

**Title:** Implementation of a Health Literacy Universal Toolkit at an Urban Trauma Center

**Objective:** Explain the significance of health literacy in healthcare and describe a quality improvement project that includes an evidence-based tool that can assess health literacy and two interventions to improve medication education for low literacy patients.

### **Significance & Background**

Low health literacy impacts the financial burden of hospitals up to \$238 billion annually. A trauma center located on the east coast implemented a Transitional Care Management (TCM) model targeting individuals at risk for readmission. While implementation of transitional care coordinators (TCC) has positively impacted the readmission rate for those patients referred to transitional care, not every patient receives this service. As part of a Doctor of Nursing Practice project, a gap analysis of the facility's discharge process was conducted and identified a deficit in the formal evaluation of health literacy upon discharge.

### **Evaluation Methods**

A quality improvement project was conducted, implementing the Rapid Estimate of Adult Literacy in Medicine Short Form (REALM-SF), an evidenced based health literacy screening tool, at the trauma center. Two interventions were offered to patients who scored as low health literate, at or below a sixth grade reading level: additional education on their inpatient or discharge medication list and a brown bag review of medications at a post discharge clinic appointment.

### **Outcomes**

Seventy one patients were screened using the REALM-SF. Sixty-two percent of patients scored at a high school reading level, 30% scored at a seventh to eighth grade reading level, and 8% scored at or below a sixth grade reading level. Twenty patients received additional medication education with My Medicines Form or a Brown Bag Review.

### **Implications**

Regardless of literacy level, patients appreciated the additional medication education interventions. Healthcare providers should observe universal health literacy precautions regardless of literacy level.