

Georgia Southern University

Digital Commons@Georgia Southern

---

Georgia International Conference on  
Information Literacy

---

Sep 25th, 12:30 PM - 1:45 PM

## Health Literacy 101: Increasing Literacy Reduces Health Disparities

Nancy Patterson

*National Network of Libraries of Medicine*, npatters@hshsl.umaryland.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/gaintlit>



Part of the [Community Health and Preventive Medicine Commons](#), and the [Information Literacy Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Patterson, Nancy, "Health Literacy 101: Increasing Literacy Reduces Health Disparities" (2015). *Georgia International Conference on Information Literacy*. 93.

<https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/gaintlit/2015/2015/93>

This presentation (open access) is brought to you for free and open access by the Conferences & Events at Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. It has been accepted for inclusion in Georgia International Conference on Information Literacy by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@georgiasouthern.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@georgiasouthern.edu).

# Health Literacy 101:

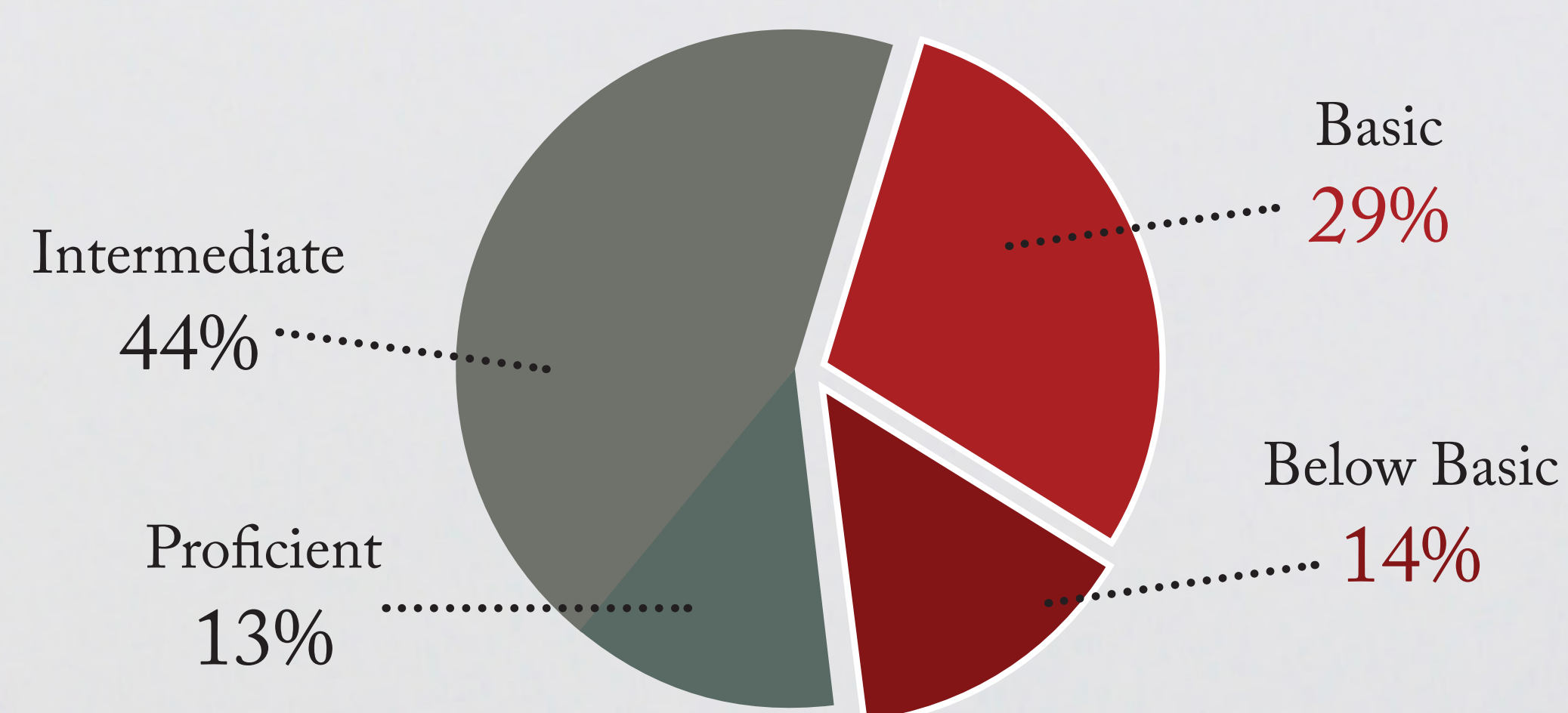
# Increasing Literacy Reduces Health Disparities

## Why does Health Literacy Matter?

“ Health disparities are *preventable* differences in the burden of disease, injury, violence, or opportunities to achieve optimal health that are experienced by socially disadvantaged populations. ”

~CDC, 2013

### What is Health Literacy?



From the National Assessment of Adult Literacy in 2003

“ The degree to which individuals have the capacity to *obtain, process and understand* basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health care decisions ”

~Healthy People 2010

“ ...understand and *act on* health information ”

~Pfizer Clear Health Communication, 2012

• Two Sides to the Story •



BOTH sides are responsible for *clear communication*

It's needed to **effectively:**

- Fill out a patient information form
- Follow discharge instructions
- Manage medications
- Care for a loved one's health
- Keep appointments
- Select and understand insurance
- Identify signs and warning labels
- Research health information
- Sign consent forms

- Underutilization of services
- Increased medication errors
- Poor understanding of health
- Increased ER visits and hospitalizations
- Poor health outcomes
- Increased healthcare costs for all

**Low Health Literacy** leads to:

**Communication tools:**

- Plain language
- Easy-to-understand materials
- Questions & self advocacy
- Teach-back technique
- Visual and audio resources
- Cultural competence

Authored by: Nancy Patterson, MLS  
Community Outreach Coordinator

National Network of Libraries of Medicine, Southeastern/Atlantic Region  
University of Maryland, Baltimore  
Health Sciences & Human Services Library, Baltimore, MD