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Using Language that Our Patients Can Understand: Cultivating Simple Language Use in our Medical and Physician Assistant Students

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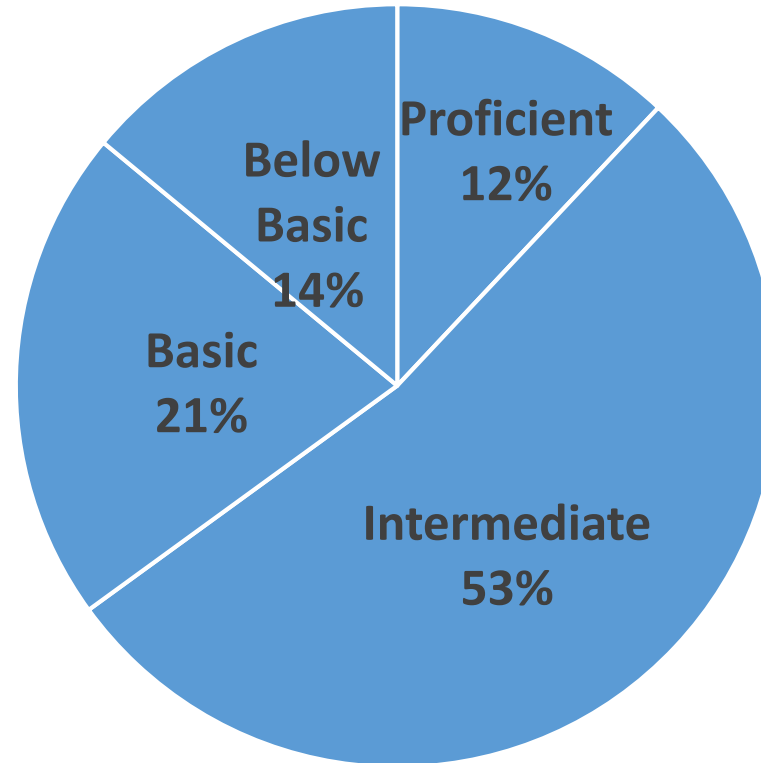


Using Language that Out Patients Can Understand: Cultivating Simple Language Use in Our Medical and Physician Assistant Students

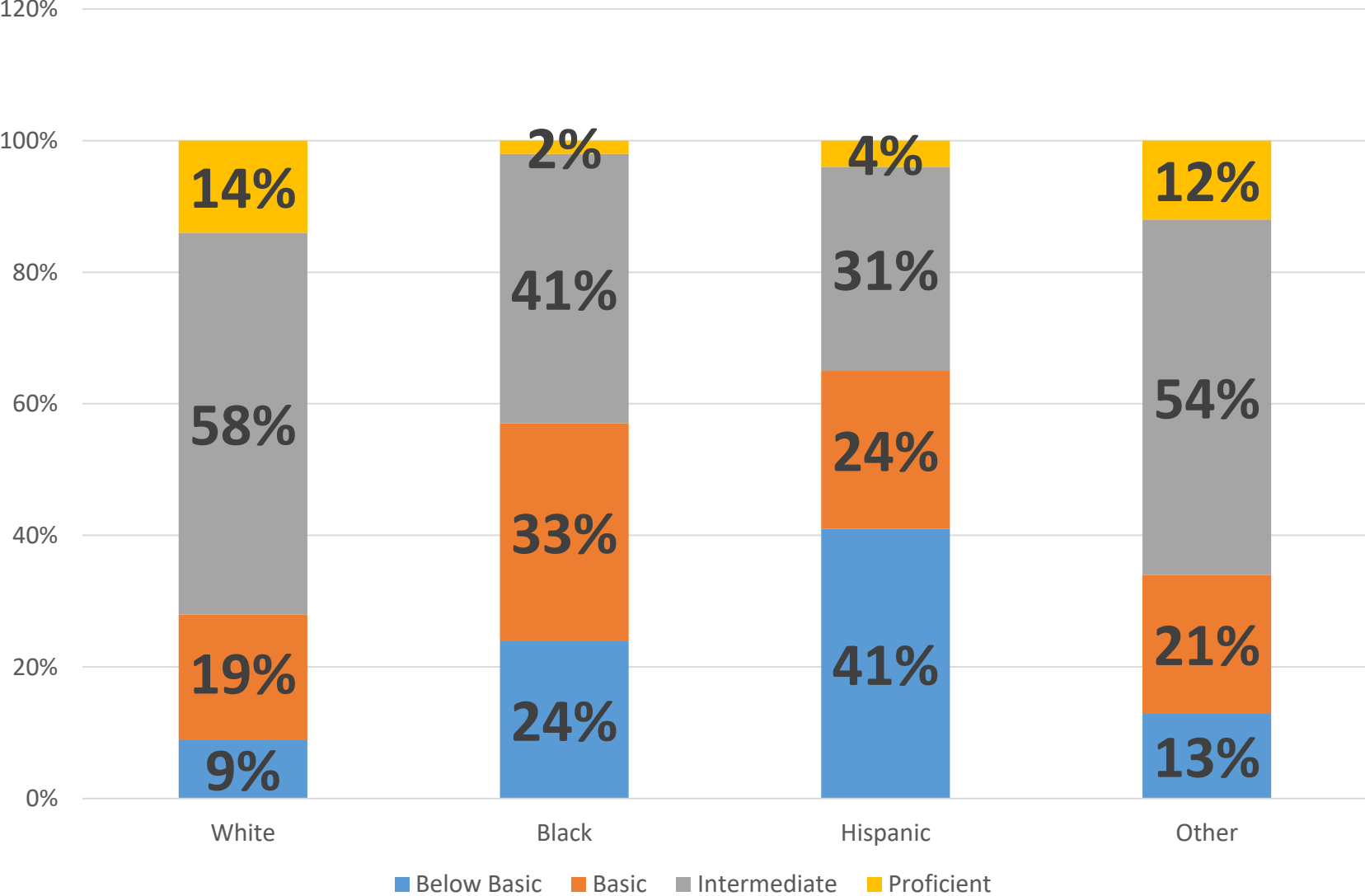
Jennifer Benson, MD, Director Doctoring 1 course

