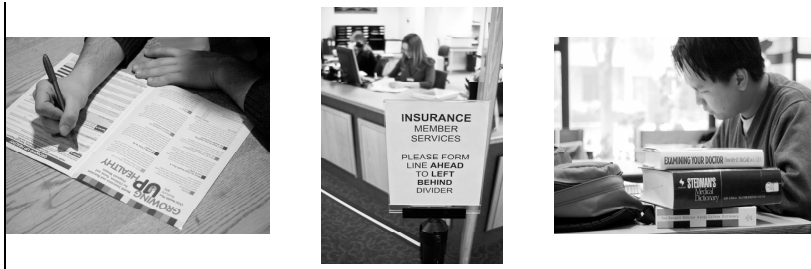

APPENDIX B:



Insights from Colleagues



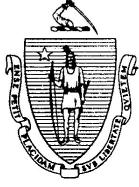
Massachusetts Department of Public Health



Vermont Department of Health



Oregon Department of Human Services



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Executive Office of Health and Human Services

Department of Public Health

250 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02108-4619

Dear Colleague:

We are pleased to share with you “**Health Literacy: Partners for Action**,” a guide for health departments to plan and implement forums on health literacy.

This guide was developed to provide health departments with the tools necessary to implement a Health Literacy Forum, as well additional suggestions for follow-up workshops. “**Health Literacy: Partners for Action**” is a “how-to” manual which includes:

- A detailed step-by-step planning process;
- Helpful activities and sample materials for the forum;
- Background resource information on health literacy, invaluable to both program planners and participants;
- Suggestions for possible follow-up activities.

This important new resource is now available to assist us as we face the increasing challenges of meeting the diverse needs of the populations that we serve. In order to improve health outcomes, we must enhance our communication strategies. In addition, we can strengthen our efforts to improve health literacy by collaborating with others who understand communication barriers and who work to help people overcome them, such as adult educators and librarians.

In the United States today, there is a growing awareness about the gap between the functional literacy skills of the average adult and the skills needed **to read, understand and act on health information**. In fact, “Healthy People 2010: Goals and Objectives of the Nation” identifies Objective 11.2: “To improve the health literacy of persons with marginal or limited literacy skills.”

In Massachusetts, we have had the benefit of being one of the pilot state health departments for this forum. Heightened awareness within our state has led to increased activities to address these concerns in public health. We have conducted additional workshops both within our own department and with our contracted vendors. In addition, we pilot tested health materials at a local adult education center.

I think you will find this guide to be a useful and thorough companion as you work to improve health literacy in your state or community.

Sincerely,

Gail Ballester, MEd.
Health Education Director



Vermont Department of Health
Division of Health Improvement
Dental Health Services

Agency of Human Services

February 6, 2004

Dear Colleagues:

In December of 1999, the Vermont Department of Health (VDH) was honored to host a workshop on Health and Literacy presented by Dr. Rima Rudd. The session was well attended and health department staff gave very positive feedback on the workshop.

The training materials used by Dr. Rudd were excellent and have been incorporated in the "Health Literacy: Partners for Action" guide. Other health departments are sure to find this guide invaluable as they address the critical need of improving communication with members of the public.

Dr. Rudd's presentation in Vermont inspired a related follow-up training session, held on October 6, 2000 where I and other health department staff provided information on developing easy-to-read publications. Readability testing has been incorporated in the process of creating VDH publications, and layout and typeface choices are selected to make documents easier to read. Health literacy training also influenced our work with physicians being trained to provide brief interventions with smokers.

The Vermont Department of Health benefited by serving as a pilot state for the Health and Literacy Studies group led by Dr. Rudd, and other state health departments stand to profit greatly from this newly developed resource. The guide receives our highest recommendation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Barbara A. Moeykens'.

Barbara A. Moeykens, M.S.
Social Marketing Specialist

108 Cherry Street • PO Box 70 • Burlington, VT 05402-0070 TEL 802-863-7341 FAX 802-651-1634



800 NE Oregon Street, Suite 550
Portland, OR 97232

MULTNOMAH COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

PDES

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES



Phone #: (503) 731-443
Fax #: (503) 731-860

February 11, 2004

Emily Zobel
Coordinator, Health Literacy Studies
Harvard School of Public Health
Landmark Center
401 Park Drive
Boston, MA 02115

Dear Colleagues,

Our state Health Department was lucky to host Rima Rudd during the pilot phase of the Health and Adult Literacy and Learning forum. Many people across several program areas attended and remarked to me afterwards that they had found it relevant and enjoyable. We found it to be an insightful and pragmatic summary of an important field that many of us really didn't know that much about. The presentation was valuable for staff across all phases of program development, implementation, and evaluation. It was particularly helpful to learn about resources to help guide us in the next steps to match our materials more appropriately with our clients.

I appreciated the approach that blended solid scientific evidence with practical strategies and therefore skillfully targeted the message for public health professionals. I would highly recommend the recently-developed manual as a tool to help state and local health agencies host their own health literacy forum.

Sincerely,

David Dowler, Ph.D.
Research Evaluation Supervisor

PROGRAM DESIGN & EVALUATION SERVICES

