II
Health Literacy Environment Review

The *Health Literacy Environment Review* includes ratings for the following components:

1. Navigation
2. Print Communication
3. Oral Exchange
4. Technology
5. Policies & Protocols
6. Summary

Note: Many of the questions in this review tool are subjective; however, we have included them in an effort to raise awareness about these environmental components.

We acknowledge the fine work of Literacy Alberta (formerly Alberta Association for Adult Literacy) and note that, with their permission, we have incorporated the structure and some content from "The Literacy Audit Kit"[2]. Additionally, we thank and acknowledge the foundation work of Len and Ceci Doak[3] and the work of Jeanne McGee[4].

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[2] Literacy Alberta (formerly Alberta Association for Adult Literacy),"The Literacy Audit Kit". Developed by Susan Devins and Anne Scott in 1997. For more info on the complete kit please e-mail office@literacyalberta.ca or visit www.literacyalberta.ca.

[3] Doak, L., Doak, C., & Root, J. (1996) *Teaching patients with low literacy skills* (2nd ed). Philadelphia, PA: J.B. Lippincott Company. This is no longer in print but it is available on our Web site free of charge at www.hsph.harvard.edu/healthliteracy.

[4] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (1999) *Writing and designing print materials for beneficiaries: A guide for state Medicaid agencies* (HCFA Publication No. 10145). Baltimore, MD: Author: Jeanne McGee.

Part 1: Navigation Rating

> *Please check the ONE response that most accurately describes your hospital*
> *or health center today using the following rating scale:*
> **1.** **This is something that is not done.**
> **2.** **This is done, but needs some improvements.**
> **3.** **This is done well.**

A. Telephone System

	1	2	3
1. When a phone call is answered (either by person or an automated phone system), there is an option to hear information in a language other than English.	☐	☐	☐
2. If there is an automated phone system, there is an option to speak with an operator or help desk.	☐	☐	☐
3. If there is an automated phone system, there is an option to repeat menu items.	☐	☐	☐
4. Information is offered (either by person or an automated phone system) with plain, everyday words.	☐	☐	☐

B. Entrance

	1	2	3
5. The healthcare facility's name is clearly displayed on the outside of the building.	☐	☐	☐
6. All entry signs are visible from the street.	☐	☐	☐
7. The signs use plain, everyday words such as "Walk-In" rather than formal words such as "Ambulatory Care".	☐	☐	☐

C. Lobby

	1	2	3
8. There is a map in the lobby.	☐	☐	☐
9. The map includes a key.	☐	☐	☐
10. The map shows the present location with a "you are here" and/or a star or symbol.	☐	☐	☐
11. Handheld maps are available for people to take with them.	☐	☐	☐
12. There is a welcome or information desk.	☐	☐	☐
13. A sign indicates the welcome or information desk.	☐	☐	☐

Part 1: Navigation Rating *(continued)*

> *Please check the ONE response that most accurately describes your hospital*
> *or health center today using the following rating scale:*
> 1.   **This is something that is not done.**
> 2.   **This is done, but needs some improvements.**
> 3.   **This is done well.**

D. Staff Assistance

	1	2	3
14. Staff or volunteers are available at or near the main entrance to help visitors.	☐	☐	☐
15. Multilingual staff or volunteers are available at or near the main entrance to help visitors.	☐	☐	☐
16. Staff or volunteers are present at the welcome or information desk.	☐	☐	☐
17. Multilingual staff or volunteers are available at the welcome or information desk.	☐	☐	☐
18. Staff or volunteers wear identification such as a button, uniform, or nametag.	☐	☐	☐

