



**Editorial Contact:**

**Tobi Aclaro**

**Institute for Healthcare Advancement (IHA)**

**(562) 690-4001, ext 203**

**e-mail: [taclaro@iha4health.org](mailto:taclaro@iha4health.org)**

## **Institute for Healthcare Advancement Will Honor Three for Excellence in Health Literacy at National Conference in Irvine, Calif.**

**La Habra, Calif. – April 30, 2010** – The Institute for Healthcare Advancement (IHA) will present three awards on May 6 for outstanding achievements in health literacy at its Ninth Annual Health Literacy Conference, “Health Literacy in the Real World: Programs & Solutions That Work,” to be held May 6-7 at the Hyatt Regency in Irvine, Calif.

The conference will be attended by nearly 400 professionals working in healthcare, health educators, and individuals with an interest in literacy as it relates to healthcare challenges.

IHA, a non-profit healthcare organization and a leader in health literacy with its educational conference and easy to read books, reviewed more than 80 submissions from some of the nation’s foremost health literacy authorities and researchers to select the winners in the categories of Research, Innovative Programs, and Published Materials.

The winners of the three 2010 IHA Health Literacy Awards are:

### **Research**

“Nutrition Labels: The relationship between health literacy and maternal response to a brief teaching intervention”

Catherine Wiley, MD

Chief, Division of General Pediatrics

University of Connecticut School of Medicine

While many caregivers report reading nutrition labels, they nevertheless exhibit significant deficits in understanding the labels’ content. Poor nutrition label comprehension correlates with low literacy and numeracy skills, but even patients with higher literacy have difficulties interpreting a nutrition label. This study explored the association between mothers’ level of health literacy and their ability to read a nutrition label, before and following a brief teaching intervention.

“Could we introduce a brief intervention that would make a difference?” Dr. Wiley queried. The target population for the study was low income families with mothers of young children. After the five-minute audiotape instruction, 97% of mothers stated they planned to look at labels more carefully in the future; 65% stated they planned to make different decisions about what to feed their child, based on the nutrition label. “Every parent improved,” said Dr. Wiley, “and the lower the literacy, the more they improved.”

Dr. Wiley continued. “Families find food labels confusing,” she said. “But even for patients with low literacy skills, learning to reading a food label is within reach. There is hope for everyone who wants to take charge of their health.”

## **Innovative Program**

“Time to Talk CARDIO”

Time to Talk CARDIO Partnership

Founding Partners: Canyon Ranch Institute, American Academy of Family Physicians Foundation, RIASWorks, Merck & Co., Inc.

Piloted in 2009, “Time to Talk CARDIO—Creating A Real Dialogue In the Office is an educational program dedicated to advancing cardiovascular health by helping to improve the dialogue between health care professionals and their patients. A key component of the program is a free, online, communication skill-building tool that features more than 550 videos demonstrating methods to help make the most of the limited time in a medical visit.

Cardiovascular disease causes more than 870,000 deaths in the United States each year.\* Richard H. Carmona, M.D., M.P.H., FACS, 17<sup>th</sup> Surgeon General of the United States (2002-2006) helped introduce “Time to Talk CARDIO” to the public in February. “Two priorities of my service as Surgeon General of the United States and of my life’s work are to increase the attention and effort focused on preventing disease and to improve the health literacy of all people,” said Dr. Carmona. “While we’ve made great progress in the prevention and management of cardiovascular disease, many patients fail to experience the full benefit from their treatment plans for a variety of reasons. Time to Talk CARDIO was created to help improve the communication between patients and health care professionals.” Time to Talk CARDIO was underwritten by Merck/Schering-Plough Pharmaceuticals and developed in partnership with the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) Foundation, Canyon Ranch Institute (CRI) and RIASWorks.

(\* Source: “Addressing the Nation’s Leading Killers: At A Glance 2008,” Center for Disease Control, Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention, p. 1.)

## **Published Materials**

“The Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) Parent Education Package”

Amy J. Neil, MS, MAP, Medical Writer and James S. Rue, Creative Director

The NICU Parent Education Package is a set of materials developed specifically for use by 300 NICUs nationwide, as well as Pediatric Intensive Care Units, maternal and fetal medicine practices, and pediatric cardiology practices. The NICU Package is a bedside portfolio designed to educate parents and improve autonomy and child outcome; educate clinicians and encourage face-to-face clinician-patient communication; provide a simple tool for clinicians to learn and communicate more easily within the hospital environment; and encourage parents to ask questions of clinicians.

Within the pilot test, 96% of parents who participated felt the topics sheets were easy to read; 88% understood all of the content. “Parents need to feel that their concerns are understood and addressed,” said Neil. “Clinicians don’t have much time to visit each patient as a parent may need, due to clinicians’ workload. These materials are a bridge of communication between them.”

Low health literacy is a widespread problem. More than 1 in 3 American adults have basic or below basic health literacy skills. Health literacy is defined as the ability to read, understand, and act on health information to make appropriate decisions. These decisions include understanding how to take your medicine, prepare for a medical test, sign up for health insurance, and care for yourself or a loved one’s chronic illness, such as diabetes, asthma, arthritis, heart disease, high blood pressure or cancer.

IHA is a La Habra, California-based not-for-profit organization dedicated to empowering people to better health. It is nationally recognized for its efforts in health literacy and provides healthcare information through its various publishing efforts, the Internet, and its renowned local and national education programs. Tel: 1-800-434-4633. Visit: [www.ih4health.org](http://www.ih4health.org).