
Incorporating Health Literacy into Professional Practice: Leverage Points in the Educational and Credentialing Process

NC Institute of Medicine Task Force
on Health Literacy

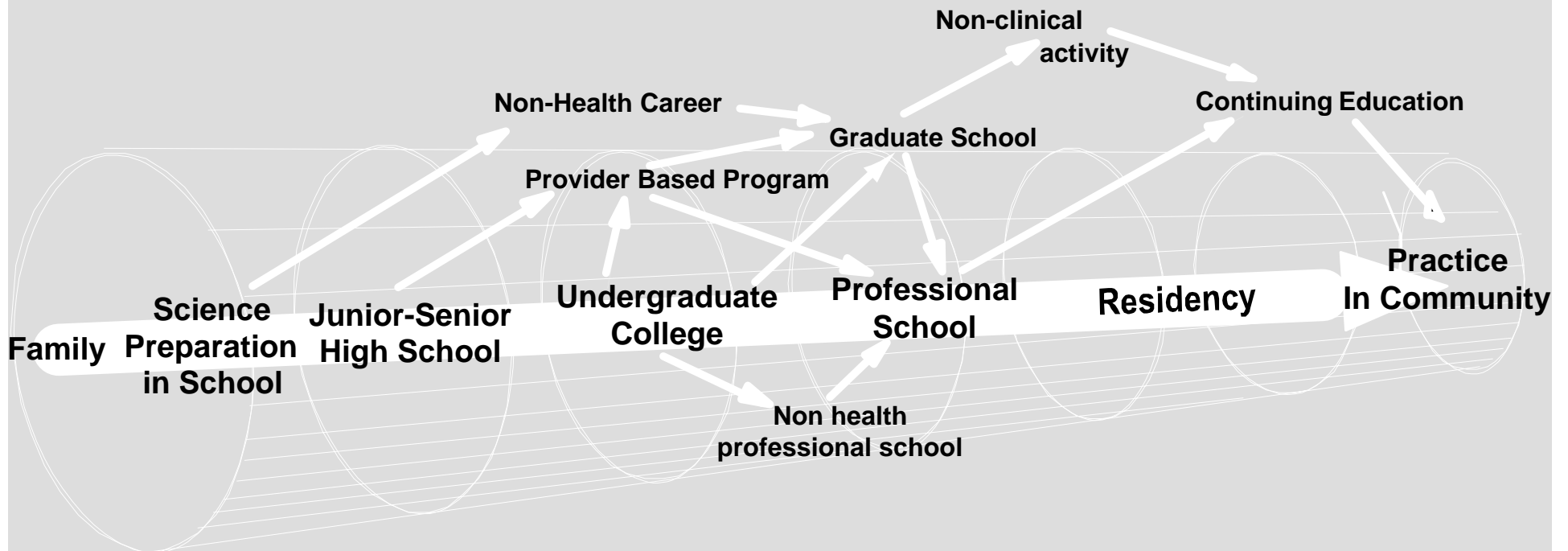
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2004 National IOM Report on Health Literacy

What can be done?

- DHHS should take lead to develop standards
- Funders should support development and use of new measures of health literacy, as well as research on extent, associations and consequences of limited health literacy
- Educators should take advantage of opportunities to incorporate health-related tracks, materials and examples into existing lesson plans
- Professional schools and continuing education programs in the health fields should incorporate health literacy into their curricula and areas of competence
- Health systems should support programs to reduce the negative effects of low health literacy

Education Pipeline for Health Care Professionals



Health Literacy Opportunities: Education

Health Professions Schools

- Curricular content
- Assessment tools
- Clinical experiences
- Community health experiences

Residency Programs

- Curricular content
- Inclusion as part of core competencies
(communication, systems of care, other)

Health Literacy Opportunities: Education

Continuing Education

- Multiple formats
- Didactic and experiential
- Discipline-specific or interdisciplinary

Library and Information Resources

Health Literacy Opportunities: Education

Challenges/Barriers

- Curricular already full
- Faculty are not conversant
- Resources not widely available nationally

Health Literacy in Selected Schools in North Carolina

Health Literacy in Medical School Curricula

- Some faculty not sure of term
- Assume it's covered in health education
- Very brief content (1-2 hours) in required curriculum
- Available more extensively in community health electives (Duke and ECU) or in volunteer community-based opportunities

Health Literacy in Nursing Curricula

- More health literacy content in nursing courses
- Incorporated into health education and patient education courses

Health Literacy in Selected Schools in North Carolina

Health Literacy in Public Health Curricula

- Health education/health behavior courses
- Public health practice
- Other experiential courses

Health Literacy for Health Professionals: Credentialing Process

- Licensure or other credentialing process
- Quality Improvement Initiatives
- Role of payors

Addressing Health Literacy: A Fit for AHEC

- AHEC touches students and professionals at all points of the pipeline
- Is best taught at experiential level
- Meets AHEC mission of improved access to care for the underserved
- Ideal for interdisciplinary experiences for students and residents
- Fits well with focus on competencies required for 21st Century health care
- Fits well with new focus on quality and patient safety