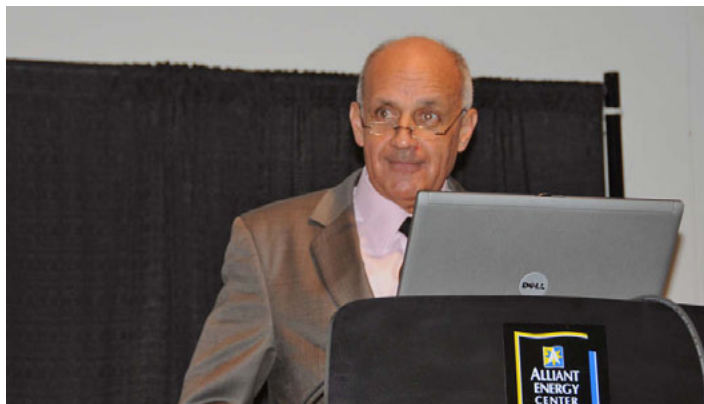


# update

## Health Literacy Summit 2011



literacy to address health literacy from an interdisciplinary perspective.

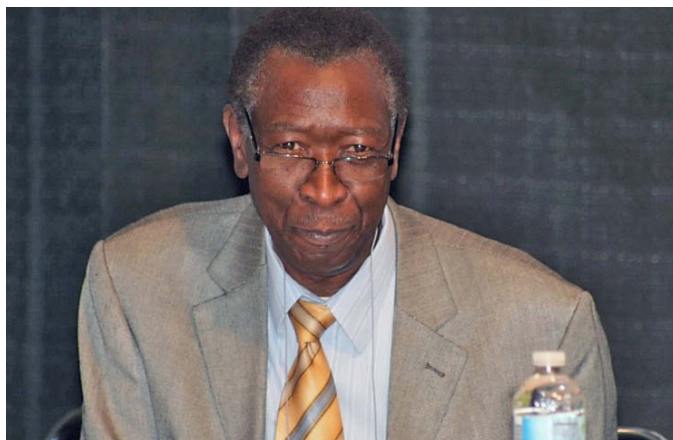
Attendees took home an understanding of the impact of health literacy on health reform, chronic disease management, and health care quality, safety, and cost. They also received resources and inspiration to start or expand health literacy initiatives within their organization.

If you missed the summit or want to revisit a presentation you enjoyed, you can find the summit Web cast and PowerPoint presentations at [www.healthliteracywisconsin.org](http://www.healthliteracywisconsin.org)

**“There can be no health care transformation without health literacy.”**

– 4th Biennial Wisconsin Health Literacy Summit Keynote Speaker  
Richard H. Carmona, MD, MPH, FACS, 17th Surgeon General of the United States

Wisconsin Literacy, Inc., along with our partner, the Wisconsin Research and Education Network (WREN), hosted the 4th Biennial Wisconsin Health Literacy Summit on April 12-13, 2011 in Madison, Wis. This event brought together more than 315 professionals from the field of health care, patient education, public health and adult



Winston Lawrence from the Literacy Assistance Center of New York served on a panel discussion of the “National Action Plan to Improve Health Literacy” at the 4th Biennial Wisconsin Health Literacy Summit



Carol Klingbeil (center, in red), from Children's Hospital of Wisconsin, was one of more than 315 attendees at the 4th Biennial Wisconsin Health Literacy Summit

*“I heard a lot of very positive feedback from a variety of conference attendees—everyone from health care workers to adult literacy providers to social service sector employees. One of the attendees said that she learned so much that she finally ‘got’ health literacy as something that she is willing and eager to look into implementing at her adult literacy agency.”*

## You can help improve the health of Wisconsin residents by supporting the health literacy initiatives of Wisconsin Literacy, Inc.

When parents struggle with reading and understanding health information, or health care providers do not communicate effectively with patients, it can lead to misunderstandings, medication errors and life-changing consequences. It also leads to wasted health care dollars—up to \$7.6 billion annually in Wisconsin alone.

