

October is Health Literacy Month



JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (Dec. 11, 2012) Lt. Mario Bencivenga, an occupational therapist at Naval Hospital Jacksonville, applies a counterforce brace to the forearm of Lt. Cmdr. Angela Powell during a check-up. The hospital's state-of-the-art facility is poised to become a vital regional warrior care center. Equipment includes an aquatic treadmill for patients to build strength and fully equipped living quarters for patients to regain the skills of daily living. (U.S. Navy photo by Jacob Sippel/Released) <http://www.navy.mil/management/photodb/photos/121211-N-AW702-005.jpg>

Health literacy is the ability to access and comprehend basic health information that empowers individuals to make educated health decisions.¹ People with accurate knowledge about the body and disease will have a better understanding of the relationship between lifestyle choices and their health, such as the impact of exercise and nutrition on overall health and wellness. Health literacy also affects a person's ability to take appropriate action in response to health-related news and announcements. For Sailors and Marines, health literacy is critical because a lack of proficiency not only limits their ability to make appropriate health decisions, it detracts from their military readiness and resilience.

The National Assessment of Adult Literacy reports that only 11 percent of service members and adult beneficiaries are proficient in health literacy.¹ While this statistic is comparable to the U.S. adult civilian population (12 percent¹), it is no less alarming. Limited literacy skills can have real life

Calling All Partners: Take Our Partner Satisfaction Questionnaire!

To make sure you get as much out of our partnership as you would like, we are conducting an All-Partner Satisfaction Questionnaire.

The questionnaire is anonymous and should take between 5 and 15 minutes for you to complete. It is designed to help us understand what we can do to better support you in our partnership. It also gives you a place to suggest additional information/resources you would like to receive from HPW, and to voice ideas for future engagement and collaboration.

Also, as a reminder, don't forget to attend the virtual All-Partner Town Hall on October 15 at 1200 (an invitation was sent via email on September 24, 2014). During the event, two partners will give a short presentation of how they currently engage with HPW. We hope their presentations will spur discussion among all of our partners on what HPW can do to better serve your organization's needs.

Please contact Erin Healy with any questions you may have.





consequences. For example, Sailors and Marines who lack proficiency could struggle with tasks that potentially impact their health, such as accurately following dosing instructions on a prescription drug bottle to help quit tobacco or understanding a standardized chart to determine childhood immunization schedules.¹

Resources You Can Use

Please consider distributing the following resources to your audiences throughout the month of October. If you reuse or reproduce any of these materials, we request you please include the following attribution: "Content courtesy of the Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center's Health Promotion and Wellness Department" and [email](#) to let us know so that we may track the reach of our materials.

Factsheet: Easy Ways to Improve Patients' Health Literacy

By using plain language and asking questions to ensure that patients understand the information or instructions, health information disseminators can provide more actionable health information. [Click here](#) for helpful tips that can help improve the overall health of Sailors and Marines.

Factsheet: Four Tips on Talking to Your Doctor for Better Health

Discussing certain health concerns can be awkward or even a little embarrassing. As health information disseminators, you can ease your patients' discomfort by encouraging them to seek care and providing them with these [tips](#).

Factsheet: Cut Through the Clutter: Find Health Info on the Web

While the Internet can be a quick and easy resource for the latest health news and reports, it can provide a wealth of misinformation as well. [Click here](#) to learn more about how you can help your patients evaluate the authenticity of the websites they are searching and separate fact from fiction.

Blog: Making Health Information Make Sense

As health professionals, our job is to take clinical and technical information and make it personal to the individual or group with whom we are speaking. [Click here](#) to learn more about what you can do to make a difference.

Additional HPW Resources

Check out the additional resources available to you! These innovative and evidence-based health promotion and wellness resources and services were developed to facilitate readiness and resilience, prevent illness and injury, hasten recovery, and promote lifelong healthy behaviors and lifestyles for Sailors and Marines.

- [HPW Homepage](#)
- [HPW Partnership Factsheet](#)
- [HP Toolbox](#)
- [Archived Webinars](#)
- [Reproducible Materials](#)

To learn how our programs can help your service members, please visit our [October Health Promotion Toolbox](#).







Social Media Messages

The following social media messages will direct you to resources for Sailors and Marines. Please feel free to share with your audiences. Like us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Pinterest](#)! Facebook and Twitter Messages for you to post:


Social media message 1:

 Make sure the health information and resources you share are right for those you are reaching out to. Here are some tips to help! #HealthLit <http://go.usa.gov/vXYB>


Social media message 2:

 Only 12 percent of US adults have proficient health literacy skills according to the National Assessment of Adult Literacy. <http://go.usa.gov/v8G9>


Social media message 3:

 Hey Health Practitioners! Wondering how you can improve your patients' #HealthLit? These tips could help Sailors and Marines in your care better understand information and instructions. <http://go.usa.gov/vXYQ>

Social media message 4:

 The Internet can be a quick and easy place to find the credible health information you are looking for. However, you may also find a wealth of misinformation. Use these tips to Cut Through the Clutter. <http://go.usa.gov/vXgj>


Social media message 5:

 Be prepared to get the most out of your next doctor's visit!

- Make a list
- Be detailed
- Be honest
- Ask questions

Learn more:
#HealthLit <http://go.usa.gov/v8A5>

Social media message 6:

 Take the mystery out of your next doctor's visit with this glossary of common medical terms: #HealthLit <http://bit.ly/1rMrNmN>

[Contact us](#) if your organization would like to collaborate with us on social media messages or if you would like us to share your messages on our [Facebook page](#).





Webinar Calendar

We host monthly healthy living webinars for health educators and other health professionals to create awareness of the health promotion and prevention resources, tools, and programs offered by the HPW Department to motivate healthy behaviors.

Date	Webinar Title	Time
October 15, 2014	All-Partner Virtual Town Hall	1200-1300 ET
November 12, 2014	Addressing Tobacco on a Military Installation: A Collaborative Approach to Reducing Use	1200-1300 ET

For many of our webinars we offer continuing education credit hours (CECH) for Certified Health Education Specialists (CHES). If you are interested in attending one of our webinars click [here](#) for registration details.

Upcoming Training

Our education and training courses equip Navy and Marine Corps command personnel with the tools, programs, and interventions to implement at the local command level. To learn more, visit our [Health Promotion training page](#).

Contact Us

Please let us know how we can help highlight your resources for service members, veterans, families, and health professionals. We welcome your [feedback and suggestions](#), and look forward to continued collaboration with your organization.

References

¹ U.S Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. America's Health Literacy: Why We Need Accessible Health Information. <http://www.health.gov/communication/literacy/issuebrief/>. Published 2008. Accessed September 12, 2014.