E. Hallways: Navigation Ease

	1	2	3
19. Maps are posted at various locations around the facility.	☐	☐	☐
20. Words used for locations on signs throughout the facility remain consistent (i.e. the "Cafeteria" is always referred to as "Cafeteria", not as "Café" or "Restaurant").	☐	☐	☐
21. Consistent symbols/graphics are used on signs throughout the facility.	☐	☐	☐
22. Overhead signs use large, clearly visible lettering.	☐	☐	☐
23. Wall (eye level) signs use large, clearly visible lettering.	☐	☐	☐
24. Signs are written in English and in the primary languages of the populations being served (i.e., if most of the patients speak English and Spanish, signs are written in English and Spanish).	☐	☐	☐
25. Color codes are used consistently on the walls or floors throughout the facility to mark paths to and from various sections of the facility.	☐	☐	☐

Part 1: Navigation Rating *(continued)*

> *Please check the ONE response that most accurately describes your hospital or health center today using the following rating scale:*
> 1. **This is something that is not done.**
> 2. **This is done, but needs some improvements.**
> 3. **This is done well.**

F. Service and Specialty Areas (Medical Records, Pharmacy, MRI, etc.)

	1	2	3
26. The name of the clinic/service area is clearly posted.	☐	☐	☐
27. Sign-in procedures are clearly indicated.	☐	☐	☐
28. Staff offer help for completing any needed paperwork.	☐	☐	☐
29. Materials provided to patients have been assessed for their reading grade level (8th grade or below).	☐	☐	☐
30. Materials provided to patients have been assessed for their cultural appropriateness.	☐	☐	☐
31. Materials provided to patients are written in the primary languages of the populations being served.	☐	☐	☐

Part 1: Navigation Rating Summary

Calculating Your Navigation Score			
Response	**Tally**	**Multiply**	**Score**
1. **This is something that is not done.**		**x 1 =**	
2. **This is done, but needs some improvements.**		**x 2 =**	
3. **This is done well.**		**x 3 =**	
		TOTAL SCORE =	

Interpreting Your Navigation Score	
Score Range	**Next Steps**
0-30	**Begin a focused initiative to eliminate literacy-related barriers.**
31-61	**Augment efforts to eliminate literacy-related barriers.**
62-93	**Continue to monitor and eliminate literacy-related barriers.**

Part 2: Print Communication Rating

<u>Type</u> of material being assessed (please check one):

□ Community relations □ Patient education materials
□ Patient/client orientation □ Legal materials
□ Forms patients fill out □ Discharge preparation
□ Follow up notifications

<u>Purpose</u> of the material being assessed (please check one):

□ Deliver information (e.g., patient education about asthma)
□ Provide directions (e.g., directions for using a peak flow meter)
□ Collect information (e.g., a health history form)

Please check the ONE response that most accurately describes the print material using the following rating scale:

1. **This is something that is not done.**
2. **This is done, but needs some improvements.**
3. **This is done well.**

A. Writing Style

	1	2	3
1. The material emphasizes and summarizes the main points.	□	□	□
2. The information is grouped into meaningful sections.	□	□	□
3. The material is written in the active voice and in a conversational style.	□	□	□
4. The material uses devices to engage and involve the reader, such as question and answer format, true-or-false, stories, or dialogues.	□	□	□
5. The words and sentences are generally short, simple, and direct.	□	□	□
6. If medical terms (such as "dosage" or "monitoring") are used, they are clearly explained with helpful examples.	□	□	□
7. The reading grade level is that of the average U.S. adult (8th grade or below).	□	□	□
8. Translations use plain, everyday words, and short sentences.	□	□	□

Part 2: Print Communication Rating *(continued)*

Please check the ONE response that most accurately describes the print material your hospital or health center uses, using the following rating scale:

1. **This is something that is not done.**
2. **This is done, but needs some improvements.**
3. **This is done well.**

