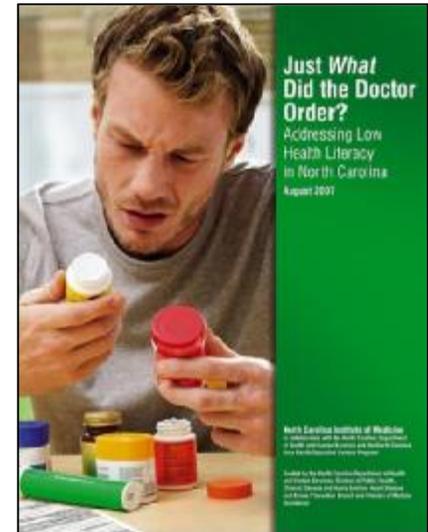


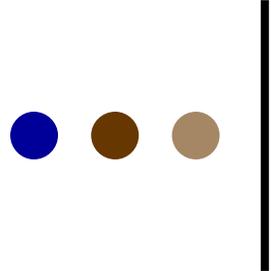


The Road to Regional Transformation: The North Carolina Experience



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Agenda

- ⌘ **A word about the North Carolina Institute of Medicine**
- ⌘ **NCIOM Task Force on Health Literacy**
 - | **Process**
- ⌘ **Progress made on implementing recommendations**



A Word About the NC Institute of Medicine

- ⌘ Quasi-state agency chartered in 1983 by the North Carolina General Assembly to:
 - | Study important health issues facing the state
 - | Provide nonpartisan advise to the North Carolina General Assembly and executive agencies to help improve health policies
 - | Provide advice to health professionals, insurers, business leaders and the public to improve the health of North Carolinians

NCGS §90-470



● ● ● | Task Force Process

- ☒ NC Division of Public Health asked the NCIOM to convene a task force to study health literacy
 - | Collaboration with NC Division of Public Health (DPH), and Area Health Education Centers program (AHEC)
 - | Funded through a CDC grant to the Chronic Disease and Injury Section of DPH
- ☒ Task Force work:
 - | Met seven times over a nine month period (2007)

● ● ● | Task Force Composition

☪ Chaired by:

- | Thomas Bacon, DrPH, Executive Associate Dean and Director, AHEC
- | L. Allen Dobson, MD, FAAFP, Assistant Secretary for Health Policy and Medical Assistance

☪ Task Force members:

- | Consisted of more than 50 people including health literacy experts, physicians, other health professionals, state and local agency representatives, insurers, adult literacy experts, consumers

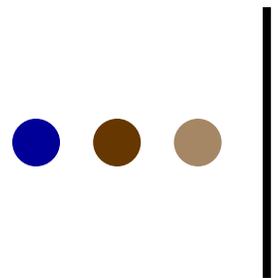
● ● ● | **Task Force Process**

- ⌘ Task Force members review research about the problem and potential solutions
- ⌘ Consensus driven process to formulate recommendations
 - | NCIOM is not an advocacy organization
 - | Task Force members become advocates for change in health policies and/or within their own organization or profession



Task Force Recommendations

- ☛ 14 recommendations to improve health care communications
 - | Focused on improving health communications rather than improving literacy or reading levels of general public
 - | Took a “universal precaution” approach aimed at improving health communications for *all* populations



2010 Update

- ⌘ **Total recommendations: 14**
 - | **Fully implemented: 0**
 - | **Partially implemented: 11 (79%)**
 - | **Not implemented: 3 (21%)**
- ⌘ Some of the work began before task force process and continued after task force concluded
- ⌘ Other progress made in response to task force recommendations



NC Health Literacy Center of Excellence

- ⌘ Task Force recommended creation of NC Health Literacy Center of Excellence charged with:
 - | Educating health professionals
 - | Identifying evidence-based guidelines or best practices for health communications
 - | Disseminating health education materials
 - | Assisting adult literacy professionals



Health Literacy Center of Excellence

- ⌘ New center not created, but many of the functions supported by:
 - | NC Program on Health Literacy, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and collaborating partners
 - | North Carolina Health Literacy Council, University of North Carolina at Greensboro



