Key Points: Define the basics of Health Literacy and Health Information Literacy to help better understand the information-seeking behaviors of consumers and meet patron needs. Also, basic ideas on how librarians can help meet the needs of consumers.

Health Literacy:

- Health Literacy is the ability to read, understand, and act on health care information. (Center for Health Care Strategies)

  Health literacy problems affect people from all backgrounds, especially those with chronic health problems. You cannot tell by looking! (Center for Health Care Strategies)

- The Statistics:
  According to the National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS):
    - 66% of United States Adults age 60 and over have inadequate or marginal literacy skills.
    - 50% of welfare recipients read below fifth grade level.
    - 50% of Hispanic Americans and 40% of African Americans have reading problems.

- Understanding Medical Information:

  It is especially difficult for less literate patients to fill out intake forms, enroll in insurance programs, for which they may be eligible, get services once enrolled, follow
  medical instructions or give informed consent.

  Prescription labels and self-care instructions are among the most important written materials patients receive.

Health Information Literacy:

- Health Information Literacy is the ability to recognize a health information need, search and evaluate information sources to retrieve relevant information and use the information to make good health decisions.

What can librarians and educators do to meet the needs of consumers/patrons who struggle with health literacy?

- Slow down and take time to listen to the patron's concerns.
- Create an atmosphere of respect and comfort. Build trust with the patron.
- Limit information given to patrons. Give them what they need.
- Find Materials to meet their needs

- o *Diagrams or Pictures* – Visuals help the patrons understand the action recommended. They can also take them home. Make sure they are clear and easy to understand
- o *Video* – Videos with run times of 8 minutes or less are the most helpful. Interactive or Instructional are also helpful
- o *Interactive Computer Programs* – Touch-screen or interactive computer programs that are user-friendly and use graphics to illustrate intended behavior are most appropriate.