

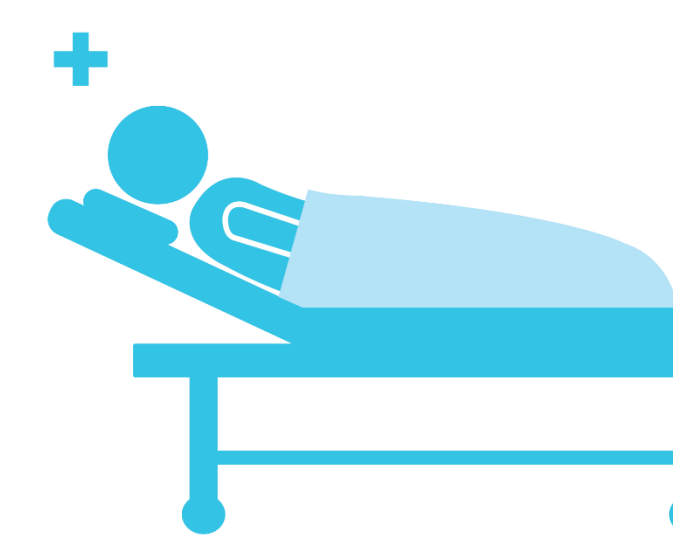
Health Literacy Missouri

The Health Environment Assessment (HEA): helping patients navigate healthcare facilities

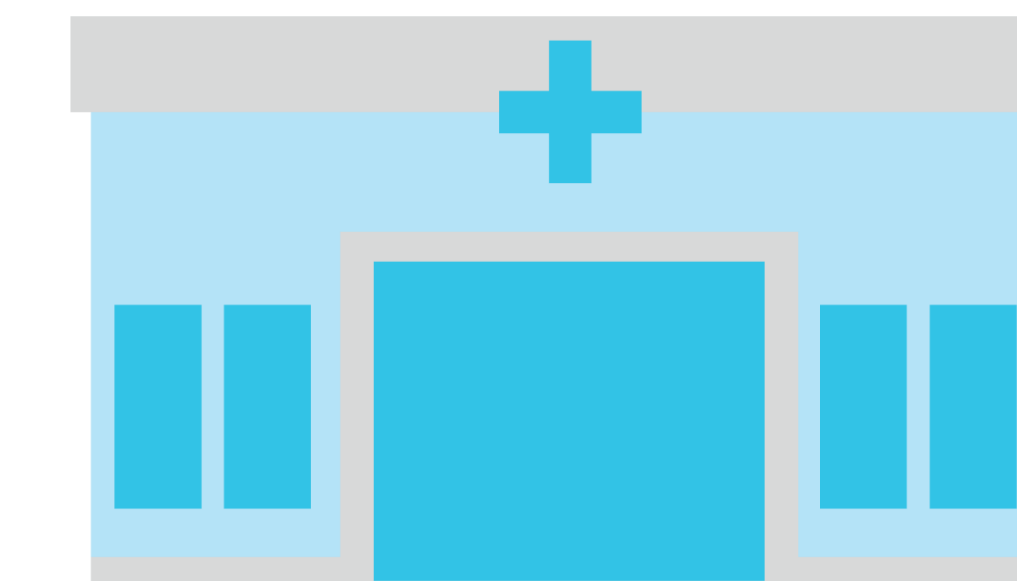
Background



90 million people in the US have difficulty understanding and using basic health information and the healthcare system.



Low health literacy is linked to poor health status, medicine errors, increased ER visits, and early death.



Healthcare providers and facilities have a role to play in alleviating patient burdens.

Project



Assess the health literacy of 10 local public health departments (LPHD) and conduct follow-up interviews and surveys to gather staff feedback about the HEA process

Objectives

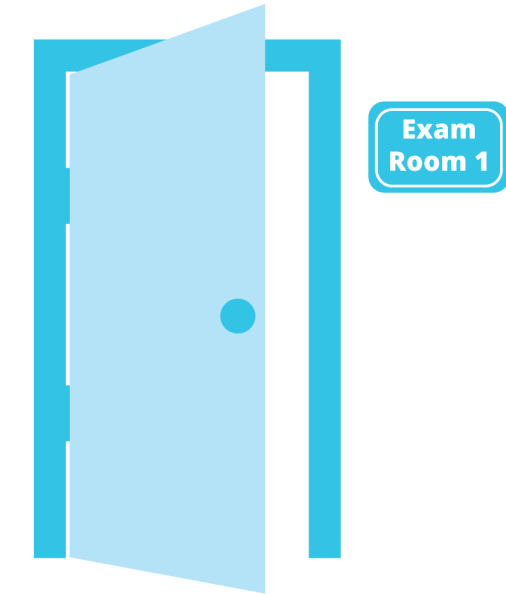
- 1 Assess policies and practices of LPHDs
- 2 Provide each LPHD with tangible recommendations to improve patient-centered care
- 3 Explore staff attitudes towards the HEA report and process
- 4 Evaluate the implementation of HEA recommendations, including barriers and solutions

