

## The Role of Culture in Health Literacy

The U.S. Population consists of diverse ethnic cultures and backgrounds with varied customs, traditions and beliefs. Thus, culture plays a major role when addressing health beliefs and health care. (1)

Access to culturally appropriate and language appropriate health information is vital to these diverse populations. For a variety of reasons, there is often a mismatch between information and populations at free health clinics. As librarians we have the skill set to identify resources and provide this information.

## Culturally Competent Resources

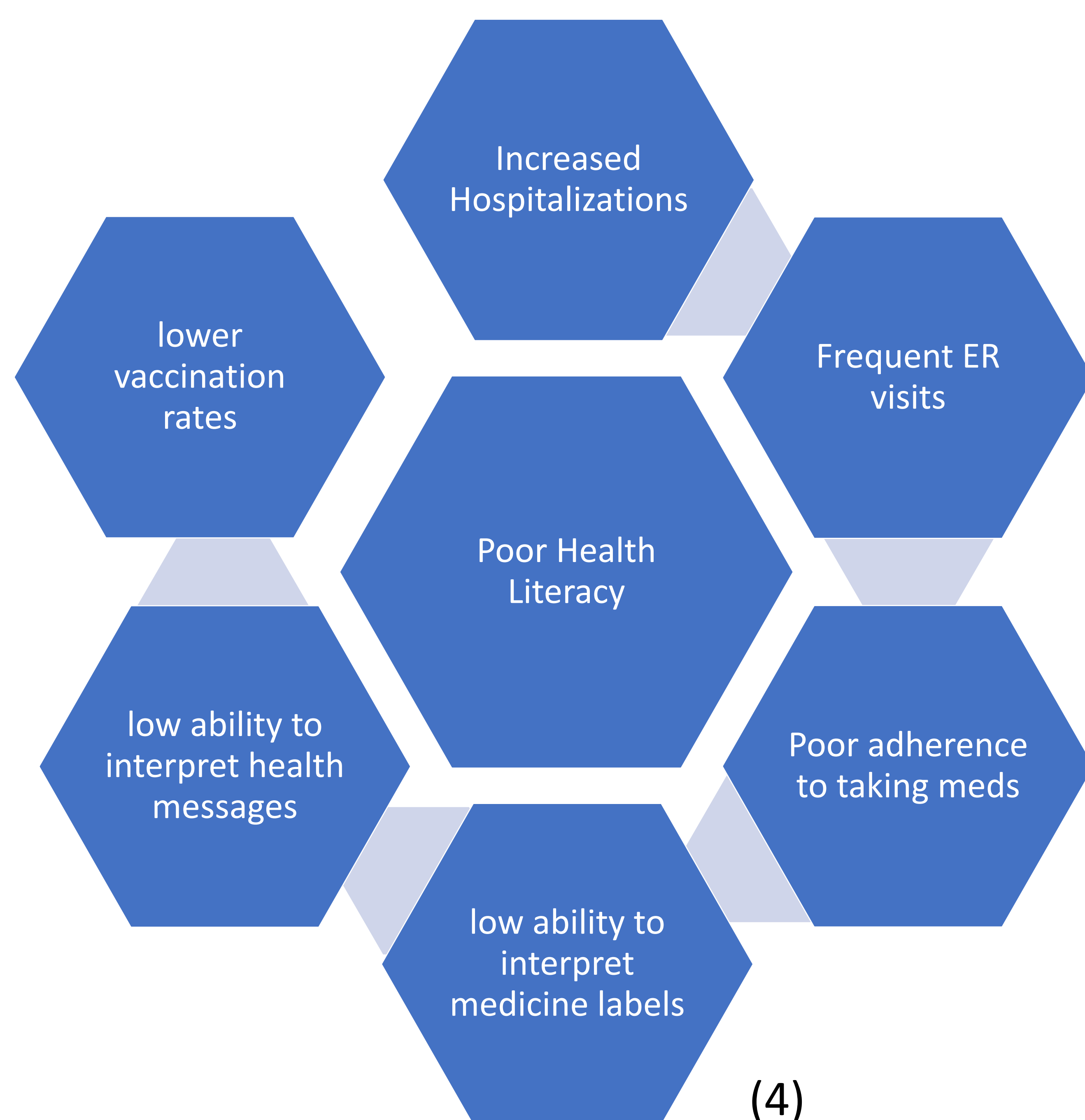
In cultures with little health literacy, culturally competent resources are often unknown, unattainable, or non-existent. These patients rely on word of mouth, tradition, and unfounded beliefs when making decisions regarding their health and health care. (2) Health information professionals can identify culturally appropriate resources in the right language to assist these patients.



