical staff.
- Begin implementing pre/post survey and education network-wide.
- Grow our project team:
  - UVM Doctor of Nursing Practice student to join our team in 2024.
  - Recruit provider champion for health literacy.



# Health literacy resources

- [UVMHC Language Access Services Sharepoint Site](#)
- [Vermont Language Justice Project](#)
- [Ten Attributes of Health Literate Health Care Organizations](#)
- [AHRQ Health Literacy Universal Precautions Toolkit](#)
- [Plain Language Guidelines](#)
- [Teach-Back: Intervention](#)
- [Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services](#)
- [Readability Calculator](#)



**ADVANCING HEALTHCARE**  
**EXCELLENCE AND INCLUSION**

# Questions?

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