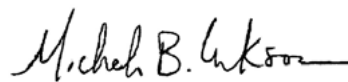
That's why Wisconsin Literacy has developed a new division, Health Literacy Wisconsin, dedicated exclusively to the issue of health literacy. We work to improve the health literacy skills of adults with low literacy within our 62 member literacy agencies. We also work with health care providers to ensure that their communication skills match the best practices in the field.

Our recent health literacy projects focus on teaching health concepts as adults learn to read. Among our member agencies, we are promoting a plain language curriculum for adult learners, called *What to Do When Your Child Gets Sick*. This book has been shown to reduce unnecessary emergency room visits by more than 50 percent and reduce health care costs by more than \$550 per family annually.

We are also working on outreach to professionals in health care, patient education, public health and adult

literacy. We recently hosted our 4th Biennial Wisconsin Health Literacy Summit, which drew more than 315 professionals from diverse fields together to discuss how to improve health care through better communication strategies.

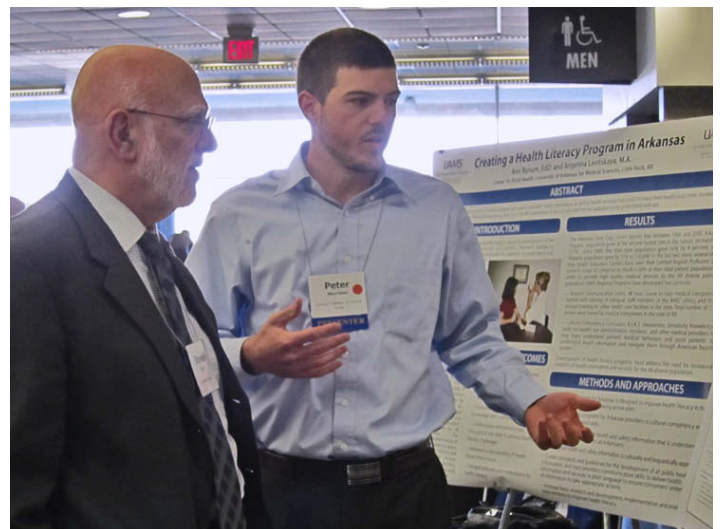
There is much work to be done to reach our mission of helping people find, understand and use health information and services to make informed decisions. We hope you will join us by considering a gift to Wisconsin Literacy as we strive to help make health information understandable for all.



Michele Erikson  
Executive Director

### *Celebration of Literacy Moves to Appleton*

Wisconsin Literacy will honor outstanding adult learners, tutors, programs, businesses and advocates during its 9th Annual Celebration of Literacy luncheon this year at the Radisson Paper Valley Hotel on Wednesday, Oct. 19, 2011. The luncheon will take place during the 2011 GED/HSED and Adult Literacy Conferences hosted by Wisconsin Technical College System and Wisconsin Literacy. The audience for this year's celebration will include more than 400 instructors, administrators and staff from the 16 Wisconsin technical colleges; volunteer tutors, instructors and staff from our member agencies; the award winners; and representatives from the celebration sponsors. Wisconsin Literacy will distribute the stories of the award winners prior to the celebration and also include details on our website. We are thrilled to be able to showcase the important work of our award recipients for an expanded audience this year!



*Peter Morrison, from the Literacy Coalition of Central Texas, discusses his poster with Steven Rush, from UnitedHealth Group in Minnesota, at the Wisconsin Health Literacy Summit*



Nancy Wheeler, Coordinator of ICAA Crossroads Literacy, co-presents with Wisconsin Literacy's Margarete Cook on how to use the *What to Do When Your Child Gets Sick* book with adult learners

## Wheeler Trains Professionals in Use of Health Literacy Curriculum in Ladysmith

ICAA Crossroads Literacy, a Wisconsin Literacy member agency coordinated by Nancy Wheeler in Ladysmith, Wis., is an example of a community-based literacy program that has expanded its health literacy work due to experiences at past health literacy summits. Last fall, ICAA Crossroads Literacy, through a grant from Northwest Area Health Education Center, conducted train-the-trainer workshops for Head Start instructors, WIC personnel, literacy agencies, public health and others on the use by parents of the *What to Do When Your Child Gets Sick* books published by the Institute for Healthcare Advancement. Nancy worked on this initiative in partnership with Wisconsin Literacy, through a grant from the Wisconsin Medical Society Foundation & the PIC Wisconsin Fund.

