

# RuX for reading

Your "Read for Health" newsletter • Summer 2007

## What's New in Health Literacy !!!!

With the end of the fiscal year there comes a time of reflection. This past year has been an incredible year for the Read for Health Initiative and I would like to take this opportunity to share with you some of our accomplishments.

The Initiative sponsored Lee M. Sanders, MD, MPH, Associate Professor of Pediatrics, University of Miami, to conduct trainings at two Medical Directors and Nursing Directors statewide meetings resulting in 77 nurses and 32 physicians being trained on the Ask Me 3 program. The Ask Me 3 program is a quick, effective tool designed to improve health communication between patients and providers.

Through patient and provider education materials developed by leading health literacy experts Ask Me 3 promotes three simple but essential questions that patients should ask their providers in every healthcare interaction. Providers should always encourage their patients to understand the answers to:

- **What is my main problem?**
- **What do I need to do?**
- **Why is it important for me to do this?**

More information on Ask Me 3 program can be obtained at [www.askme3.org](http://www.askme3.org)

Dr. Sanders also conducted training on the American Medical Association's, "Help your Patients Understand" curriculum. This curriculum is designed to help providers:

- **Gain an understanding of the full scope of health literacy**
- **To recognize health system barriers faced by patients with low health literacy**
- **To improve verbal and written communications to patients and**
- **To create a "shame-free" environment for patients**

Seventy-eight of our County Health Department (CHD) nurses and 32 of our CHD physicians were trained on this curriculum.



More Information on the Ask Me 3 program can be obtained at:  
[www.askme3.org](http://www.askme3.org)

## Reach Out And Read Program

Another training conducted by Dr. Sanders was on the Reach Out and Read program. This curriculum trains doctors and nurses to advise parents about the importance of reading aloud and to give books to children at pediatric check-ups from six months to five years of age. A special focus is placed on children growing up in poverty. By building on the unique relationship between parents and medical providers, Reach Out and Read helps families and communities cultivate early literacy skills so that children enter school prepared to succeed at reading. Seventy-one CHD nurses and 38 CHD physicians were trained.



In all, 383 continuing education hours in combined health literacy based trainings were provided this past year through the Read for Health Initiative.

The Initiative also provided each attendee with a copy of Helen Osborne's book, *"Health Literacy from A to Z: Practical Ways to Communicate Your Health Message."* This book is an easy-to-use handbook filled with hundreds of ideas and strategies for everyday practice. Helen Osborne is renowned for her work in health literacy. She is president of Health Literacy Consulting and has a very useful website with health literacy information.

I encourage you to visit her site and sign up for her free health literacy newsletter. [www.healthliteracyconsulting.com](http://www.healthliteracyconsulting.com)

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## Clinical and Preventative Management Summit

In January 2007, the Department of Health held its first Clinical and Preventative Management Summit with over 300 attendees. The Read for Health Initiative organized five health literacy panel discussions over a day and a half covering the following topics:

**INFANT AND MATERNAL CHILD HEALTH OUTCOMES AND HEALTH LITERACY** - To identify and address health literacy problems in the field of maternal and child health.

**TRANSITIONING YOUTH INTO ADULT HEALTH CARE** - Empowering youth k-12 for the level of responsibility to manage their future health care, particularly youth with disabilities.

**BUILDING HEALTH LITERACY LINKAGES** - Creating a forum for health, literacy, k-12, and adult education organizations to collaborate.

**MINORITY HEALTH** - Connecting the dots, linking health literacy awareness efforts to health disparities.

**HEALTHCARE PROVIDER TRAINING** - Integrating health literacy information into medical, nursing and other allied health education curricula. This summit provided a wonderful opportunity to expand health literacy awareness to DOH staff, community partners, stakeholders and members of Florida's medical communities.



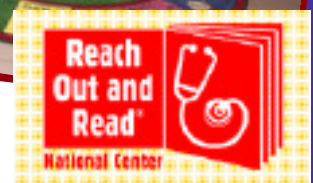
The Read for Health Initiative recently formed a partnership with Florida's *Volunteer School Health Nurses* program to teach More Health's curriculum, "Physical Exam-Check Up and Check Out" to elementary school children. The curriculum empowers youth on health literacy issues. The Initiative successfully negotiated with More Health to include the link between reading and health and to include a segment on how to better communicate with your doctor based on the Ask Me 3 program but geared to a child's level. It's a win-win situation for the students and for the Volunteer School Health Nurses. This program will roll-out in twelve counties beginning in the Fall 07-08 school term.

One of the earliest projects of the Read for Health Initiative was the Reach Out and Read program. The Initiative has increased the participation rate of our county health departments who provide well child visits by 57% with 43 of our 48 CHD's participating. The Initiative is currently reaching out to our Children's Medical Services' clinics (CMS), a program that provides a family-centered managed system of care for children with special health care needs, to participate in the Reach Out and Read program. Our doctors and nurses know that growing up healthy means growing up with books.

In an effort to support reading in our county health departments and to encourage participation in the Reach Out and Read program, the Initiative funded all of our county health departments and CMS clinics to create a "Reading Rich Waiting Room Environment." All were asked to purchase child size reading chairs, bookshelves, books, etc., to create reading corners in WIC, dental, immunization and well child clinic waiting rooms throughout the state.



