

Helping Wisconsin Patients Better Understand Their Medicines

Wisconsin Health Literacy Expands Prescription Label Project



The expansion will especially target pharmacies in counties with low health literacy rates.

A mother gave her child 5 ml of oxycodone for pain instead of 1 ml every 4 hours as needed. She mistook the strength of the medication (5mg/5ml) for the dose she was supposed to give.

A woman was rushed to the ER due to an overdose of a diabetes medicine. She was taking almost three times the recommended dosage. The instructions read “take up to 3 tablets every 24 hours” and she understood it to be “3 tablets, 3 times a day every 24 hours.”

These are just a few of the stories Wisconsin Health Literacy (WHL), a division of Wisconsin Literacy, Inc., collected in its medication label survey. The survey showed that 1 in 4 people have trouble understanding their medications. WHL was awarded a three-year, \$446,000 grant from the Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin endowment of the Medical College of Wisconsin to expand the number of Wisconsin pharmacies using an easier-to-read prescription medicine label designed to help patients better understand how and when to take their medicines. This will build on a previous two-year grant in which five pilot pharmacies implemented new labels at 61 pharmacy sites.

Let’s Talk About Pain Medicines Workshops

America is in the midst of an opioid epidemic, and it is a driving factor in the decreasing life expectancy for anyone between the ages of 25 and 44 according to The Washington Post. Regrettably, Wisconsin is seeing similar concerning data. Between 2014 and 2015, the number of deaths due to overdose rose. “There is no demographic, there is no geographic region, there is no socioeconomic pocket, there is no racial undertone to this epidemic,” said Lieutenant Governor Rebecca Kleefisch, who co-chairs the Governor’s Task Force on Opioid Abuse.

WHL wants to be a part of the solution and is partnering with trusted community-based organizations to deliver 64 workshops to help educate adults on the safe and effective use of prescription opioids in its *Let’s Talk About Pain Medicines* workshops. Support for the workshops is coming from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services Minority Health Program, Security Health Plan, and the Wisconsin Medical Society Foundation.

The workshops will cover various topics, such as understanding of label directions (when and how long to take opioids) and possible side effects. Prevention will be a strong theme with a focus on an increased awareness of the high risks of using opioids and the ways parents can reduce the risks of opioid abuse in their families by limiting access. Information will be provided in both English and Spanish.



Participants at a recent Wisconsin Health Literacy workshop

Learning for a Lifetime

A Message from the Director, Michele Erikson

It is easy to assume that most of us learn to read at 4-8 years of age upon entering elementary school. But not all children are successful at acquiring this decoding skill. Why is this and what needs to happen before a child goes to school to make reading possible?

An incredible amount of brain building happens at 0-3 years. In fact, research shows 85 percent of the brain is already developed by age 3. The face-to-face oral literacy that parents and caregivers engage in with children is a critical element that builds brains and prepares them for later learning.

Parents who struggle with reading need to know that their voice and conversations are the most important tools they have to help their children become good readers. Talking, singing, rhyming, rapping, conversing, and narrating activities is exactly what builds a child's brain and reduces the huge vocabulary gap - the 30 million word gap - that often appears before the kids enter kindergarten.

Breaking the cycle of low literacy can happen at any part of the lifespan of learning. It is important to help literacy learners who are also parents understand the power of oral literacy in building their child's brain. Oral literacy is the critical foundation to children becoming good readers. Illustrated books, with or without words, are a great example - you don't have to read the



Parents Katie and Layla from Literacy Green Bay wanted to teach their daughters the importance of education by getting their own high school equivalency.

words to share a story in a book. You can make up your own story! For suggested ways to read and engage with your baby and toddler, visit Reach Out and Read Wisconsin's blog (<http://blog.rorwisconsin.org/blog/>).

To hear more about this topic, come to our Celebration of Literacy event on April 25th from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. at the Monona Terrace and Convention Center and hear from keynote speaker, Dr. Dipesh Navsaria, medical director of Reach Out and Read Wisconsin and expert on early literacy and brain development. Tickets will go on sale soon. Join us!



The Big Share is a 24 hour online giving event for non-profits working with social justice, women and children, and the environment. Check out Wisconsin Literacy's page <https://www.thebigshare.org/organizations/wisconsin-literacy-inc.>

Building Literacy Together

In 1985, Wisconsin Literacy started as a dedicated all-volunteer coalition of adult, family and workplace literacy providers passionate about literacy. They supported each other through information sharing, referral, advocacy, resources, and training. Today, Wisconsin Literacy has 80 literacy agency members from all across the state of Wisconsin – all working to build literacy together.



As membership grows so does the diversity of programs. The work ranges from helping adults with basic literacy and English language skills to providing workplace and family literacy programs; from providing tutoring and books to at risk kids to serving adults suffering from traumatic brain injuries and severe learning disabilities.

No matter their particular focus, Wisconsin Literacy connects those agencies to needed resources, support, and each other. Nik Shier, Executive Director of Fox Valley Literacy Council, said, “Wisconsin Literacy has the power and resources to put us in contact with other literacy councils and the work that they are doing. Beyond the physical resources, the connections and relationships are really important.”

Marina Rodriguez, from member agency UMOS, (United Migrant Opportunity Services) presents to other agencies on what they do to help Human Trafficking victims in Wisconsin and how to recognize warning signs.

Wisconsin Literacy Welcomes New Staff

Angie Stokes, Northwest Regional Literacy Consultant

Angie Stokes joins the Wisconsin Literacy staff as the Northwest Regional Literacy Consultant. Angie has worked in K-12 schools and at the university level focusing on improving literacy skills, particularly for vulnerable populations. In addition to teaching, she has experience working with community agencies and local businesses to build programs that support youth talent development and in turn promote local economic development.



Lynn Currie, Fund Development Manager

Lynn Currie's most recent role was Director of Volunteer Services at Friends of Henry Vilas Zoo, where she served for the past seven years. Her efforts resulted in an increase from 3,500 volunteer hours in 2010 to over 23,000 in 2016. Having grown up in a very small town in northwest Iowa, Lynn understands the importance of communities coming together to create opportunities that benefit everyone and considers herself incredibly fortunate to be joining the Wisconsin Literacy team.



Caitlyn Mowatt, Health Communication Specialist

Caitlyn Mowatt joins the Wisconsin Health Literacy division as the Health Communication Specialist. She has been working at Divine Savior Hospital in Portage and appreciates the work nonprofit organizations contribute to communities. She has been a leader for health literacy, started and chaired a county health literacy committee, and has also been involved in community health needs assessments. We look forward to her joining our staff.





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Save the Date

Three photographs showing people at a literacy celebration. The first photo shows two women smiling. The second photo shows a group of people, including children, holding certificates. The third photo shows a man and a woman at a table with a microphone and a pitcher.

CELEBRATION OF LITERACY

APRIL • 25 • 2018 | 11 AM - 1 PM
MONONA TERRACE & CONVENTION CENTER

The Wisconsin Literacy logo, featuring a stylized white book icon and the text "wisconsin literacy" in a white sans-serif font.