

A BILL

22-62

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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To establish the Health Literacy Council to improve the health literacy and knowledge of mental health for district residents.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this act may be cited as the “Health Literacy Council Establishment Act of 2017”.

Sec. 2. Definitions.

For the purposes of this act, the term:

(1) “Health literacy” means the ability to make informed decisions about one’s personal health, to prevent or treat illness, based on an understanding of the principles of obtaining, processing, and comprehending basic health information, products, and services, which includes: educating residents on how the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act impacts them; helping residents develop their health knowledge into a set of positive attitudes and behaviors; learning how to apply for and access health care through DC Health Link, the federal health care exchange, or private health care providers; teaching residents to communicate their health needs with health care providers, evaluate information for credibility and quality, calculate dosages of medicines and treatments, understand the components of health plans, how to read a health insurance card; how to appropriately navigate and utilize the health care system;

28 internalize health care terminology; and to be aware of the beneficial effects of good health
29 practices, and making good health a personal priority.

30 (2) "Health literacy level" means a person's ability to apply health literacy skills
31 to everyday situations and tasks.

32 (3) "Proficient health literacy level" means that an individual can read and
33 understand lengthy complex written health material and synthesize the information to make
34 complex inferences to maximize the benefits of healthcare, access the health resources, products,
35 and services they need, and lead a healthy lifestyle.

36 Sec. 3. Establishment of the District Health Literacy Council.

37 There is established a Health Literacy Council in the District of Columbia that shall
38 advise the Mayor and the Council in promoting health literacy for residents of the District and
39 helping residents develop a working knowledge of mental health.

40 Sec. 4. Members of the Health Literacy Council.

41 (a) The Health Literacy Council shall consist of 15 members, as follows:

42 (1) One member shall be appointed by the chairperson of the Council committee
43 on Health.

44 (2) One member shall be the President, or designee of the President, of UDC.

45 (3) One member shall be the President, or designee of the President, of CCDC.

46 (4) One member shall be the Executive Director, or the designee of the Executive
47 Director, of the Health Benefit Exchange Authority.

48 (5) One member shall be the Director, or a designee of the Director, of the
49 Department of Behavioral Health.

50 (6) One member shall be the Director, or a designee of the Director, of the
51 Department of Health Care Finance;

52 (7) One member shall be the Director, or a designee of the Director, of the
53 Department of Health;

54 (8) Eight members shall be appointed by the Mayor and shall be comprised of:

55 (A) One member who shall represent the WIC;

56 (B) Four members who shall be District residents with extensive
57 knowledge of health resources and services, health education, and in the field of health literacy
58 programs;

59 (C) One member who shall represent the DC Youth Advisory Council;

60 (D) One faculty member from a District of Columbia university who is a
61 District resident with specific experience in issues of equity in health care systems; and

62 (E) One member with experience in primary care who is employed by a
63 clinic or association representing clinics.

64 Sec. 5. Duties of the Health Literacy Council.

65 (a) The Health Literacy Council shall:

66 (1) Meet at least quarterly;

67 (2) Create and operate under its own rules of procedure;

68 (3) Develop a plan to be submitted to the Mayor and the Council within 6 months
69 after the effective date of this act, for the coordination of the District's health literacy efforts.

70 (4) Submit to the Mayor and the Council an annual report and

71 recommendations on the health literacy status of the District, with the first health literacy report
72 and recommendations to be delivered within 12 months of the effective date of this act.

73 (b) In the first annual health literacy report required by subsection (a)(4) of this section,
74 the FHLC shall endeavor to address, among other issues:

75 (A) Matters related to District residents' health care consumer
76 rights;

77 (B) Access to health care education, health literacy levels;

78 (C) An evaluation of current health literacy level in the District and
79 defined metrics to measure health literacy improvement over time;

80 (D) An assessment of funding and resources necessary to support
81 health education, care coordination services, and the explanation of health literacy initiatives;
82 and

83 (E) An assessment on how to reduce health disparities through health
84 literacy and plans to meet the health literacy needs of older adults, residents with disabilities,
85 residents with English as a second language, residents with minimal internet access, and
86 residents applying for health care for the first time.

87 Sec. 6. Health literacy education in workforce development programs.

88 The Mayor shall submit to the Council, within 180 days after the effective date of this
89 act, a plan for the implementation of a health literacy education curriculum that will complement
90 adult literacy programs for District agency workforce development training programs in
91 partnership with the DC Workforce Investment Council (WIC), the Department of Health Care
92 Finance, The University of the District of Columbia (UDC), the Community College of the

93 District of Columbia (CCDC), the DC Youth Advisory Council, and the District of Columbia
94 Health Benefit Exchange.

95 Sec. 7. Applicability.

96 (a) This act shall apply upon the date of inclusion of its fiscal effect in an approved
97 budget and financial plan.

98 (b) The Chief Financial Officer shall certify the date of the inclusion of the fiscal effect in
99 an approved budget and financial plan, and provide notice to the Budget Director of the Council
100 of the certification.

101 (c)(1) The Budget Director shall cause the notice of the certification to be published in
102 the District of Columbia Register.

103 (2) The date of publication of the notice of the certification shall not affect the
104 applicability of this act.

105 Sec. 8. Fiscal impact statement

106 The Council adopts the fiscal impact statement in the committee report as the fiscal
107 impact statement required by section 4a of the General Legislative Procedures Act of 1975,
108 approved October 16, 2006 (120 Stat. 2038; D.C. Official Code § 1-301.47a).

109 Sec. 9. Effective date.

110 The act shall take effect following approval by the Mayor (or in the event of veto by the
111 Mayor, action by the Council to override the veto), a 30-day period of congressional review as
112 provided in section 602(c)(1) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, approved December
113 24, 1973, (87 Stat. 813; D.C. Official Code § 1-206.02(c)(1)), and publication in the District of
114 Columbia Register.