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## WHAT IS HEALTH LITERACY?

Health literacy is the ability to obtain and understand health information and services in order to make health decisions. Good health literacy is a key component of effective health care.

Did you know that a national survey indicates that over 50% of adults have “below basic” or “basic” literacy for math skills and over 40% of adults have “below basic” or “basic” skills in reading prose? Also, people with low health literacy adhere less to medical regimens, have increased health care costs, die earlier, and are more likely to be hospitalized.

MTGEC’s new program presents the key concepts of health literacy, how low health literacy affects health care, the influences of age and culture on health literacy, ways to assess health literacy, and techniques to improve health literacy knowledge. It will also teach how to put this information into practice in educational and clinical settings.

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## MONTANA GERIATRIC EDUCATION CENTER

*A consortium of The University of Montana,  
Northwest Research and Education Institute,  
and Montana Tech*

## HEALTH LITERACY SCHOLARS PROGRAM



### Goals

- To increase the expertise of health care professionals, health care profession faculty and students in health literacy.
- To identify and implement mechanisms to improve health literacy for patients, especially at risk rural and American Indian elderly.

# COURSE COMPONENTS



## 1. COMPLETE THE HRSA ON-LINE HEALTH LITERACY COURSE (5 HRS)

Unified Health Communication 101: Addressing Health Literacy, Cultural Competency, and Limited English Proficiency. Consists of five modules to be completed on-line.

Continuing education credit is provided by HRSA. Register at <http://www.hrsa.gov/healthliteracy/training.htm>

## 2. PARTICIPATE IN AN ON-LINE JOURNAL CLUB ON HEALTH LITERACY (2 HOURS)

An asynchronous discussion on selected articles and topics will be held among fellow students from various disciplines.

## 3. COMPLETE THE ON-LINE MTGEC HEALTH LITERACY MODULE (4 HOURS)

Apply the principles of health literacy to elderly patients with emphasis on the rural and American Indian populations of Montana. (Module available by August 2009)

## 4. ATTEND THE OCTOBER 13, 2009, MTGEC ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON IMPROVING HEALTH LITERACY AND DIABETES OUTCOMES IN OLDER PERSONS (6 HOURS)

Speakers will present from Billings and Missoula and will be broadcast to more than 20 interactive videoconference sites across the state.

## 5. PREPARE FOR AND PARTICIPATE IN MTGEC'S FOLLOW-UP VIDEOCONFERENCES (4 HOURS)

These two videoconferenced programs in January and February 2010 will expand on themes from the October conference. Case scenarios will be used to illustrate health literacy principles.

## 6. COMPLETE A HEALTH MESSAGE FOR USE IN EDUCATION OF OLDER PATIENTS WITH LOW READING SKILLS (4 HOURS)

Design and implement a patient education tool for use in your own practice. Possible topics include general disease state information, diagnostic tests and procedures, specific treatments: medications, exercise, and nutrition.

**Total Hours: 25**

## CREDIT AND CERTIFICATES

Except for the HRSA health literacy on-line course, continuing education certificates for each course component, as well as the health literacy scholars certificate, will be issued by MTGEC. For an additional cost, continuing education credit approved by the appropriate professional organization or state licensing board will be awarded.

The Montana Geriatric Education Center (MNA-09MGEC11) is an approved provider of continuing nursing education by the Montana Nurses Association, an accredited approver by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation.

Continuing education credit is being sought from the Montana Boards of Occupational Therapy Practice, Pharmacy, Social Work Examiners and Professional Counselors and American Physical Therapy Association – Montana Chapter. MTGEC is a pre-approved provider for the Board of Nursing Home Administrators.

## TARGET AUDIENCE

Nurses, nurse practitioners, physicians, physician assistants, pharmacists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, social workers, nursing home administrators, dietitians, other health care professionals, health care profession faculty and students.

## FEES AND REGISTRATION

Fees for the Health Literacy Scholars Program are:

\$20	Personal use (No C.E. credit)
\$45	General continuing education credit
\$70	Professional continuing education credit

(These fees do not include the cost of the MTGEC Annual Conference and the follow-up videoconferences, which must be paid for separately by each participant in the program. See the MTGEC website for more information.)

Enrollment in the Health Literacy Scholars Program is now open and continues through early September 2009. The program must be completed by June 1, 2010.

Register at

<http://mtgrec.umontana.edu>

Click on the "on-line curriculum" icon for the registration form.