Workshops in Ladysmith, Balsam Lake and Ashland included information on red flags for literacy issues, adult learning theory, Health Literacy 101 and how to introduce the book to parents. Books were distributed to Head Start instructors to give to parents at home visits. A lesson plan that included a scavenger hunt through the book was developed for instructors to use with parents to get them comfortable with using the book as a first resource when their children are sick. Surveys are being conducted to determine the usefulness of the book for parents when making decisions for their children's health care. Evaluations of the workshops were overwhelmingly positive and participants requested similar opportunities in other areas of the state and for future parents.

Find us online:

[www.wisconsinliteracy.org](http://www.wisconsinliteracy.org)

[www.healthliteracywisconsin.org](http://www.healthliteracywisconsin.org)

## Kraus Develops Health Literacy Ambassador Program in Wausau

An example of how one health care professional has put what she learned from attending Wisconsin health literacy summits to work to improve health literacy is Jan Kraus, MLS, Manager of the Aspirus Wausau Hospital Medical Library. Jan's health literacy journey began at the 2007 summit where she was inspired by a presentation on a program called Health Literacy Ambassadors. Jan found the concept so remarkable that she decided to develop a Health Literacy Ambassador program at Aspirus. The program involves Jan meeting once a month for an hour with clinical staff and others to review selected written medical and health care documents for readability and ease of comprehension. The meeting is informal, and Jan reminds clinical staff that, "when asking people to review materials, it's important to make it clear that we are testing the material and not the person's reading or comprehension skills."

Jan and Aspirus clinical staff and volunteers have also partnered with adult learners, tutors and the director of Marathon County Literacy Council (a Wisconsin Literacy member agency), as well as NTC Community College Initiative Program students, to help expand the outreach of the Ambassador program. The program continues to generate helpful insights into the issues of creating more understandable medical and health care documents. A truly rewarding aspect of the program is the learning that takes place. The shared interest in health literacy has created a common bond between participants. Jan sums up the mission of the Aspirus Health Literacy Ambassador Program when she says, "Feedback from readers is by far the most effective assessment tool for readability and communication improvements."



Wisconsin Literacy is preparing for the kick-off of its 9th Annual **1200 Tutors in 12 Weeks** campaign on International Literacy Day, Sept. 8, 2011. This annual campaign helps to reduce waiting lists for adult literacy

services. Member agencies participating in the campaign will recruit and train new tutors throughout the state until December 1, 2011. Campaign participants will then receive funding from Wisconsin Literacy based on the number of new tutors that are recruited and trained in 12 weeks. Wisconsin Literacy member agencies will also host International Literacy Day and Literacy Awareness Month events throughout Wisconsin in September. Check out Wisconsin Literacy's website in August for a list of events in your area!



A mother and son from Eau Claire review medication dosage instructions using the book *What to Do When Your Child Gets Sick*. Through a grant from the Wisconsin Medical Society Foundation & the PIC Wisconsin Fund, Wisconsin Literacy and its member agencies trained volunteer tutors to use this book with adult learners. Twelve hundred copies were distributed to adult learners throughout Wisconsin. Look inside for more information about our health literacy initiatives.

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*Strengthening Wisconsin's workforce,  
families and communities through literacy*

Member of:



### Wisconsin Literacy Partners:

Group Health Cooperative of South Central WI  
Literacy Coalition of Southeastern Wisconsin  
Wisconsin Area Health Education Centers  
Wisconsin Branch - Int'l Dyslexia Association  
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction  
Wisconsin Technical College System