

## Path to Improvement

Ready to get started! By following these 6 steps and working through the tools, you should be on your way to implementing health literacy universal precautions in your practice.

### 1 Watch a Health Literacy Video.

This 6 minute [health literacy video](#)  from the ACP Foundation lets you hear from real patients and medical staff.

### 2 Form Your Team.

Establishing a team of people committed to health literacy universal precautions is an essential step in the process. Getting support and buy-in from all levels of practice staff will be necessary for successfully making changes. The team should include at least one staff member from each area of your practice. Detailed guidance on creating your health literacy team is outlined in [Tool 1: Form a Team](#) .

### 3 Assess Your Practice.

How do you know where to get started making changes in your practice? In order to identify areas of your practice that are in need of improvement, your health literacy team should conduct a health literacy assessment of your practice.<sup>23</sup> [Tool 2: Assess your Practice](#)  will guide your team through this process.

### 4 Choose Tools.

After completing the assessment and discussing the results, you will be able to identify strengths, barriers, and opportunities for improvement. [Tool 2: Assess your Practice](#)  offers guidance in choosing tools to implement. For a complete list of tools click on [Tools](#) .

### 5 Raise Staff Awareness About Health Literacy.

Generating awareness of the issue is necessary any time you want to promote change. If the clinicians and staff in your practice are not aware of how health literacy issues affect your patients, they will not be as receptive to implementing new ideas. [Tool 3: Raise Awareness](#)  includes guidance and links to several resources that can be used to inform your practice staff about health literacy.

## ⑥ Plan Your Changes.

Once your health literacy team has assessed your practice, identified priority areas for improvement, and provided health literacy awareness training, your team will lead the practice in implementing health literacy tools. It is important to have a practice improvement strategy to test changes and assess whether they are achieving desired goals. The Model for Improvement<sup>24</sup> is a commonly used method to guide health care organizations and practices on making changes. It outlines four steps to work through before making widespread changes.

### 1. Set Aims.

#### **What are you trying to accomplish?**

Your health literacy team should define what you want to achieve by implementing health literacy changes in your practice. The aims should be time-specific, realistic, and measurable. For example, an aim to promote medication adherence may be: “Over the next 6 months, the practice will put systems in place to remind all patients to bring medicines to every visit.”

### 2. Establish Measures.

#### **How will you know that a change is an improvement?**

Your team will select specific measures that will be used to assess whether or not your aims are being achieved. These can be measures of reach, process, or outcomes. What percentage of patients brought their medications to their visit? What percentage of visits included a teach-back? What percentage of patients with diabetes have their glucose levels at their goal? Measures can also be qualitative, such as an assessment of whether the practice flow was interrupted by a change.

### 3. Select Changes.

#### **What changes can you make that will result in improvement?**

This toolkit contains numerous potential changes to help your practice. Start with the [Tools](#)  that are most closely associated with your aim.

### 4. Test Changes.

#### **How can you test your selected changes and implementation strategy?**

Once you have selected a tool, you need a plan for implementing it into your practice. One suggested way for making changes in your practice is by doing small PDSA (plan-do-study-act) cycles for each change you wish to make. We have an explanation and [directions](#)  for this type of change model along with a [PDSA worksheet](#)  that you can use to help you in this process. For more information on using the Model for Improvement, see the [Institute for Healthcare Improvement Web site](#) .