Methods

1 The HEA team visited each LPHD to assess the following from a patient's perspective:



Navigation to and within the facility



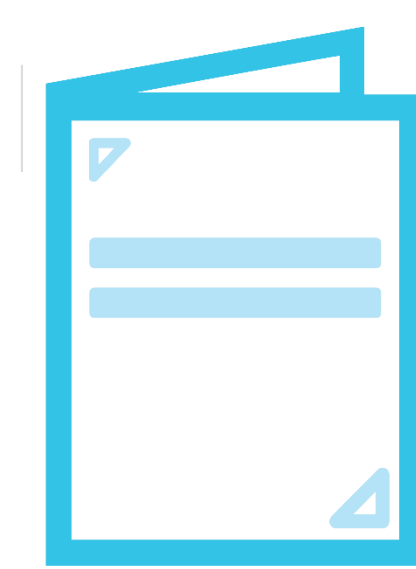
Signs and postings



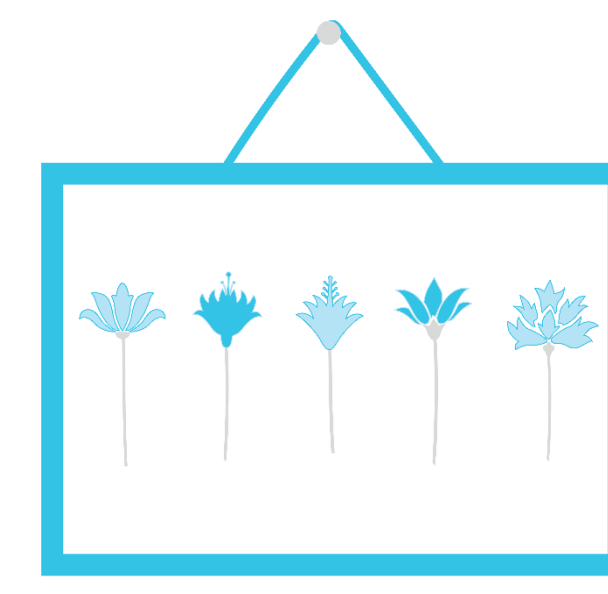
Staff-patient communication



Web presence and usability



Printed materials and information

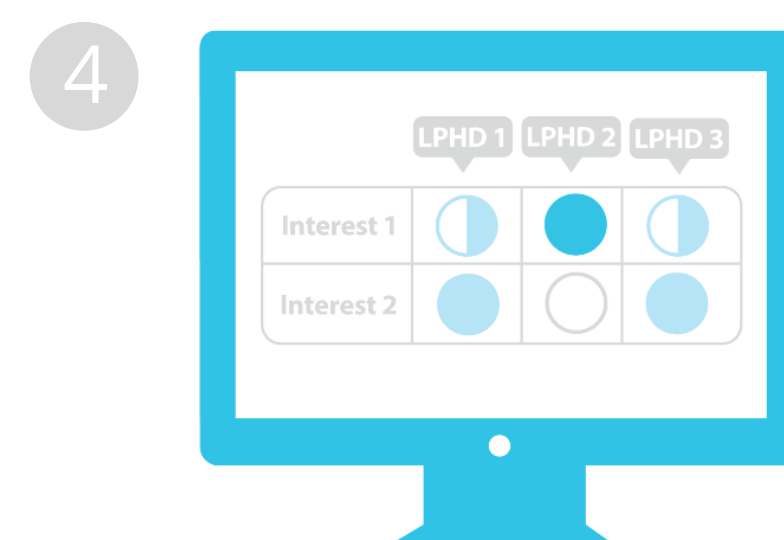


Patient-centered interior design

and



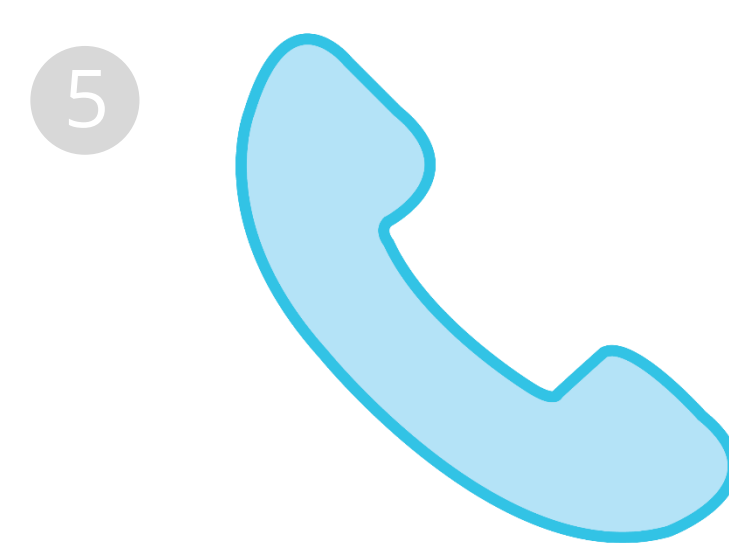
2 Recorded observations on a digital checklist that allowed for real-time capture of data and photographs



