Form a Team

Overview

Initiating and sustaining health literacy universal precautions in a practice requires strong, effective leadership and a clear strategy. The most effective teams include at least three categories of members: senior leadership, clinical leaders, and day-to-day leaders. If any layer of the team is not committed to this effort, you won't get the results you want. The health literacy team can increase awareness and provide education about health literacy. More importantly, they will lead changes in the practice to address the needs of patients at all literacy levels. Commitment by all three levels of staff is important to successfully implement health literacy universal precautions.

Purpose

To help your practice assemble a health literacy team and identify a leader who will champion health literacy universal precautions.

> **Tip** ★
>
> **Goals for Your Team**
> - Raise awareness about health literacy.
> - Conduct a practice assessment.
> - Identify health literacy priorities.
> - Establish aims and goals.

Action

- **Identify members.**
  Thoughtful selection of the health literacy team will help to bring lasting change. The members should reflect major roles in your practice.
    - ◊ **Chair or Champion:** This person will possess the passion to see success in the team and the ability to help facilitate and oversee changes that are needed.

◊ **Employees from each department:** Representatives from each department can offer assistance on how to assimilate changes into that department as well as take the changes back to their department. These will include the following:
  - ♦ **Clinicians**
  - ♦ **Nurses**
  - ♦ **Practice manager**
  - ♦ **Front desk/receptionist**

◊ **Senior leadership:** Top management can help make decisions with the ability to direct and provide resources as needed. They can also help the team break down barriers to making improvements.

◊ **Patient and/or caregiver of a patient:** Having a patient and/or caregiver of a pediatric patient on the team can be extremely eye-opening and provide an invaluable perspective on your practice. Although this is often overlooked, we <u>strongly</u> encourage you to think about recruiting someone for your team, either as a full-fledged or an ad hoc member. They provide clinicians and staff with first-hand insight on what patients experience and how systems and communication can be improved.

> **Tip** ⭐
>
> **Patient and/or Caregiver Representative**
>
> - Ask staff to identify and suggest patients or care-givers who are typical of your patient population.
> - Include this member as needed on special projects.
> - Consider providing this member a meal or a small gift of appreciation for their participation.

- **Establish team.**
  - ◊ **Size of team:** The number of people on the health literacy team will vary based on the number of clinicians and staff employed by your practice, but keep it manageable. A team with more than 8 members can make it hard to get things done.
  - ◊ **Meetings:** The team should meet regularly to manage the process of implementing tools, evaluating the results, and ensuring transformation of the practice. Many of these tools have short implementation cycles, and more frequent meetings (bi-monthly) may be beneficial at first. Less frequent meetings may be adequate as more changes are in place.

⬧   **Ad hoc members:** Members such as senior leadership or patients can be added as ad hoc members and called to work on special projects. For example, you may involve a patient or caregiver to review the written materials used with patients.

⬧   **Quality improvement team:** If your practice has a quality improvement team established, rather than forming a separate health literacy team, you may want to incorporate health literacy into this team's activities.

- **Train members.**
  Members of the team will need to learn about health literacy before initiating any changes. Once the team is educated and motivated to make changes, then they can work through this toolkit. The following is a list of training aids to help with team education, and for more in-depth explanation look at Tool 3: Raise Awareness ⬉ ,which discusses education of the whole practice.

  ⬧   The Health Literacy Video ⏵ (6 minutes) from The American College of Physicians Foundation.

  ⬧   Health Literacy and Patient Safety: Help Patients Understand ⏵ (23 minutes) a video from the American Medical Association

  ⬧   Health Literacy: Barriers and Strategies ▤ PowerPoint presentation.

  ⬧   Prevalence Calculator 🖱 estimates the percentage of patients in your practice who may have particular difficulty understanding medical information.

Track Your Progress

⬧   Is your team meeting on a regular basis?

⬧   Are meetings productive with clear plans for action?

⬧   Are members of your team coming to meetings prepared to discuss progress made since the last meeting?

Resources

- The Institute for Healthcare Improvement Web site 🖱 outlines how to create a health improvement team and practice improvement methods.