

## SENATE RESOLUTION NO.141

Senators Santana, Geiss and McMorrow offered the following resolution:

1 A resolution to recognize October 2024 as Health Literacy  
2 Month.

3 Whereas, Since 1999, October has been recognized as Health  
4 Literacy Month internationally. It has been recognized by 13 states  
5 and federal organizations such as the Centers for Disease Control  
6 and Prevention (CDC), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and  
7 the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS);  
8 and

9 Whereas, The American Medical Association (AMA) recognizes  
10 limited health literacy as a stronger predictor of poor health  
11 status and outcomes than age, race, education level, socioeconomic  
12 status, or employment status; and

1       Whereas, HHS adopts two definitions that, when combined,  
2 constitute health literacy:

- 3       • Personal Health Literacy: the degree to which individuals  
4       have the ability to find, understand, and use information  
5       and services to inform health related decisions and  
6       actions for themselves and others; and
- 7       • Organizational Health Literacy: the degree to which  
8       organizations equitably enable individuals to find,  
9       understand, and use information and services to inform  
10      health-related decisions and actions for themselves; and

11      Whereas, The CDC estimates that 9 in 10 Americans have limited  
12 health literacy, and lack the skills necessary to manage their  
13 health and prevent diseases, to seek and obtain health care, and  
14 communicate effectively with their providers; and

15      Whereas, Limited health literacy affects individuals across  
16 every segment of the population, regardless of whether or not  
17 individuals possess strong literacy skills or higher education.  
18 Age, racial and ethnic, socioeconomic, cultural, and linguistic  
19 disparities exist in levels of ability to access, understand, and  
20 use health information; and

21      Whereas, It is estimated that the burden of unaddressed  
22 limited health literacy represents between 7 to 17 percent of all  
23 national personal health expenditures and costs the United States  
24 healthcare system \$106 to 238 billion a year; and

25      Whereas, Limited health literacy is associated with:

- 26      1) An increased risk of sentinel events;
- 27      2) Worse overall health status;
- 28      3) Reduced ability to understand health messages;
- 29      4) Limited ability to follow and adhere to medication

1 instructions and understand labels;

2 5) Lower likelihood of seeking or receiving preventative care;

3 6) Greater use of the emergency department and increased  
4 hospitalizations;

5 7) Lower satisfaction with care;

6 8) Shorter life expectancy;

7 These risks are preventable when health literacy is systemically  
8 addressed; and

9 Whereas, K-12 schools within Michigan and across the U.S. do  
10 not include health literacy skills in health education curriculum;  
11 and

12 Whereas, Health literacy training for providers of any  
13 experience level is shown to improve patient health literacy and  
14 prevent patient-provider miscommunication which poses risks such as  
15 sentinel events; and

16 Whereas, Health literacy practices, such as the use of plain  
17 language, are not consistently included in curriculum within health  
18 professional's training at schools of medicine, nursing, dentistry,  
19 pharmacy, public health, and allied healthcare across Michigan; and

20 Whereas, HHS has declared health literacy as a foundational  
21 principle and overarching goal of *Healthy People 2030*: "Eliminate  
22 health disparities, achieve health equity, and attain health  
23 literacy to improve the health and well-being of all", and stresses  
24 the responsibility of organizations to equitably address health  
25 literacy; and

26 Whereas, Although federal organizations are bound by The Plain  
27 Writing Act of 2010 to write "clear government communication that  
28 the public can understand and use", no such law exists for  
29 organizations in Michigan. However, health organizations across

1 Michigan are committed to promoting and supporting strong  
2 organizational health literacy; and

3       Whereas, Health literacy is necessary to achieve health equity  
4 by providing health information that is understandable, accessible,  
5 and actionable to all regardless of one's age, race, ethnicity,  
6 language, socioeconomic status, gender identity, sexual orientation  
7 or creed; and

8       Whereas, Addressing health literacy needs can improve the  
9 health status and quality of life for millions of Michiganders;  
10 now, therefore, be it

11       Resolved by the Senate, That the members of this legislative  
12 body recognize October 2024 as Health Literacy Month. We encourage  
13 efforts to increase awareness of health literacy among the general  
14 public and recognize the need for additional support and education  
15 to increase the health literacy of all citizens; and be it further

16       Resolved, That we urge all Michiganders to use this month as  
17 an opportunity to educate themselves about health literacy.