Strategies for Improving Health Literacy for Student Success

Experiences at the University of South Carolina

AARON GUEST, BA, MPH\textsuperscript{(C)}, MSW\textsuperscript{(C)}
KARLA BURU, MPH, MSW
MEGAN WEIS, DRPH, MPH, MCHES
Health Literacy

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA), Title V, defines health literacy as “the degree to which an individual has the capacity to obtain, communicate, process, and understand basic health information and services to make appropriate health decisions.”

http://www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/learn/
Health Consumerism

Health consumerism tried to encourage health information empowerment and the transfer of knowledge so that patients can be informed and thus more involved in the decision-making process.
Limited literacy and limited health literacy are NOT the same thing. While strong literacy and numeracy skills may make health information and services easier to navigate, healthcare activities can still be unfamiliar territory to individuals.
Impact of Health Literacy

- The average annual healthcare costs of those with low health literacy levels are 4 times greater than that of the general population.

- Individuals with low health literacy are less likely to participate actively in healthcare decision making and more likely to struggle with health management tasks and to face significant challenges navigating the health system.
Health Literacy on the College Campus

Limited information available on college student health literacy.

- 2006 U.S. Department of Education Report

Focus traditionally on specific disease, health outcomes, health conditions, health disparities, minority populations, or situations.
Health Literacy Task Force

Assigned to Healthy Carolina within Student Health Services

- **Vision:** A *healthy campus environment in which to live, learn, work, and play.*

Health Literacy Task Force Formed (HLIT)
Task Force Members

Community-University Partnerships

Individuals from multiple backgrounds
- Health Literacy Experts
- ACA Experts
- SHS Members
- Representatives from the Student Body
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active Taskforce Members</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jessica Johnston (Co-Chair)</td>
<td>Director of Healthy Carolina</td>
<td>USC - Student Health Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marguerite O’Brien (Co-Chair)</td>
<td>Director of Wellness, Prevention and Advocacy Services</td>
<td>USC - Student Health Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric Moschella (Co-Chair)</td>
<td>Director of Student Success Center</td>
<td>USC - Student Success Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karla Buru</td>
<td>Quality Improvement Coordinator</td>
<td>USC - Student Health Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Daniela Friedman</td>
<td>Associate Professor, HPEB</td>
<td>USC - Arnold School of Public Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ana Gallego</td>
<td>Program Director</td>
<td>South Carolina Health Coordinating Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aaron Guest</td>
<td>MSW/MPH/ Health Communication Graduate Student, Office for the Study of Aging Graduate Research Assistant</td>
<td>USC - Student Health Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa Johnson</td>
<td>Assistant Director of Financial Operations</td>
<td>USC - Student Health Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danielle Schoffman</td>
<td>PhD Student in HPEB</td>
<td>USC Student &amp; Graduate Student Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Megan Weis</td>
<td>Associate Director for Outreach and Program Development</td>
<td>South Carolina Institute of Medicine and Public Health</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjunct Taskforce Members</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sue Berkowitz</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Appleseed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Sudha Xirasagar</td>
<td>Associate Professor, HSPM</td>
<td>USC - Arnold School of Public Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Anna Scheyett</td>
<td>Dean</td>
<td>USC - College of Social Work</td>
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Task Force

- Identify Purpose, Mission, Vision, Goals, and Objectives
- Assign Roles
- Schedule meeting dates
- Review current available data
Task Force Workgroups

Definition Workgroup
  ◦ Health Literacy

Tools & Resources Workgroup

Surveys & Instrument Workgroup
  ◦ Should We Do Anything?

IRB Workgroup
Current data – Health Insurance Requirement

Division of Student Affairs & Academic Support policy STAF 7.00 requires health insurance for the following groups:

- All international students
- Graduate assistants
- Graduate students taking 9 or more credit hours
What is your primary source of health insurance?