Health Professional Education

- ⌘ Task Force recommended more education on health literacy for health professionals
- ⌘ Some progress:
 - | Community college system includes information on health literacy in all nursing courses addressing patient education
 - | Individual didactic sessions offered in medical schools, pharmacy programs, public health schools
 - | AHEC offers health literacy content in continuing education training to different health professionals



Pharmacists as Medication Counselors

- ⌘ Task Force recommended that NC foundations test new models that enhance the role of pharmacists as medication counselors
 - | NC Health and Wellness Trust fund has created CheckMeds—pharmacy counseling services available at no cost to seniors across the state
 - | Other foundations helping to fund dissemination activities



DHHS Review All Consumer Education Materials

- ⌘ Task Force recommended that NC Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS) review all consumer education materials for health literacy
 - | Website materials must be written at no greater than 7th grade reading level
 - | Specific materials – targeted to Medicaid population—have been evaluated and tested for health literacy
 - Created a library of patient management tools



Trained NC DHHS Staff in Health Literacy

- ☪ Task Force recommended training for NC DHHS staff to increase competency in health literacy
- ☪ Some divisions have done more than others
 - | Division of Public Health, Children and Youth Branch, requires training for state and local staff on health literacy
 - | Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services has two trained staff who also work on cultural competency issues and disseminates materials to local agencies
 - | Medicaid has patient education workgroup with representatives across the state

● ● ● | Lay Health Advisors, Group Medical Visits

- ☛ Task Force recommended that foundations and insurers fund efforts to use lay health advisors, group education sessions, and care managers to enhance patient education
 - | Medicaid: care managers, group medical visits
 - | Division of Public Health: community health workers
 - | Community health centers: promotores, community health workers, care managers
 - | Congregational Nurse Program



Malpractice Carriers Risk Management

- ☛ Task Force recommended that malpractice carriers incorporate health literacy education into risk management training
 - Medical Mutual, which provides malpractice insurance to many NC physicians, has incorporated information about health literacy in their risk management trainings, and created a separate health literacy toolkit



Health Literacy in Adult Education

- ☪ Task Force recommended that ESL, Adult Basic Education and adult literacy courses incorporate health literacy into their curricula
 - | *Expecting the Best*: health literacy curricula developed to serve needs of people with limited English proficiency served in the community college system
 - | Many community-based literacy organizations have also incorporated health literacy information into their programs



Health Literacy: Adult Literacy

- Local health literacy councils established in four counties, developing in six additional counties



Recommendations with No Progress

- ⌘ Changes in prescription bottle labeling from NC Board of Pharmacy
- ⌘ Tying some insurance reimbursement to health professionals who have received health literacy training
- ⌘ Broad based social marketing campaign to encourage consumers to be more active in asking questions of their providers



NC Continuing to Work on Health Literacy

☪ NC Program on Health Literacy

- | Research, education of health providers and health systems, development of health literacy materials and interventions

☪ NC Health Literacy Council

- | Grassroots efforts to build community coalitions to improve health literacy throughout the state, education of health providers and health systems, work with adult literacy professionals

☪ AHEC, Medical Mutual

- | Educate professionals



● ● ● | Affordable Care Act

⌘ North Carolina continuing to discuss health literacy issues as we implement health reform, for example in:

- | Development of comparative insurance information for the health benefit exchange (“plain language”) (Sec. 1311(e)(3)(B))
- | New models of care as we attempt to more fully engage consumers in self-management of chronic diseases and primary prevention
- | Patient education materials (ie, decision aids, disseminating research findings) (Secs. 3501, 3506, 3507)

● ● ● | For more information

- ☪ NCIOM Task Force report, issue brief and update:
<http://www.nciom.org/publications/?just-what-did-the-doctor-order-addressing-low-health-literacy-in-north-carolina-7796>
- ☪ North Carolina Medical Journal devoted to health literacy and effective patient-practitioner communication (NCMJ, Sept/Oct. 2007)
<http://www.ncmedicaljournal.com/archives/?patient-practitioner-communication>
- ☪ NC Program on Health Literacy
<http://www.nchealthliteracy.org/>
- ☪ NC Health Literacy Council
<http://www.uncg.edu/csr/healthliteracy/>

