

Wisconsin Literacy, Inc.

Strengthening Wisconsin's
workforce, families and
communities through literacy

New Jersey Health Literacy Summit
April 3, 2009
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Executive Director



today's topics

- How we began
- What we did
- What we learned
- Challenges
- Where you can start



Wisconsin Literacy, Inc.

- A nonprofit coalition of 59 adult, family, and workplace literacy providers

- Vision: to strengthen Wisconsin's workforce, families, and communities through literacy



getting started

Find a champion

- Dr. Paul Smith, physician champion for health literacy joins WL Board of Directors-2003

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in the beginning.....

- First statewide health literacy summit-2004
 - 50 attendees
- First attempt to develop collaborative project linking adult learners with health care providers-2004 and 2005
 - Local and statewide funding unsuccessful

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the spread of a good idea

Wisconsin Hospital Association hosts webcast of Dr. Smith's Health Literacy presentation to all member hospitals. 2006

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putting a good idea to work

- Smaller grant proposals funded for Focus Group research. 2006
- Promotion of HL initiatives among member agencies
 - local hospital foundations,
 - Health profession curriculum
 - collaborations with state organizations



taking it to the next level

- Second statewide Health Literacy Summit
 - 230 attendees in 2007
- Website redesigned to promote health literacy
 - Hits to website double in one year.




getting the word out


- Four regional health literacy committees begin post-summit initiatives. 2007
- WL made over 60 Health Literacy Awareness presentations in 15 months



moving beyond awareness


- Starting small...
 - health literacy curriculum for nursing students and practicing nurses
 - Improving the health literacy environment of hospitals using a collaborative model

 Next step is to replicate statewide



all four corners

- Ask Me 3 Video for physician and literacy versions
- On-line Health Literacy Survey for physicians and patients to assess their understanding of health literacy
- Informational materials developed to meet demand for increased presentations
- Joint Commission presents at Health Literacy Conference
- Wisconsin hospital integrates health literacy "overhaul" throughout all levels of personnel, adds HL website, forms HL personnel committee



staying alive

- Wingspread Conference to bring regional committees together with statewide mission and goals. 2008
- 2009 Health Literacy Summit with state, regional and national partners
- Development of a post- Health Literacy Summit Tool Kit



pilots and programs

- State Badger Care + Workgroup - Piloting Ask Me 3 in 6 federally qualified health centers
- Numerous literacy programs integrating health literacy curriculum



more pilots and programs

- Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin – collaboration with insurers on providing consultations for prescriptions with limited literacy patients.
- Marshfield Clinic’s Plain Language Initiative with patient education staff
- Reach Out and Read Programs



collaborative partners

- Wisconsin Medical Society
- Wisconsin Hospital Association
- Wisconsin Department of Public Health
- Wisconsin Department of Health Services
- Wisconsin Public Health Association
- Wisconsin Association of Health Underwriters
- Wisconsin Nursing Association
- Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin



you can never have too many friends

- Local Hospitals and Clinics
- Health Care Quality Organizations
- Corporations with Literacy Focus.
- University of WI and Community Technical Colleges
- Area Health Education Centers
- Wisconsin Newspaper Association
- AARP
- Rotary and Other Service Organizations

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target your market

- Patient Education Writers
- Risk Managers
- Quality Improvement Directors
- Patient Safety Directors
- Human Relations Directors
- Language Services Professionals
- Health Educators
- Administrators
- Physicians
- Nurses
- Pharmacists

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be careful what you wish for!

- Health Literacy initiatives can drive your organization when your organization's mission should drive your initiatives
- Tips:
 - Strategic planning
 - Remember your customer

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money matters

\$106-\$238 BILLION is lost every year on health care costs due to poor communication between patients and providers.

(Vernon, J. et al, University of Connecticut, Oct. 2007)



squeaky wheel gets the grease

- Tell the stories
- Add health literacy resources to your Website
- Show the Institute of Medicine video
- Relay The Joint Commission's emphasis on language, literacy, culture and patient safety



For More Information.....

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