For the first time in 20 years, and with the launch of Healthy People 2030 (HP2030), the Healthy People initiative has expanded its definition of health literacy.

**EVOlUTION OF THE DEFINITION OF HEALTH LITERACY**

The HP2010 definition of health literacy solely focused on the individual's capacity to comprehend basic health information. HP 2030 expands the definition to include a focus on both personal and organizational health literacy, recognizing health literacy in a systems context with interventions at all levels.

**PERSONAL HEALTH LITERACY**

Personal health literacy is the degree to which individuals have the ability to find, understand, and use information and services to inform health-related decisions and actions for themselves and others. Changes from the previous definition include (1) an emphasis on the use of health information and services, (2) a shift from appropriate decisions to informed decisions and actions, and (3) inclusion of a public health perspective whereby personal health literacy can be used to promote the health of others.

**ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH LITERACY**

The adoption of a definition for organizational health literacy signals that personal health literacy is contextual and that organizations play a critical role by making health information and services easy to understand and access. The definition also points out that organizations must be equitable in how they address health literacy.

**BENEFITS OF BOTH PERSONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH LITERACY**

The HP2030’s updated health literacy definition builds on Healthy People’s previous health literacy contributions to public health. Both personal and organizational health literacy can have a powerful effect on an individual’s health. It can make the difference in understanding a diagnosis, treatment, or recommended lifestyle changes to lead active, healthy lives.

Source: Stephanie Santana; Cindy Brach; Linda Harris; Emmeline Ochiai; Carter Blakey; Frances Bevington; Dushanka Kleinman; Nico Pronk. Updating Health Literacy for Healthy People 2030. J Public Health Manage Pract. Published ahead of print, Mar. 12, 2021. doi: 10.1097/PHH.0000000000001324