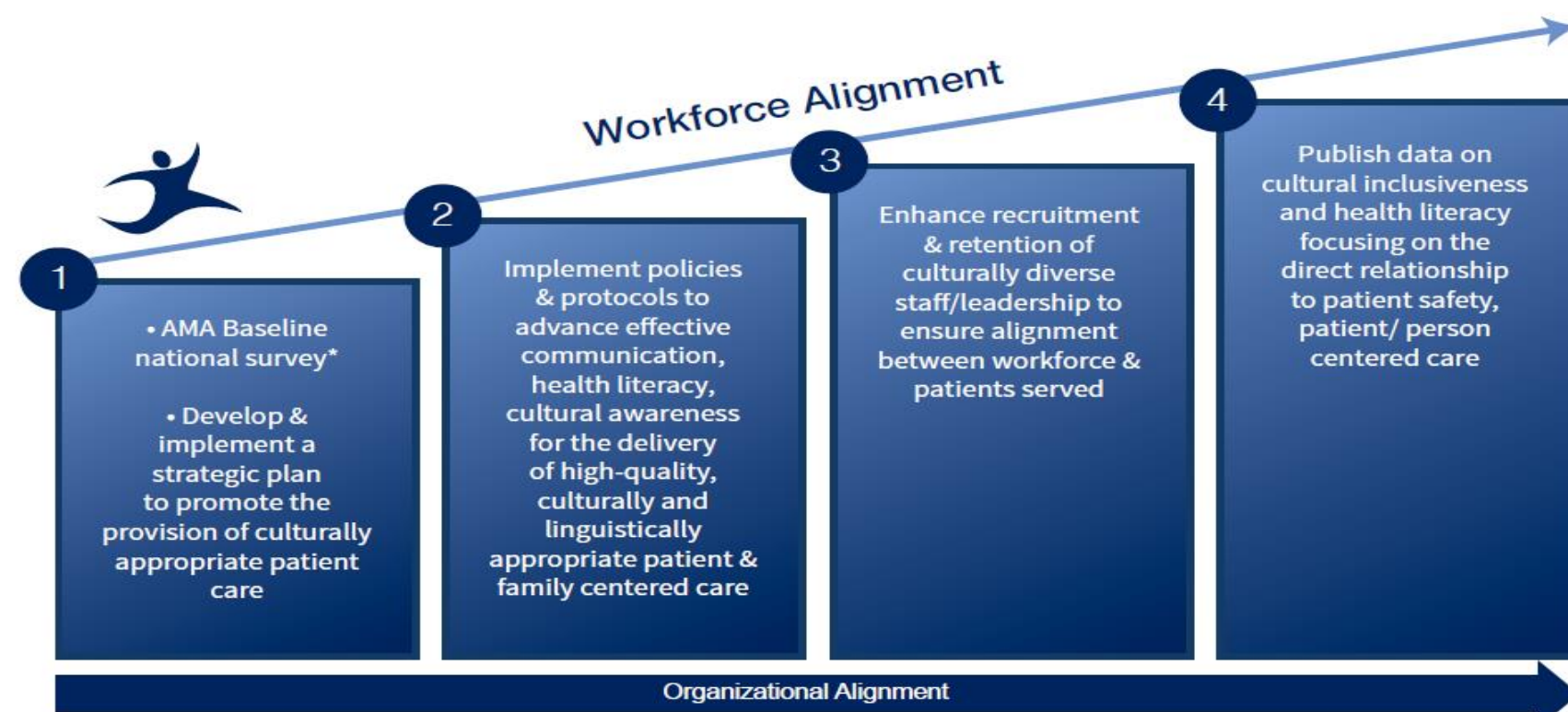
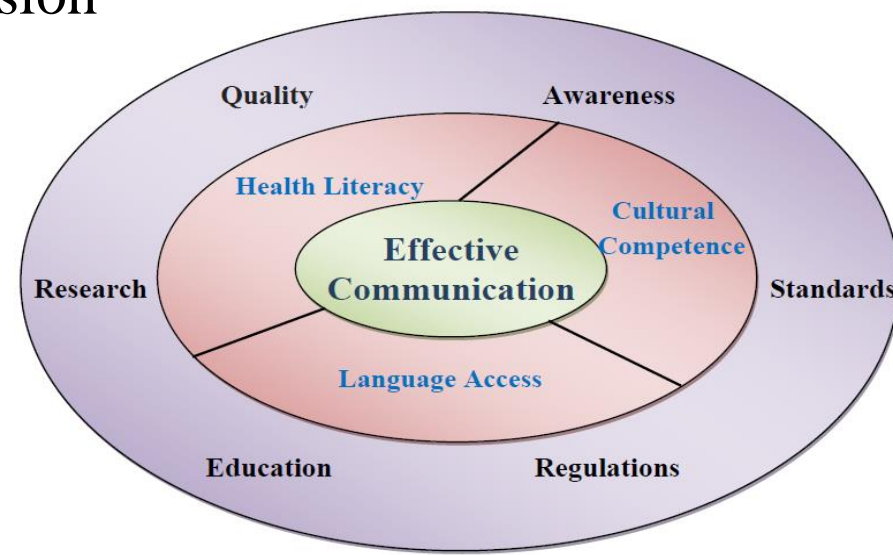


