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Health Literacy Environment Version 2 Peer Review and Pilot Test Responses

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Medical Librarians as Health Literacy Champions: Bringing About Efficacious Institutional Change and Contributing to a Revised Assessment Tool

Abstract

Background: In alignment with the Medical Library Association's vision that “quality information is essential for improved health,” the first three authors formed the Health Literacy Task Force in 2016. The librarian-led task force sought to evaluate Organizational Health Literacy while increasing their roles as health literacy experts within their organization.

Case Presentation: The Health Literacy Task Force used the 2006 Health Literacy Environment of Hospitals and Health Centers (HLEHHC) to evaluate their organization. The original author of the HLEHHC tool, with the health literacy task force, formed a collaborative to update HLEHHC. The collaborative engaged in an extensive literature review focused on emerging issues and tools, reviewed each section of the HLEHHC, and formulated changes. Modifications were made to the rating scale as well as to section directions and components. The new tool was peer reviewed and revised and then pilot tested and modified. Peer review and pilot testing processes engaged health literacy experts, medical and administrative personnel, along with medical librarians in a variety of healthcare settings.

Conclusion: The environmental assessment conducted by the task force is helping shape changes in the hospital. The collaborative process yielded an updated instrument for assessing the extent to which a hospital or health center is ‘literacy friendly’ and ‘a health literate institution.’ Medical librarians made an important contribution as leaders in enhancing “the quality of health care, education, and research throughout the world.” This successful effort

demonstrates the value of medical librarians in institutional assessment and quality improvement, especially in the health literacy arena.