

# Building understanding: Health literacy and links with cultural competence and language access in Counties Manukau

Dr Siniva Sinclair  
Pasifika Medical Association conference  
September 2017

Date:

# Health literacy burdens



# Health literacy

---

- *“The capacity to obtain, process and understand basic health information and services in order to make informed and appropriate health decisions”*
- In most health settings, there is a significant mismatch between a consumer’s health literacy skills and health sector demands - so need to:
  - ✓ (1) Develop the health literacy skills of consumers *and*
  - ✓ (2) Reduce the health literacy demands of the health sector
- Important to do both:
  - ✓ *“be careful not to assume that health literacy must focus solely on developing consumers’ skills”*

# Health literate organisations

---

- *“make it easier for people to navigate, understand, and use information and services to take care of their health”*
  - ✓ Make health literacy everyone’s business – leaders, managers, clinical and non-clinical staff
  - ✓ Design systems, processes and services that allow consumers to access services easily
  - ✓ Support operational staff to use health literacy approaches and strategies
  - ✓ Eliminate confusing communication that could prevent consumers from accessing treatments easily
  - ✓ Actively build health literacy of consumers to help them to manage their health
  - ✓ Make sure operational staff understand that, no matter how high a consumer’s level of health literacy is, stress and anxiety affect their ability to understand and remember new information

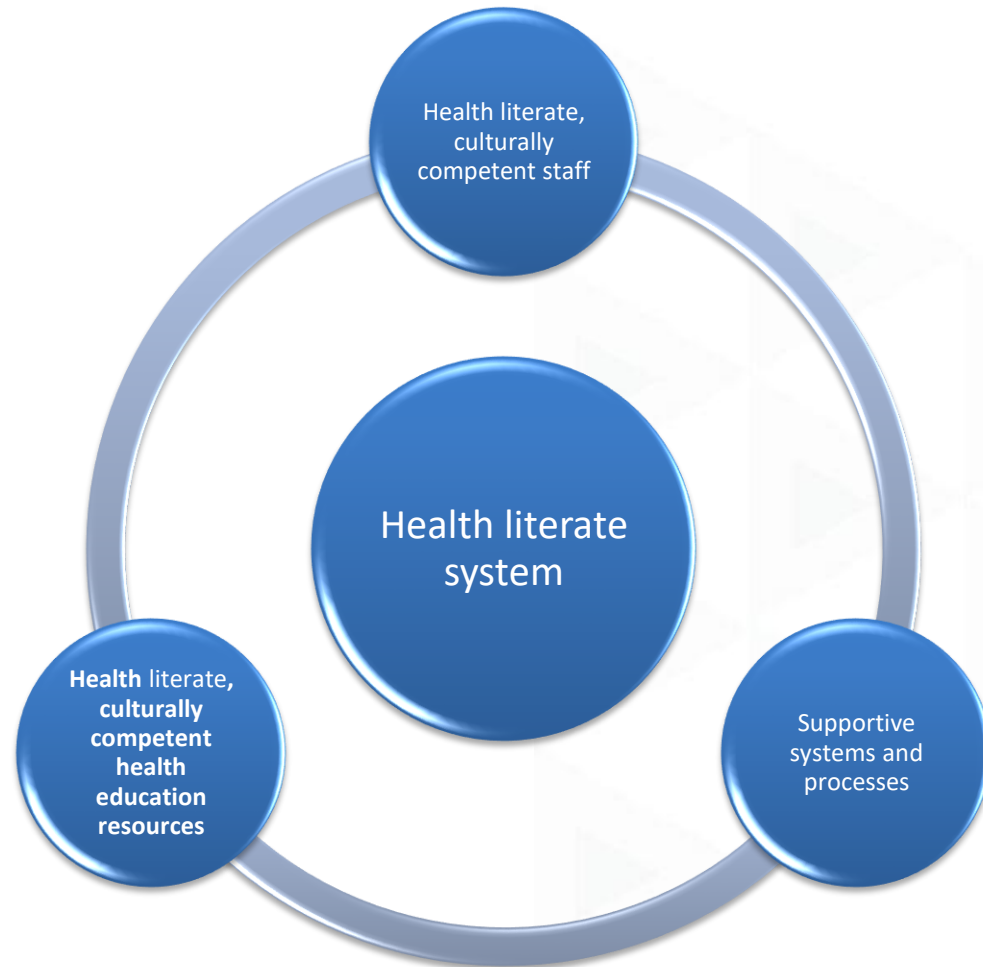
# Vision

---

- Everyone in Counties Manukau can find their way into and around the health services they need
- Every interaction builds understanding between patients, whaanau and staff
- Appropriate health education resources are used when needed to support understanding

# What do we need to achieve this vision?

---



# A three-step process for health literacy

---



# Role of Pacific staff

---

- Helping us find and celebrate the “bright spots” – clinicians and resources showing outstanding effectiveness
- Sharing insights into misunderstandings that may occur – unbeknown to clinicians
- Supporting language access
- Facilitating target audience involvement in the review and development of health education resources
- Leading the development of supportive systems and processes
- Contributing to training of other staff



# What can a health literate system achieve?

---

**“Last year I went to  
hospital 28 times!**

By looking after myself  
and having a better  
understanding of my  
condition I’ve only been  
twice so far this year.”

George

Patient

