Health Literacy Promotion
Raise Awareness Email Communications

Day 1
• As you know: People with low health literacy often have poorer health outcomes. Some barriers that have been identified are lack of access to health information and self-management knowledge and skills.¹

Trained volunteers are available in the Patient and Family Library to help find validated health information on a range of topics.

Questions? Contact XX, Patient Education Specialist at ---

Day 2
• Research has shown patients who are actively involved in their health care have better health outcomes, better compliance with treatment protocols, and reduced complications- this has been especially significant for patients living with chronic diseases.²

Ensure health information is available in your clinics in a variety of formats to improve access.

If you need help building a collection contact XX, Patient Education Specialist at ---

Day 3
• Clinicians with high quality communication and education skills significantly contribute to patient-empowerment and self-management.³ ⁴ ⁵

New Health Literacy workshops are available to support staff and physicians.

Enroll yourself or your team today! Contact XX, Patient Education Specialist at ---

¹ Sally Lindsay et al., Enabling healthy choices: is ICT the highway to health improvement? Health: Vol. 12, No. 3, 313-331 (2008).
² Andrew Heisz, Canada’s global cities: Socio-economic conditions in Montréal, Toronto and Vancouver, Business and Labour Market Analysis Division, Statistics Canada.
³ Mark Fam, Treating patients as consumers: A new prescription for Canada’s health care sector, Deloitte Inc 2009.
⁴ Kate R. Lorig et al., Evidence suggesting that a chronic disease self-management program can improve health status while reducing hospitalization: A randomized trial, Medical Care, Vol. 37, No. 1 (Jan 1999), pp. 5-14.
Day 4

- Recent surveys have shown that more Canadians including a large number of seniors, are using the Internet everyday for information about their health.\(^6\) As an educational tool, technology provides a number of advantages, including “just-in-time” availability, a private learning environment, and immediate reinforcement of the learning that has occurred.\(^7\)

This also means patients and families at XX organization need help finding accurate and current health websites. Develop a plain language list of valid websites for your patients and their families.

Need help developing your list? Contact XX, Patient Education Specialist at ---

Day 5

- Did you know that 60% of Canadians have low health literacy? The number is even higher for seniors. 88% of seniors have low health literacy.\(^8\)

Clear communication practices and removing literacy-related barriers will improve care for all patients regardless of their health literacy level.\(^9\) At XX organization, we endeavor to ensure all patient education resources are written in plain language.

Do you need help assessing whether your resources are in plain language? Or do you need help with plain language editing? Contact XX, Patient Education Specialist at ---

Day 6

- Healthcare providers cannot always tell which patients have limited health literacy. ‘Universal precautions’ refers to taking specific actions that minimize risk for everyone when it is unclear which patients may be affected. Use plain language in all of your patient teaching. People prefer clear instructions, especially when sick.\(^10\)

Challenge: Be the first person to restate the meaning of the sentence below in plain language and win a prize!

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\(^7\) Deborah Lewis, Computer-based approaches to patient education, JAMIA 1999 6: 272-282.
\(^8\) Canadian Council on Learning, 2007
\(^9\) Health Literacy Universal Precautions Toolkit, 2010
\(^10\) Health Literacy Universal Precautions Toolkit, 2010

Used to promote Health Literacy month at St. Michael’s Hospital, Toronto, Canada.
“Your immature gallinaceans must not be calculated prior to their being produced.”

Email your answer to XX, Patient Education Specialist at --. The answer will be posted in tomorrow’s email.

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Day 7

- Did you know: The average Canadian looks up 5-6 different sources for health information for every health-related question?¹¹

Be prepared to respond to patients questions. Develop a collection of reliable patient education resources to support your patient teaching.

Answer from yesterday’s plain language challenge:

“Don’t count your chickens before they hatch”

The winner is ---------

You will be contacted by XX, Patient Education Specialist about picking up your prize.

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¹¹ Pew Research Council

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