**Maggie Bednar, RN, Gainesville Nursing Director was proud to send us this picture of their new CMS "Reading Rich Environment" waiting room.**



Another truly exciting Initiative was to support Health Literacy Month in October, 2006, by announcing the Read for Health Initiative's first "Health Literacy in the Classroom," volunteer reading project. Volunteers were asked

to visit elementary school classrooms around the state and read, "*Curious George Goes to the Hospital*" to preschool, kindergarten, or first grade students. The Initiative organized over 900 volunteers who read to over 1,200 classrooms reaching over 30,000 children statewide. The books were donated to the classrooms in an effort to reinforce health concepts throughout the year.

## Health Literacy in the Classroom

A second in a series of "**Health Literacy in the Classroom**" volunteer reading projects occurred in April '07 in recognition of "TV Turn of Week." TV-Turnoff Week is a nationwide campaign to raise public awareness about the negative impact of excessive television watching and to encourage children and adults to watch less television in order to promote healthier lives and communities. Again, volunteers were asked to read the Berenstain Bears, "*Too Much TV*" to kindergarten and first grade students. This was another successful campaign.

## October is Health Literacy Month

If you haven't already volunteered for this wonderful program in the past, watch for additional opportunities in the very near future. In October, recognition of "**October is Health Literacy Month**", the Initiative will be rolling out "*The Berenstain Bears Visit the Doctor*." Sure to be another success story. In February 2008, the Initiative is working on a partnership with the Florida Dental Association and will introduce "*Dora the Explorer-Healthy Smiles*" during Children's Dental Month. And, in early spring, in partnership with the Safe Kids Coalition and the Injury Prevention department, the Initiative will begin an early start to drowning prevention with "*Stewie the Duck Learns to Swim*."

The Read for Health Initiative is in the early stages of partnering with the Woman, Infant and Children's (WIC) clinics with a reading promotional using "*The Very Hungry Caterpillar*."

## MicheLee Puppets, Laughter & Mayhem

The Read for Health Initiative recently negotiated a contract with MicheLee Puppets to perform the Extreme Health Challenge to over 30,000 third to fifth grade students. The Extreme Health Challenge is a wonderfully wacky play that uses "kooky" puppet characters and even "kookier" actors to teach elementary-age children how to take great care of their bodies! Through a series of challenges, battles of wit, audience participation and puppetry mayhem, children laugh and learn about the importance of good nutrition and active lifestyles. As part of the contract, MicheLee Puppets agreed for the script to be rewritten to include a reading component which includes a section on reading food labels. Activity guides

were made available to the teachers to reinforce the health literacy messages learned and a DVD was provided to each school to use at morning announcements promoting and empowering young children to make healthy lifestyle choices.



More information can be obtained  
on MicheLee Puppets at:  
[www.micheleepuppets.org](http://www.micheleepuppets.org)



**A scene from the puppet show**

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### **“What to do When Your Child Gets Sick”**

The Read for Health’s latest endeavor is a partnership with the Florida Literacy Coalition. The Coalition introduced the Institute for Healthcare Advancement’s “What to do When Your Child Gets Sick” materials at their May conference in Lake Mary during their general session. Eligible programs for this project were the Adult and Family Literacy Programs that work with parents of young children.

The keynote speaker was Sabrina Kurtz-Rossi, M. Ed. She spoke on health literacy and how to successfully integrate health literacy instruction into the classroom. During her session, she invited teachers and administrators to register for the materials as part of a pilot project. Each program was eligible to receive a teacher’s manual and up to 40 copies of “What to Do When Your Child Get’s Sick”, for distribution to parents in their program.

#### **In exchange each teacher/administrator agreed to:**

- Distribute the books to their students
- Select and teach lessons from the teachers manual (for a minimum two hours of instruction)
- Complete and submit a teacher evaluation report which will include information on how the materials were used, the number of students receiving the materials, the teacher’s assessment of lessons/materials, and informal student feedback.

In all, 20 teacher training manuals were distributed along with 520 copies of the “What to Do When Your Child Get’s Sick” book.

## What To Do For Senior Health

A similar project is in the early stages of development using “What to do for Senior Health” training materials from the Institute for Healthcare Advancement written in plain language. Addressing seniors health literacy is vital since seniors today are living longer than before and as the 2003 results from the National Adult Literacy Survey indicated seniors aged 65 and older had the lowest literacy levels.

## Feature Story: Book Give Away

### Alachua County Health Department

In June 2004, Nancy Day, ARNP and Dr. Yana Banks, began the Reach Out and Read program in the pediatric clinic of the Alachua County Health Department in Gainesville. In October the following year they added three satellite clinics to their program. In that time they have given over a 1,000 new books away to their pediatric patients that are six months to five years of age. They also have gently used books available for the children that come to clinic but do not fall in the age range eligible for the Reach Out and Read program.

This year they promoted early literacy and their Reach Out and Read program at the seventh annual Family Empowerment Health Fair held at the Martin Luther King Center in Gainesville that was held on Saturday, January 27. Hundreds of adults and children came by their booth to learn about the importance of literacy and receive a new book! Since education and literacy are so strongly linked to good health, Nancy and Dr. Banks are always looking for venues to get the word out about child literacy!

**On the left is  
Nancy Day, along  
with Dr. Yana Banks.**



For more information about the Read for Initiative, please contact Carol Scoggins, State Read for Health Coordinator.  
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