Support for Promoting Health Literacy in Illinois

**WHEREAS**, around 88% of adults living in the US have a level of health literacy that is inadequate for navigating the healthcare system and advocating for their individual health and well-being1; and,

**WHEREAS**, compared to adults with proficient health literacy, adults with low health literacy report poor outcomes and health status2, experience healthcare costs that are 4 times greater, have 6% more hospital visits, and an average of 2-day longer hospital stays3; and,

**WHEREAS**, limited health literacy poses a high financial and social burden, resulting in over 1 million unnecessary hospital visits, and an additional $25 billion in healthcare spending annually4; and,

**WHEREAS**, low digital health literacy was a direct contributor to the spread of online misinformation related to COVID-195, and caused people to decline vaccination, reject public health measures, and seek the use of unproven treatments6; and,

**WHEREAS**, low-income patients seeking multilingual health information reported negative experiences and limited health literacy due to inaccessible materials and preferred language acommodations7; and,

**WHEREAS**, the level of health literacy influences the management of communication within the healthcare system, and that higher levels of health literacy among providers is positively associated with attitudes toward health literacy promotion and the use of communication techniques8; and,

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,** that the Illinois Public Health Association (IPHA), as a public health leader in Illinois, will:

1. Support the development and dissemination of materials for both patient and provider education that is accurate, accessible, and actionable.
2. Advocate in favor of awareness of health literacy and its implications on the health of Illinois residents.
3. Encourage Public Health Departments to develop communication materials that promote health literacy.

References

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