

Framework for Health literacy: a health system response

Sector Feedback 6 to 27 March 2015
(From presentation document – wording only)

Position statement

Health literacy is the capacity to find, interpret and use information and health services to make effective decisions for health and wellbeing.

Health literacy is supported by a health system focus on:

- services being easy to access and navigate
- effective health worker communication
- clear and relevant health messages that empower everyone to make informed choices.

What we know - health literacy is important

Research shows a relationship between health literacy levels and health status. New Zealanders in general have limited health literacy skills.

Health literacy improvement has potential for:

- better use of health services
- improved consumer experience
- reduction in health-related costs
- contributing to health equity
- empowering individuals/whānau to make appropriate choices for their health and wellbeing

Why do we need a framework?

We need a framework to:

- provide high level guidance on:
 - what health literacy is
 - how it can be better supported at all levels of the health system
 - what success may look like
- build on gains made in the Ministry's health literacy work programme and provide future direction eg: Health Literacy Environments Review Progress

Framework purpose:

The purpose of the framework is to:

- embed a health literacy perspective in the work of the health system so it becomes 'business as usual'
- reflect international response to health literacy that has changed over time (from focus on individuals - 80s; to health practitioners - 90s; to current whole-of-system approach)

- build on the momentum of He Korowai Oranga – Māori Health Strategy by:
 - reinforcing more explicit emphasis on **“Quality”**, **“Leadership”** and **“Health Equity”** – improving health literacy is an important part of the health system’s response
 - supporting implementation: adding to tools that support a health system approach (eg. Equity Framework, Māori responsiveness)

Developing the framework

Framework development included:

- reviewing international approaches and strategy examples
- input from Workbase (+ six principles in health literacy environments review tool developed for NZ context)
- cross-Ministry workshops

The framework

The framework has three core principles:

- Leadership
- Knowledge
- Commitment

Both “leadership” and “knowledge” principles are required for a sustained “commitment” to improving health literacy.

Framework design

The framework is designed to support action on health literacy improvement at all levels and includes:

- the health system
- health organisations eg: NGOs, PHOs, practitioner associations, regulatory bodies
- health practitioners and ALL staff
- individuals and whānau (shows impact of actions at other levels)

Watch this space!

Feedback for the health literacy framework is due by 5 pm on Friday 27 March 2015.

Following analysis of feedback from the sector, the framework and the Health Literacy Environments Review Tool will be released.