For a fact sheet on health literacy please visit the Oklahoma Literacy Resource Office webpage: Literacy Fact Sheet: Health Literacy—goo.gl/qmfFV

For information on the Oklahoma Literacy Resource Office and the state’s literacy efforts contact Leslie Gelders at 800–522–8116 or visit odl.state.ok.us/literacy

Oklahoma Health Literacy Clearinghouse www.okhealthequity.org

For information on Oklahoma’s health ranking www.americashealthrankings.org/OK

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Health Literacy is the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.

The Facts

In 2014, the 25th annual America’s Health Rankings® (produced by United Health Foundation) ranked Oklahoma in the bottom five least healthy states, 46th overall—a drop of two places from the previous year. The study cites increases in smoking, obesity, diabetes, as well as limited availability of primary care physicians, and low use of prenatal care as causes for the low ranking.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has said that nearly 9 out of ten Oklahoma adults have difficulty using the everyday health information that is routinely available in healthcare facilities, retail outlets, media, and communities.

What makes Health Literacy Important?

The American Medical Association Foundation has said that poor health literacy is a stronger predictor of a person’s health than his age, socioeconomic status, education, or ethnicity.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, persons with limited literacy skills are more likely to have chronic conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, or asthma, and are less likely to manage them effectively.

The Institute for Medicine’s Board of Neuroscience and Health has found that adults need basic health literacy skills to speak with medical professionals, access health information, follow dosage instructions, make informed health decisions, and to use medical tools for personal and family health care.

How can Oklahoma address health literacy?

The literacy and education communities can

- provide access to reliable health information written at a basic reading level.
- host learner in-services on health topics.
- network with the health community to address the needs of adults with low reading and low English skills.

The health community can

- use clear communication techniques when talking with low literate patients.
- use print materials written at a basic level, with pictures, large print, and plenty of white space.
- work with literacy programs and adult learners to identify information that is confusing to individuals with low literacy skills.

Resource

Quick Guide to Health Literacy
www.health.gov/communication/literacy/quickguide
For a fact sheet on health literacy please visit the Oklahoma Literacy Resource Office webpage Literacy Fact Sheet: Health Literacy—goo.gl/qmfFV

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OKLAHOMA

Literacy Resource Office

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