Created by Max Hancock from Noun Project

## Disparities in Health Outcomes

Populations with low health literacy level are at a greater disadvantage and often experience poor health outcomes.(3)



(4)

## Health Happens Here

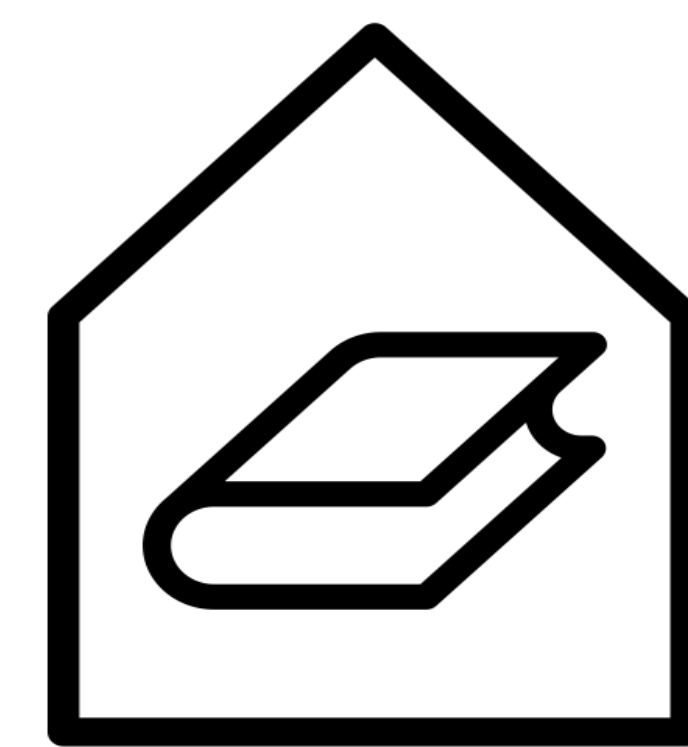


Setting: Free Health Clinic

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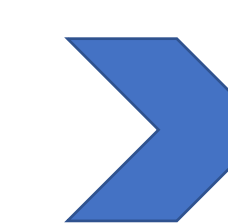
View a Clinic in Action!

## Typical Day

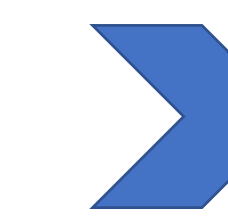


Created by Jaime Serra from Noun Project

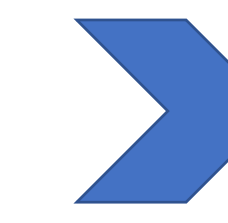
Check-in and register to receive one of three types of care: Medical, Dental, or Vision



Basic Screening Blood Glucose, Blood Pressure Vitals



If screening is normal - move to appropriate care area: Medical, Dental, Vision



If screening is abnormal - move to medical care area until stable



*Provide health /follow up care information; handouts for local-free health clinics language and culturally appropriate health information.*



*Provide health information, resources in their language, and culturally appropriate; health literacy assessed; use Video or other medium if necessary.*

*“...medical libraries are important partners in community-based health literacy efforts.” [5]*



Used with permission from Dr. Michael H. Luszczak, Emergency Room Physician Kaiser Roseville, CA

## Did you know?

Not all veterans are eligible for VA benefits. There are often not enough resources to address their needs. Stand Down Clinics offer free medical, dental, and eye care.



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1. Zhou, AQ., Lee, HY. 2019. Who Has Low Health Literacy and Does It Matter for Depression?, Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 25, 73-81.
2. Health Literacy and the Role of Culture, Fact Sheet #3. 2013 Center for Health Care Strategies. Retrieved April 2019 from: [https://www.chcs.org/media/Health\\_Literacy\\_Role\\_of\\_Culture.pdf](https://www.chcs.org/media/Health_Literacy_Role_of_Culture.pdf)
3. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. Retrieved April 2019, from <https://www.ahrq.gov/downloads/pub/evidence/pdf/literacy/literacyup.pdf>
4. Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Retrieved May 2019, from <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/social-determinants-health/interventions-resources/health-literacy#1>
5. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Health Literacy and Libraries. Retrieved May 2019, from <https://www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/education-support/libraries.html>