



National Council to Improve Patient Safety Through Health Literacy

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I am writing on behalf of the National Council to Improve Patient Safety Through Health Literacy. We request your consideration of the enclosed Council proposal. The focus is on developing a certification for health literate healthcare organizations — to recognize healthcare organizations that meet predetermined evidence-based criteria.

Background: The Challenge

In 2019, the Health Literacy Committee of Greater Cleveland (Ohio) learned that many local healthcare organizations lacked awareness of health literacy as a patient safety issue. We also found that this problem exists well beyond our local jurisdiction. Failure to address health literacy at the hospital level is a challenge nationally.

However, we were aware that some healthcare systems have made health literacy an organizational priority. We believed that if these organizations were recognized through certification, it would incentivize them to sustain these efforts. Additionally, the prospect of certification could encourage other organizations to begin implementing health literacy best practices.

Seeing the potential benefits to certification, our local committee initiated a Call for Action — forming a National Council comprised of recognized health literacy experts. The Council's task is to frame the problem and solution as compelling and critical issues linking health literacy and patient safety.

Our Proposed Solution

Enclosed you will find our proposal, which documents the need for certifying organizations that recognize health literacy as an institutional priority.

In the proposal you will find:

- A summary of what can occur when organizations do not address health literacy.
- Benefits of health literacy certification.
- Our evidence-based recommendations for health literacy certification.
- An appendix illustrating one organization's health literacy assessment, which highlights implementation of multiple health literacy strategies.

About the Council

Our Council is made up of 18 dedicated health professionals who live throughout the United States. Please see the enclosed roster of Council members to learn more about them. We have been meeting twice per month for many months to formulate the recommendations in the enclosed proposal.

We appreciate your consideration of our request to implement a health literacy certification for organizations that meet predetermined criteria. I would be pleased to answer any questions. Please contact me at this number: **216-536-4796**.

Sincerely,

Karen Komondor, BSN, RN, CCRN

St. Vincent Charity Medical Center, Cleveland, OH
Chair, National Council to Improve Patient Safety Through Health Literacy