Background

Health literacy became a priority for healthcare and North Shore-LIJ Health System (NSLIJHS) in 2010 as the focus on patient- and family-centered care gained national attention:

- Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA)
- New and revised standards for patient-centered communication released by The Joint Commission
- Plain Writing Act

In response to this growing national imperative, NSLIJHS implemented initiatives to cultivate diversity, inclusion and provide tools to implement effective communication skills.



NSLIJHS and the Hofstra North Shore-LIJ School of Medicine merged its existing diversity and health literacy initiatives in July 2010, and established the Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Health Literacy (ODIHL).

- Created to drive the Health System's mission to provide excellent patient care, and foster an environment that supports principles of equity, diversity, inclusion and effective communication.

Target Population



NSLIJHS employees.

The Health System consists of 19 hospitals and serves a catchment areas of over 8 million people, with over 54,000 employees.

Objectives

- Develop and coordinate a system-wide program that provides the highest quality health care and optimizes patient satisfaction and outcomes by decreasing barriers to health care for Limited English Proficiency (LEP), Hearing Impaired, Visually Impaired, Speech and Language Impaired and low health literate patients and families.
- Promote organizational changes such as adding multidisciplinary committees to enhance the alignment of healthcare demands for the communities we serve.

Activities

- Health System Committees - A multidisciplinary System Patient Education Committee and Language and Communication Access Committee were created in 2011 and 2012, consisting of more than 30 staff members from system hospitals, departments and service lines.
 - In order to promote, sustain and advance an environment that supports principles of equity, diversity, inclusion and health literacy, the Committees were combined in 2013.
 - In 2015, the Committee was renamed the System Effective Communication Committee.

- Health Literacy Module – a 60 minute online interactive educational tool developed by ODIHL leadership.
 - Provides techniques to enhance patient-provider communication, disseminates evidence-based health literacy research, and shares educational strategies and tools that promote effective oral and written communication.
 - This module is accessible to all NSLIJHS employees.
 - The module was launched in July 2012. Over 5,000 employees have participated to date.

Activities (continued)

- Health Literacy Hero contest - provided employees the opportunity to nominate someone, or themselves, who they believe promote health literacy and find ways to communicate effectively to make health information more understandable



- 17 nominations were submitted. Three winners were selected: two nurse practitioners and a nutrition coordinator.



- Health Literacy Month Book Drive - ODIHL spearheaded and collaborated with the Long Island Regional Adult Education Network (LI-RAEN) and several literacy programs on Staten Island on a system-wide book drive.

- Collected a total of 4,265 books.
- System Committee members eagerly volunteered to promote, coordinate, and oversee the 17 drop-off locations and book collection



- "Health Literacy Happenings": Column in North Shore-LIJ's New Standard Magazine, quarterly employee publication.

Outcomes

- Employee engagement increases the awareness of health literacy and the importance of effective communication.
- A knowledgeable workforce will learn how to apply health literacy tenets to their work routine and change health system culture.
- Enhances patient-provider communication.
- Addresses health literacy as part of the overall patient care agenda.
- Improves the readability of health care information .
- Consistent with the mission of the health system, employees become empowered by their direct contribution to patient safety and quality patient-centered care.