B. Organization and Design

	1	2	3
9. The material uses headings, subheadings, or other devices to signal what is coming next.	☐	☐	☐
10. The labels for sections, headings, and subheadings are clear.	☐	☐	☐
11. The material looks uncluttered, with generous margins and plenty of white space.	☐	☐	☐
12. The graphic design uses devices such as contrast, bullets, and indentation to signal the main points and make the text easy to skim.	☐	☐	☐
13. The material uses bullets effectively (size, shape, spacing, and color.)	☐	☐	☐
14. Explanatory illustrations, diagrams, tables, charts, and graphs are clearly labeled and placed near the text that introduces them.	☐	☐	☐

C. Type Style, Size of Print, and Contrast with Paper

	1	2	3
15. The font size is 12-point or greater.	☐	☐	☐
16. The text uses CAPITAL letters only when needed grammatically.	☐	☐	☐
17. The text avoids splitting words across two lines.	☐	☐	☐
18. There is contrast between the printed text and the paper.	☐	☐	☐
19. The print does not overlay pictures or designs.	☐	☐	☐

Part 2: Print Communication Rating *(continued)*

Please check the ONE response that most accurately describes the print material your hospital or health center uses, using the following rating scale:

1. **This is something that is not done.**
2. **This is done, but needs some improvements.**
3. **This is done well.**

D. Photographs, Illustrations, Symbols, and Diversity

	1	2	3
20. The material uses photos, illustrations, symbols, patterns, and other visuals to reinforce key messages.	☐	☐	☐
21. The material avoids using cartoons, humor, and caricature, which may be understood as offensive.	☐	☐	☐
22. The people and activities shown in photos or illustrations are contemporary.	☐	☐	☐
23. The people and activities shown in photos or illustrations are representative (in their demographics, physical appearance, behavior, and cultural elements) of the intended audience of the materials.	☐	☐	☐
24. The material shows awareness of and respect for diversity, and uses culturally appropriate words and examples.	☐	☐	☐

Part 2: Print Communication Rating Summary

Calculating Your Print Communication Score			
Response	**Tally**	**Multiply**	**Score**
1. **This is something that is not done.**		**x 1 =**	
2. **This is done, but needs some improvements.**		**x 2 =**	
3. **This is done well.**		**x 3 =**	
		TOTAL SCORE =	

Interpreting Your Print Communication Score	
Score Range	**Next Steps**
0-23	**Begin a focused initiative to eliminate literacy-related barriers.**
24-47	**Augment efforts to eliminate literacy-related barriers.**
48-72	**Continue to monitor and eliminate literacy-related barriers.**

Part 3: Oral Exchange Rating

> *Please check the ONE response that most accurately describes staff oral communication skills at your hospital or health center today using the following rating scale:*
> 1. **This is something that is not done.**
> 2. **This is done, but needs some improvements.**
> 3. **This is done well.**

Oral Exchange

	1	2	3
1. Staff offers everyone help (i.e., filling out forms, getting directions) regardless of appearance.	☐	☐	☐
2. Multilingual staff are available to help people.	☐	☐	☐
3. Staff uses sentences that are short, direct, and use plain, everyday words.	☐	☐	☐
4. Staff adjusts the pace of their speech when they work with people for whom English is a second language.	☐	☐	☐
5. Staff checks in with patients by asking "Am I being clear?" rather than "Do you understand?"	☐	☐	☐
6. Staff asks patients if they have any questions.	☐	☐	☐
7. Staff uses audio and/or videotapes when such materials are available.	☐	☐	☐
8. Translation services are available or can be called in with short notice.	☐	☐	☐

Part 3: Oral Exchange Rating Summary

Calculating Your Oral Exchange Score			
Response	**Tally**	**Multiply**	**Score**
1. **This is something that is not done.**		**x 1 =**	
2. **This is done, but needs some improvements.**		**x 2 =**	
3. **This is done well.**		**x 3 =**	
		TOTAL SCORE =	

Interpreting Your Oral Exchange Score	
Score Range	**Next Steps**
0-8	**Begin a focused initiative to eliminate literacy-related barriers.**
9-16	**Augment efforts to eliminate literacy-related barriers.**
17-24	**Continue to monitor and eliminate literacy-related barriers.**