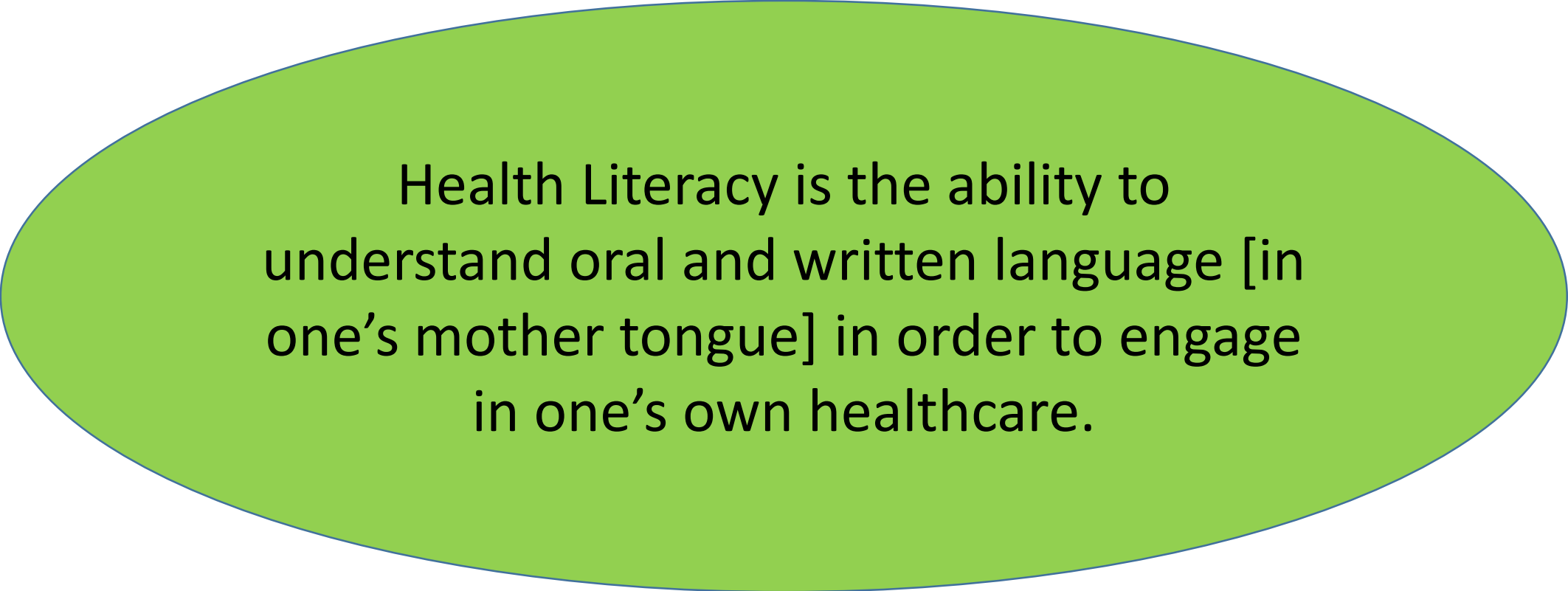
Special thanks to Kathryn Anderson and Sarah Leister from
the UNM Health Literacy office.

