

Healthy People 2010 Operational Definition

11-2. Improve the health literacy of the population.

11-2b. Decrease the proportion of persons with *Below Basic* health literacy.

National Data Source	National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL): Health Literacy Component. National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), U.S. Department of Education.
State Data Source	Not identified.
Healthy People 2000 Objective	Not applicable.
Changes since the 2000 Publication	New subobjective (see Comments).
Measure	Percent.
Baseline (Year)	14 (2003)
Target	13.
Target-Setting Method	8 percent improvement. For a discussion of target-setting methods, see Part A, section 4.
Numerator	Persons, aged 16 and older, who scored "Below Basic" in the health literacy component of the NAAL.
Denominator	Persons aged 16 and older.
Population Targeted	U.S. civilian non-institutionalized population (including persons in federal and state prisons -- see Comments).
Questions Used to Obtain the National Baseline Data	Assessment questions not released.
Expected Periodicity	Periodic.
Comments	The NAAL measured literacy through participants' completion of tasks representing a range of literacy activities that they are likely to face in their daily

lives. Three literacy scales were used in the 2003 assessment: prose, document and quantitative literacy. The health literacy items reflect the Healthy People 2010 definition of health literacy: the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions. Health literacy tasks concerned three domains of health and health care information and services: clinical, prevention, and navigation of the health care system.¹

Six states voluntarily participated in the 2003 assessment: Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri, New York, and Oklahoma. Data release is planned in 2007.

Many Healthy People 2010 Objectives target the US civilian noninstitutionalized population. Generally, that population includes persons who reside in households and excludes persons residing in institutions such as nursing homes, college dormitories, prisons, etc. The population targeted by objective 11-2 includes prisoners in federal and state prisons. It does not include residents of other institutions

Objective 11-2 moved from developmental to measurable in December 2006. The original objective focused on persons with inadequate or marginal literacy skills. The objective text was revised to include the entire population. Two subobjectives were created. The first, 11-2a, focuses on increasing the percentage of people who score "Proficient" in health literacy. The second, 11-2b, focuses on decreasing the percentage of people who score "Below Basic" in health literacy.

For some objectives, data do not meet the criteria for statistical reliability, data quality, or confidentiality and have been suppressed. Information on suppression of data for the major Healthy People 2010 data systems has been published in a *Healthy People Statistical Note*.²

See Appendix A for focus area contact information.

References

1. Kutner, M., Greenberg, E., Jin, Y., and Paulsen, C. (2006). *The Health Literacy of America's Adults: Results From the 2003 National Assessment of Health Literacy* (NCES 2006-483). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.
2. Klein, R.J.; Proctor, S.E.; Boudreault, M.A.; Turczyn, K.M. Healthy People 2010 Criteria for Data Suppression. *Statistical Notes* No. 24. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2002.