Part 4: Technology Rating

Please check the ONE response that most accurately describes the current technology your hospital or health center uses, using the following rating scale:

    1.   **This is something that is not done.**
    2.   **This is done, but needs some improvements.**
    3.   **This is done well.**

Technology

Televisions	1	2	3
1. Televisions are available to patients in one or more locations (i.e., waiting areas, testing sites, pharmacy).	☐	☐	☐
2. Televisions are equipped for DVD or VCR use.	☐	☐	☐
3. Televisions are used for orientation purposes.	☐	☐	☐
4. Televisions are used for educational purposes.	☐	☐	☐
Telephones			
5. House telephones are available to patients in one or more locations (i.e., hallways, waiting areas, testing sites, pharmacy).	☐	☐	☐
6. House telephones offer directions to people throughout the facility.	☐	☐	☐
7. House telephones offer links to translation services.	☐	☐	☐
Computers			
8. Computers are available to patients in one or more locations (i.e., waiting areas, testing sites, pharmacy, resource rooms).	☐	☐	☐
9. Computers are programmed for orientation purposes.	☐	☐	☐
10. Computers are programmed for educational purposes.	☐	☐	☐
11. Computers have Internet connections.	☐	☐	☐
12. Computers have headsets connected to them.	☐	☐	☐
13. Exam rooms have computers where providers can show patients parts of their electronic medical records.	☐	☐	☐
14. Providers can print out specific patient education materials.	☐	☐	☐
Kiosks			
15. Kiosks are available to patients in one or more locations (i.e., waiting areas, testing sites, pharmacy, resource rooms).	☐	☐	☐
16. Kiosks are programmed for orientation purposes.	☐	☐	☐
17. Kiosks are programmed for educational purposes.	☐	☐	☐
18. Kiosks have headsets connected to them.	☐	☐	☐

Part 4: Technology Rating Summary

Calculating Your Technology Score			
Response	**Tally**	**Multiply**	**Score**
1. **This is something that is not done.**		**x 1 =**	
2. **This is done, but needs some improvements.**		**x 2 =**	
3. **This is done well.**		**x 3 =**	
		TOTAL SCORE =	

Interpreting Your Technology Score	
Score Range	**Next Steps**
0-17	**Begin a focused initiative to eliminate literacy-related barriers.**
18-35	**Augment efforts to eliminate literacy-related barriers.**
36-54	**Continue to monitor and eliminate literacy-related barriers.**

Part 5: Policies & Protocols Rating

> *Please check the ONE response that most accurately describes the policies and protocols at your hospital or health center today, using the following rating scale:*
> **1.** **This is something that is not done.**
> **2.** **This is done, but needs some improvements.**
> **3.** **This is done well.**

A. Use of Print

	1	2	3
1. All print materials for public display use plain, everyday words and phrases.	☐	☐	☐
2. All print materials for patients are written at a reading grade level of 8 or below.	☐	☐	☐
3. All new print materials are piloted with members of the intended audience.	☐	☐	☐
4. All patients have an opportunity to ask questions about policies and protocols.	☐	☐	☐

B. Oral Exchange

	1	2	3
5. All staff and volunteers use plain, everyday words and phrases in all discussions with patients.	☐	☐	☐
6. Staff trained in translations services are available.	☐	☐	☐
7. Protocols prohibit the use of children or untrained staff or volunteers as medical translators.	☐	☐	☐
8. All translators use plain, everyday words and phrases.	☐	☐	☐

Part 5: Policies & Protocols Rating *(continued)*

> *Please check the ONE response that most accurately describes the policies and protocols at your hospital or health center today, using the following rating scale:*
> 1.   **This is something that is not done.**
> 2.   **This is done, but needs some improvements.**
> 3.   **This is done well.**