- College/university sponsored plan
- Parents' Plan
- Another plan
- Don't have health insurance
- Not sure if I have insurance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>College/university sponsored plan</th>
<th>Parents' Plan</th>
<th>Another plan</th>
<th>Don't have health insurance</th>
<th>Not sure if I have insurance</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
<td>63.0%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
<td>69.1%</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Student Health Services survey data

What is your primary source of health insurance?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Fall 2012</th>
<th>Spring 2013</th>
<th>Fall 2013</th>
<th>Spring 2014</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College/university sponsored plan</td>
<td>16.07%</td>
<td>20.11%</td>
<td>21.07%</td>
<td>20.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents' Plan</td>
<td>65.65%</td>
<td>60.63%</td>
<td>62.08%</td>
<td>63.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another plan</td>
<td>10.80%</td>
<td>10.92%</td>
<td>10.67%</td>
<td>10.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't have health insurance</td>
<td>5.26%</td>
<td>5.46%</td>
<td>2.53%</td>
<td>3.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure if I have insurance</td>
<td>2.22%</td>
<td>2.87%</td>
<td>3.65%</td>
<td>2.71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other related data available

NCHA questions
- Have you received information on the following topics from your college or university?
- Are you interested in receiving information on the following topics from your college or university?
  - Examples: Cold/Flu/Sore Throat, Nutrition, Physical Activity, Pregnancy Prevention

SHS Patient Survey questions
- I understand my follow-up care.
- I understand the health information I received.
Identified The Need

Health Literacy

Health Consumerism:
  ◦ Insurance
  ◦ Affordable Care Act

Students use both Student Health Services and Community Services
Tools & Resources

Plain Language Thesaurus for Health Communication (CDC)

University of Minnesota
http://www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/navigate-healthcare-system

Insurance terms – Glossary at healthcare.gov
  ◦ https://www.healthcare.gov/glossary/

Great tools - but none of these fit our needs
Surveys & Instruments

Test of Functional Health Literacy in Adults (TOFHLA)


eHealth Literacy


Health Literacy Needs Assessment Survey

Needs assessment survey for University of South Carolina students

Question wording had to pay particular attention to groups and subgroups within the university population

A few questions about SHS were included to assess aspects of on-campus health care utilization behaviors and perceptions

Response-Based Survey

20 to 28 question survey
The Health Literacy Survey

Sections On:
◦ Sources of Health Information
  ◦ Locations
  ◦ Trustworthiness
  ◦ Access
  ◦ Methods
◦ Sources of Healthcare
◦ SHS Service Utilization
◦ Perceptions of SHS
◦ Role in Healthcare Decision Making
◦ Understanding of the Affordable Care Act & Insurance
Survey Delivery

Phase 1:
◦ E-mail sent to 9,000 randomly selected students

Phase 2:
◦ Initial report showed limited response rate
◦ Direct E-Mails to Campus Contacts
  ◦ Graduate Student Association
  ◦ Undergraduate Weekly e-mail
General Findings (preliminary)

**Strengths/Assets:**
- Understanding of health information
- Confident in abilities to search for credible information

**Identified areas for improvement:**
- Affordable Care Act
- Insurance
Health Literacy

the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.

Knowledge is Power! Get Informed!

Why is health literacy important to you as a student?

Limited health literacy affects your ability to:
- Search for and use health information
- Adopt healthy behaviors
- Act on important public health alerts

There are certain things you should know when seeking appropriate healthcare. We have created a web site for you that will help you in your decision making. Topics include:
- Commonly Used Medical and Insurance Terms
- Navigating the Healthcare System/Using Insurance
- Questions to Ask Your Doctor
- Budgeting for Healthcare
- Evidence Based Sources of Health Information
- Wellness and Preventive Care Guidelines

Visit the Health Literacy web site at www.sa.sc.edu/shs/healthliteracy
Next Steps

- Provide web-based resources
- Develop training module/presentation for U101 students
- Collaborate with other university departments to include health literacy components in their programs
- Connect USC students to existing community resources
Questions?

Aaron Guest – guestma@mailbox.sc.edu
Karla Buru – kburu@mailbox.sc.edu
Megan Weis – megan@imph.org