It is important for clinicians to use simple language with patients as only 12% (!!!!!) of US adults have proficient literacy.



Literacy challenges affect all racial and ethnic groups.







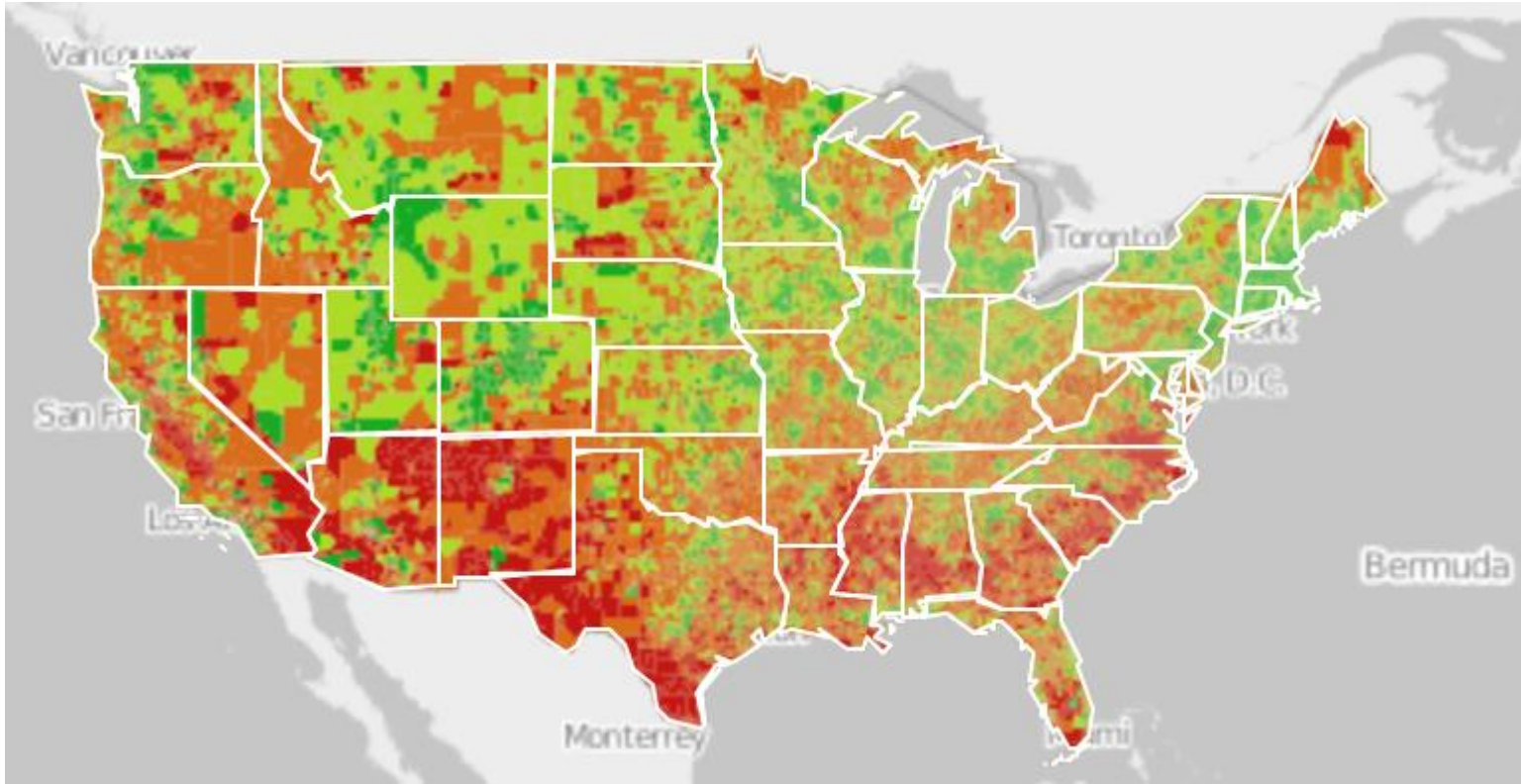
Health Literacy is the ability to understand oral and written language [in one's mother tongue] in order to engage in one's own healthcare.