C. Staff Orientation

	1	2	3
9. The facility holds an orientation program for all staff and volunteers who may interact with patients. All staff and volunteers include:			
a. Administrative staff (support staff, coordinator)	☐	☐	☐
b. Intake staff	☐	☐	☐
c. Discharge coordinator	☐	☐	☐
d. Nursing (RNs, LPNs)	☐	☐	☐
e. Medical (MDs, NPs, PAs, DOs, DMD)	☐	☐	☐
f. Pharmacy (pharmacists, educators, technicians)	☐	☐	☐
g. Allied health professionals (social workers , physical therapists, occupational therapists, educators, medical assistants, x-ray technicians)	☐	☐	☐
h. Translation service staff	☐	☐	☐
i. Telephone and help desk staff	☐	☐	☐
j. Custodial staff	☐	☐	☐
k. Volunteers	☐	☐	☐
10. Orientation for all staff and volunteers includes a description of the physical layout and design of the facility.	☐	☐	☐
11. Orientation for all staff and volunteers includes a discussion about literacy issues.	☐	☐	☐
12. Orientation for all staff and volunteers includes information about the patient population (cultures, languages and other demographics).	☐	☐	☐

Part 5: Policies & Protocols Rating *(continued)*

Please check the ONE response that most accurately describes the policies and protocols at your hospital or health center today, using the following rating scale:

1.   **This is something that is not done.**
2.   **This is done, but needs some improvements.**
3.   **This is done well.**

D. Staff Skills Building (print communication and oral exchange)

	1	2	3
13. The facility offers on-site training or workshops about health literacy issues related to print communication for all relevant staff and volunteers.	☐	☐	☐
14. The facility offers on-site training or workshops about health literacy issues related to oral exchange for all relevant staff and volunteers.	☐	☐	☐
15. The facility offers on-site training or workshops about how to use existing and new technologies (i.e., exam room computers, use of electronic medical records) for all relevant staff and volunteers.	☐	☐	☐
16. The facility offers CME credit courses related to health literacy and communication for all professional staff.	☐	☐	☐
17. The facility offers employees adult education and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses to build literacy skills.	☐	☐	☐
18. All staff know about adult literacy resources in the community. If asked, they could tell a patient or fellow employee where to get help to improve literacy skills.	☐	☐	☐
19. The facility has a resource room available to all staff and volunteers with DVDs, booklets, Web sites, etc. about health literacy issues.	☐	☐	☐

Part 5: Policies & Protocols Rating Summary

Calculating Your Policies & Protocols Score			
Response	**Tally**	**Multiply**	**Score**
1. **This is something that is not done.**		**x 1 =**	
2. **This is done, but needs some improvements.**		**x 2 =**	
3. **This is done well.**		**x 3 =**	
		TOTAL SCORE =	

Interpreting Your Policies & Protocols Score	
Score Range	**Next Steps**
0-18	**Begin a focused initiative to eliminate literacy-related barriers.**
19-37	**Augment efforts to eliminate literacy-related barriers.**
38-57	**Continue to monitor and eliminate literacy-related barriers.**

Part 6: Summary Sheet for Review & Analysis

Calculating Your Overall Score for the Health Literacy Environment Review	
Section of Review	**Score for Section**
1. Navigation	
2. Print Communication	
3. Oral Exchange	
4. Technology	
5. Policies & Protocols	
TOTAL =	

Interpreting Your Overall Score for the Health Literacy Environment Review	
Score Range	**Next Steps**
0-100	**Begin a focused initiative to eliminate literacy-related barriers.**
101-200	**Augment efforts to eliminate literacy-related barriers.**
201-300	**Continue to monitor and eliminate literacy-related barriers.**

Part 6: Summary Sheet for Review & Analysis *(continued)*

Institution-Based Health Literacy Initiative

Strengths

_____

_____

_____

Weaknesses

_____

_____

_____

Priority/Start Point

_____

_____

_____

Key Staff Involved in Institution-Based Health Literacy Initiative

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____