

Unified Health Communication: Bridging the Gap in Access

Linda Kwon, MPH
Lauresa Washington, MHSA
Laura Shepherd, Moderator

Health Resources and Services Administration
Office of Pharmacy Affairs and HIV/AIDS Bureau
Rockville, MD

The Unified Health Communications (UHC) Approach



Your Unified Health Communication (UHC) I.Q.

- ▶ Is health literacy, limited English proficiency and cultural competency a challenge to address within your organization?
- ▶ What are your insights about or experiences with UHC?

HRSA's Unified Health Communications Approach

“HRSA supports and promotes a unified health communications perspective that:

- ▶ addresses cultural competency, limited English Proficiency, and health literacy in an integrated approach
- ▶ develops the skills and abilities needed by HRSA-funded providers and staff to deliver the best quality health care effectively to the diverse populations they serve.”¹

¹ HRSA POM- 2007-01: Cultural and Linguistic Competence, page

The Ryan White Community

- ▶ The data show that the Ryan White community has been successful in reaching its target populations
- ▶ It is enrolling people disproportionately affected by HIV disease – the under- and uninsured, the poor, ethnic and racial minorities, women, and people of all ages.
- ▶ <http://hab.hrsa.gov/reports/data2a.htm>

HIV/AIDS Among Ethnic and Racial Minorities

- ▶ African Americans and Latinos express higher levels of urgency and concern about HIV/AIDS than whites along a variety of measures, and support greater levels of government investment.

- ▶ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Fact Sheet: Estimates of New HIV Infections in the United States; August 2008.*

UHC Wokshop Objectives

- ▶ **Demonstrate** the importance of an integrated approach to effective health communication
- ▶ **Identify** the basic concepts and tenets of health literacy, cultural competency and limited English proficiency
- ▶ **Recognize** the benefits of using this interactive online training tool that has been accredited by several health professions organizations

Our Roles

Low literacy has been linked to adverse health outcomes such as less understanding and use of preventive services and higher rates of hospitalization.

Primary responsibility for addressing health literacy lies with healthcare providers, public health professionals, and healthcare and public health systems.

Why Training?

- ▶ Health care providers funded through HRSA grants need to understand how to be effective in cross-cultural and language, appropriate communications, as well as general health literacy issues.
 - Over 65 percent of patients in HRSA-funded programs are culturally diverse
 - More than 1 to 3 adults lack sufficient health literacy to interpret an OTC drug label, know when a child should receive a vaccine, use a BMI chart

HRSA's UHC Training Course Goal

- ▶ **Improve your patient communication skills**
- ▶ **Increase your awareness and knowledge of the three main factors that affect your communication with patients: health literacy, cultural competency and low English proficiency**
- ▶ **Implement patient-centered communication practices that demonstrate cultural competency and appropriately address patients with limited health literacy and low English proficiency**

Main Screen for Training Course



UHC Course Composition

- ▶ Five Interactive Modules
 - Health Communication
 - Health Literacy
 - Cultural Competency
 - Limited English Proficiency
 - The Capstone

- ▶ Course Length

4–5 hours with ability to start and stop during course

UHC Attributes

- ▶ Pre and Post Test Assessments
- ▶ CMEs, CEUs and CHES Credits
Up to 5 CEs awarded from:
 - The American Academy of Physician Assistants
 - American Pharmacist Association
 - American Association for Health Education
 - Medical Library Association
 - National Committee for Quality Assurance

Module 1 – Health Communication

OBJECTIVE

1. Present how a unified approach to health communications includes addressing limited health literacy, cultural competency, and limited English proficiency

Module 2 – Health Literacy

OBJECTIVES

1. Introduction to Health Literacy
2. Working with Patients/Consumers with Limited Health Literacy

Module 3 – Cultural Competency

OBJECTIVE

1. Cultural Competence and Health Communications

Module 4 – Limited English Proficiency

OBJECTIVES

1. Introduction to LEP
2. Working with Patient/Consumers with Limited English Proficiency

Module 5 – Capstone

OBJECTIVE

1. Ability to apply a unified health communication approach to interactions with patients with limited health literacy, LEP, and/or cultural differences.

Accessing the UHC

- ▶ **Who:** HRSA Staff and Grantees and other public health professionals
- ▶ **Where/How:** Access course on HRSA Internet

<http://www.hrsa.gov/healthliteracy/training>

For more information about the HRSA UHC

Len Epstein

Senior Advisor, Clinical Quality & Culture
Health Resources & Services Administration

Office of Health Equity

301-594-3803 V – 301-443-7853 F

lepstein@hrsa.gov

<http://www.hrsa.gov/culturalcompetence>