

VIA ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION: definehealthliteracy@hhs.gov

July 30, 2019

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
Don Wright, MD, MPH
Director, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
Rockville, MD 20852

Re: Updated Health Literacy Definition for Healthy People 2030

Dear Dr. Wright:

The American Association of Diabetes Educators (AADE) appreciates the opportunity to respond to the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion's (ODPHP) solicitation for written comments on the updated health literacy definition for Healthy People 2030. The updated definition is as follows:

"Health literacy occurs when a society provides accurate health information and services that people can easily find, understand, and use to inform their decisions and actions."

AADE is an interdisciplinary association of healthcare professionals dedicated to integrated clinical and self-management as a key component in the care of people with diabetes and related chronic conditions. AADE represents over 14,000 professional members including nurses, nurse practitioners, PAs, dietitians, pharmacists, exercise specialists, and others. AADE has a vast network of clinicians working with people who have, are affected by, or are at risk for diabetes. Health literacy plays an important role in diabetes self-management and can affect diabetes-related health outcomes. As such, AADE has offered comments on the updated definition of health literacy proposed for Healthy People 2030.

AADE believes there are strengths in the updated definition, specifically with the addition of the statement related to providing *accurate* health information. Health information is readily and easily accessible to individuals through many channels including television, smart phones and apps, the Internet, friends, family and social media platforms. However, the information presented may be inaccurate or misleading to individuals seeking health information. AADE values ODPHP's emphasis on providing accurate health information and remains committed to contributing to the body of accurate health information.

In addition to focusing on the importance of providing accurate health information, AADE proposes the following edits to further enhance the updated definition:

- Health literacy incorporates the ability to read. AADE believes the verb “read” should be included in the definition.
- Numeracy also plays an important role in health literacy, and to reflect this, AADE recommends including the word “interpret.”
- AADE urges ODPHP to consider a person’s culture and how that impacts how they access health information.

AADE has incorporated our proposed edits in the definition below:

*“Health literacy occurs when a society provides **culturally sensitive and** accurate health information and services that people can easily find, **read**, understand, **interpret** and use to inform their decisions and actions.”*

Below is a list of references that support AADE’s suggested changes:

Bailey, S. C., Brega, A. G., Crutchfield, T. M., Elasy, T., Herr, H., Kaphingst, K., ... Schillinger, D. (2014). Update on Health Literacy and Diabetes. *The Diabetes Educator*, 40(5), 581–604. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0145721714540220>

Foronda, C., Baptiste, D.-L., Reinholdt, M. M., & Ousman, K. (2016). Cultural Humility: A Concept Analysis. *Journal of Transcultural Nursing*, 27(3), 210–217. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1043659615592677>

Lee, E., Kim, C., Lee, J., & Moon, S.H. (2017). Self-administered health literacy instruments for people with diabetes: systematic review of measurement properties. *Journal of advanced nursing*, 73 9, 2035-2048. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.13256>

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AADE appreciates the opportunity to comment on an updated health literacy definition for Healthy People 2030. Please contact Kate Thomas, Director of Advocacy, by phone at 312-601-4821 or via email at kthomas@aadenet.org, should you have any questions regarding AADE’s comments and edits.

Sincerely,



Charles Macfarlane, FACHE, CAE
Chief Executive Officer