

**Family & Community Health Sciences  
Kathleen Law, Dietetic Intern  
2023 Impact Statement  
Monmouth County  
Health Literacy**

**Rationale for Program:**

In honor of October being Health Literacy Month, Rachel Tansey of the Monmouth Country Family and Community Health Sciences (FCHS) department, and Kathleen Law, a Dietetic Intern and Master of Science student from Saint Elizabeth University, worked to bring this new program together in multiple formats. Almost 36% of US adults have low health literacy. Rates are higher among those with language barriers, the elderly, lower-income, and lower-education Americans. People with low health literacy may have trouble understanding prescription drug instructions, medical forms, and pre- or post-surgical instructions. To prevent negative effects of low health literacy, people need to use health information, not just understand it. To achieve health equity, attaining the highest level of health for all people, it is important for people to make “well-informed” decisions rather than just “appropriate” ones and take an active role in their own health. For those with low health literacy, who are unable to work with their healthcare team, issues like medication mistakes, non-compliance, poorly controlled chronic conditions, and longer/more frequent hospital stays are possible. By improving people’s health literacy, health outcomes may be better, which may also lead to reduced healthcare costs.

**What Has Been Done?**

A presentation and supporting articles were created to address health literacy in adults. These materials educate individuals on what health literacy is, who it may affect disproportionately and how so, and the barriers to health literacy. Steps to improving health literacy, including key questions to ask healthcare providers, were included, as were additional resources for people to learn more about health literacy.

**Targeted Audience:**

The educational materials on health literacy were created for adults, to be shared via a Workforce Wellness webinar and newsletter, as well as a Visions article, available to the general public, professionals, and non-profit workers.

**Outcomes:**

Feedback given in the poll at the end of the health literacy webinar show that the presentation was well received. Out of about 70 people who signed up for the webinar, there were 37 participants in attendance. Twenty-five of the participants completed the end of webinar poll. When asked about overall instruction and teaching during the webinar, as well as the program and presentation, the majority of people gave an excellent rating (68% and 64%, respectively). Of participants who responded to the poll, 92% stated they learned something new from the health literacy webinar; and 84% attended the webinar with the goal of making behavior changes. Comments made at the end of the webinar include, “great service you are providing to the community at large” and “thank you for this wonderful webinar.”

Many people that were signed up for the webinar were interested in receiving future emails, including the Visions Newsletter and information on upcoming webinars. Emails sent after the webinar would include articles on health literacy, which may reinforce the information shared during the presentation. The webinar reached many people from New Jersey and several participants from outside of the state.

**Funding Source:**

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**Partners:**

Rutgers Cooperative Extension  
Monmouth County