4 Reviewed reports to consolidate and quantify qualitative data, and compiled summary reports of all 10 LPHDs



3 Wrote individual reports that included observations, photographs, facility strengths, and specific, evidence-based recommendations for improvement



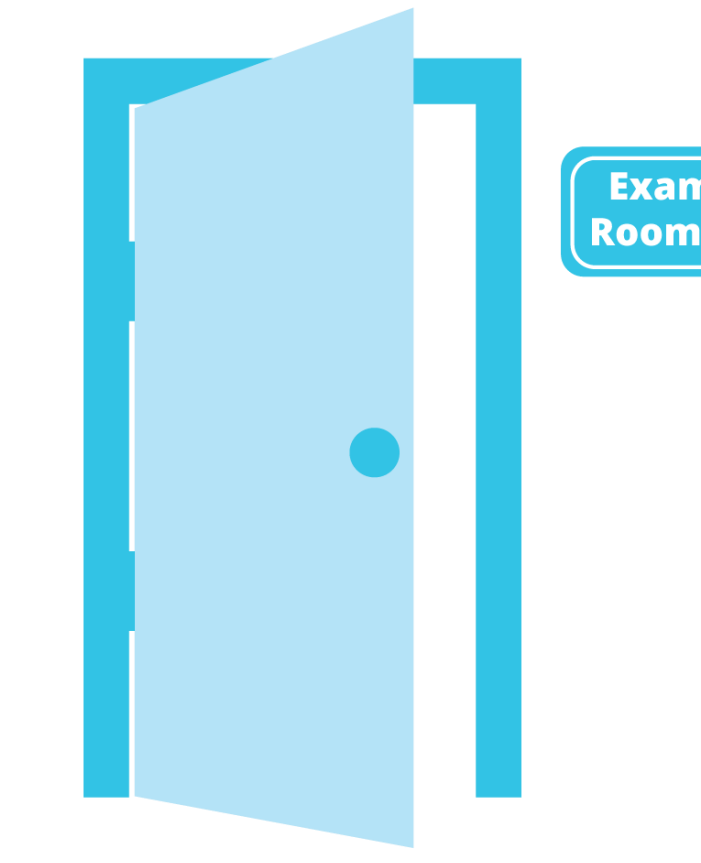
5 Conducted follow-up phone interviews and online surveys, and analyzed data

Results

HEA reports showed that:



A few facilities had inaccurate Google profiles, preventing HLM's team, and likely patients, from easily finding the facility.



Most sites had interior signage that used uncommon words and abbreviations.



The most common areas for improvement in staff-patient communication were the use of jargon and failure to check for patient understanding.

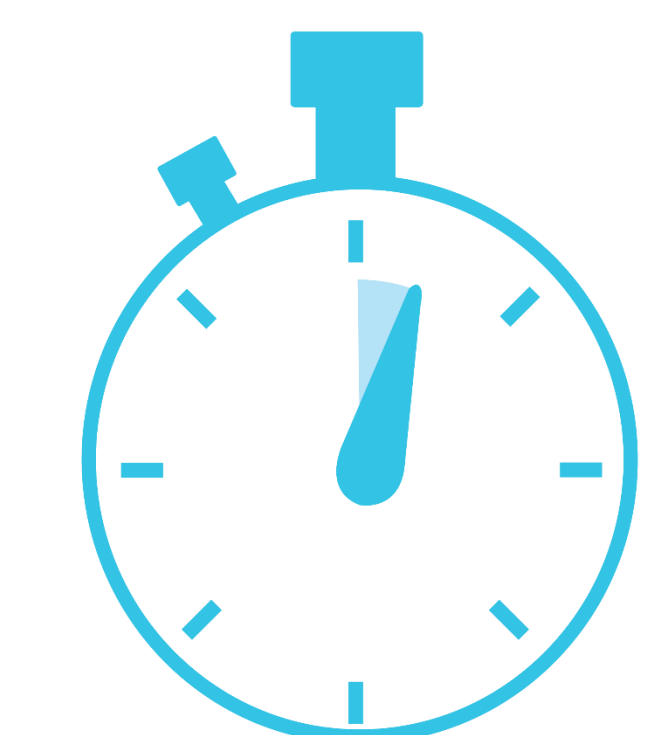
Follow-up phone interviews and surveys found:



LPHD staff found the reports helpful and most intend to or have already implemented recommendations.



Some observations confirmed known yet unaddressed issues, while other observations highlighted new issues found to be valid by staff.



LPHD staff reported barriers to implementing the recommendations: lack of personnel, time, resources, and the complexity of the recommended changes.

Implications for policy, delivery, and practice



The HEA is an innovative tool to:

- Evaluate and enhance the healthcare environment
- Improve patient-centered care
- Provide facilities with evidence-based recommendations to improve their policies and practices



The HEA report's evidence-based health literacy and healthcare design recommendations create positive change in the healthcare environment.

Acknowledgements

HLM would like to thank Jo Anderson, the participating LPHDs, and Savannah Sisk for their support.

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