Low Health Literacy is associated with adverse health outcomes.

patients with low
HEALTH LITERACY...

 <p>Are more likely to visit an EMERGENCY ROOM</p>	 <p>Have more HOSPITAL STAYS</p>	 <p>Are less likely to follow TREATMENT PLANS</p>	 <p>Have higher MORTALITY RATES</p>
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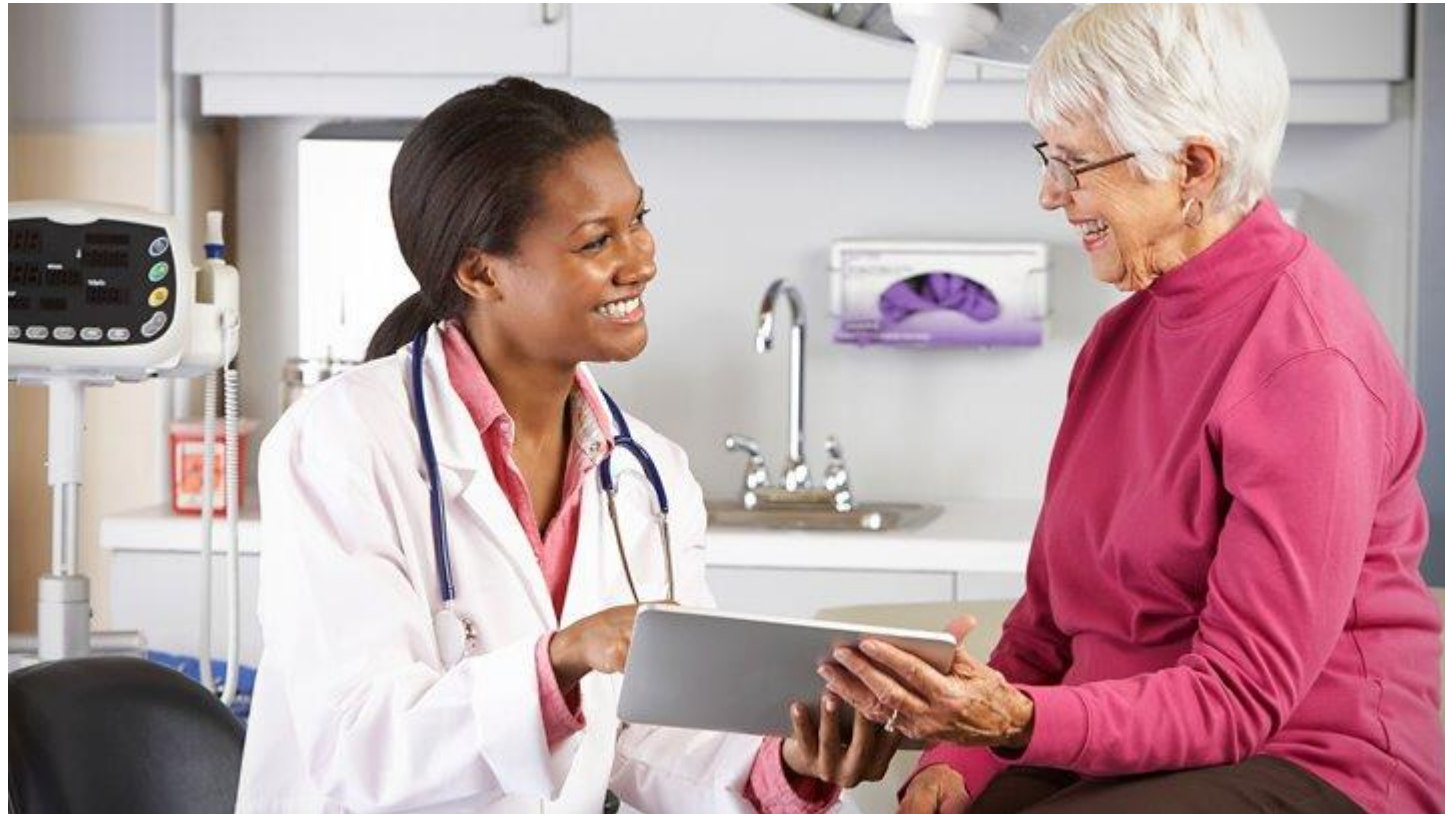
www.cdc.gov/phpr 



Health Literacy Levels

- Quartile 4 (highest)
- Quartile 3
- Quartile 2
- Quartile 1 (lowest)

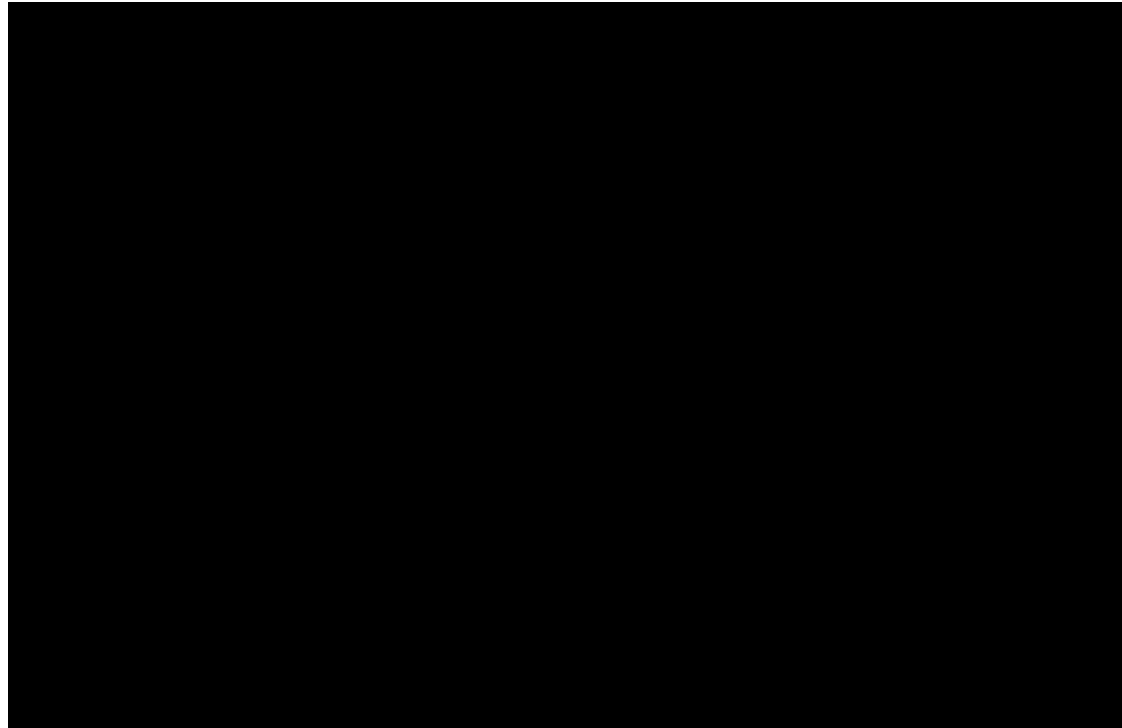
Patients are sick, overwhelmed, confused and feeling vulnerable.
Simple language use is for everyone!



Joint Commission recommends communication with patients target the 5th grade reading level or lower.

Rosa Parks was born February 4, 1913 in Tuskegee, Alabama. She spent her childhood in Alabama. When she was 11, she enrolled in the Montgomery Industrial School for Girls. Later, she worked as a seamstress in Montgomery.

Words and phrases we use commonly are a problem.



Compiled from:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iCvQyRhpI4Q>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ImnIptxIMXs>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BgTuD7I7LG8>

I identified an opportunity:

UNM School of Medicine did not have a Health Literacy curriculum.

I initially focused on first year medical students, to **preserve** their ability to recognize and use simple language.

“Translating” medical documents into “plain language” increases medical student use of simple language during simulated patient encounters.



In 2018, I debuted a “translating into plain language” session for the UNM first year medical and physician assistant students, in the Doctoring 1 course.

Full payment is expected at the time of service. However, discounted fees and payment plans are available. In order to qualify, you will be asked to provide documentation regarding your income.

Please plan to pay for your visit before you leave. If you can't pay right away, talk to us. We may be able to charge you less or give you more time to pay. You'll have to prove what your income is. So bring your paycheck stubs or other proof.

Assessment:

In addition to ongoing language monitoring by preceptors during simulated clinical encounters, the first written exam asked students to “translate” the following sentence, replacing the words in bold with simpler words.

“Please **discontinue** your **current hypertension medication** as it is **causing lower extremity edema**. I’m going to give you an **alternate medication** that won’t have this **adverse consequence**.”

“Please stop taking the pills you have now for your high blood pressure because they are making your legs puffy. I’m going to give you a different pill to take instead that won’t have this problem.”

Next steps:

- Add a Health Literacy activity to the second year of school
- Ongoing assessment/reinforcement strategies