

AN ACT

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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, including:

(A) Knowing how the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act impacts them;

(B) Developing health knowledge into a set of positive attitudes and behaviors;

(C) Learning how to apply for and access health care through DC Health Link, the federal health care exchange, or private health care providers;

(D) Being able to communicate health needs with health care providers, evaluate information for credibility and quality, calculate dosages of medicines and treatments, understand the components of health plans, and read a health insurance card;

(E) Knowing how to appropriately navigate and utilize the health care system and internalize health care terminology; and

(F) Being aware of the beneficial effects of good health practices, and making good health a personal priority.

(2) “Health literacy level” means a person’s ability to apply health literacy skills to everyday situations and tasks.

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

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

Sec. 4. Members of the Health Literacy Council.

The Health Literacy Council shall be composed of 15 members, as follows:

(1) One member shall be appointed by the Chairperson of the Council committee with oversight over the Department of Health;

(2) One member shall be the President of the University of the District of Columbia, or the President's designee;

(3) One member shall be the President of the Community College of the District of Columbia, or the President's designee;

(4) One member shall be the Executive Director of the Health Benefit Exchange Authority, or the Executive Director's designee;

(5) One member shall be the Director of the Department of Behavioral Health, or the Director's designee;

(6) One member shall be the Director of the Department of Health Care Finance, or the Director's designee;

(7) One member shall be the Director of the Department of Health, or the Director's designee; and

(8) Eight members shall be appointed by the Mayor, as follows:

(A) One member shall represent the Workforce Investment Council;

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

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

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

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

Sec. 5. Duties of the Health Literacy Council.

(a) The Health Literacy Council shall:

(1) Meet at least quarterly;

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

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

(4) Submit to the Mayor and the Council an annual report and recommendations on the health literacy status of the District, with the first health literacy report and recommendations, to be delivered within 12 months of the effective date of this act.

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

(1) Matters related to District residents' health care consumer rights;

(2) Access to health care education and health literacy levels;

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

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

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

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

Within 180 days after the effective date of this act, the Mayor shall submit to the Council a plan for the implementation of a health literacy education curriculum that will complement adult literacy programs for District agency workforce development training programs in partnership with the Workforce Investment Council, the Department of Health Care Finance, the University of the District of Columbia, the Community College of the District of Columbia, the Youth Advisory Council, and the District of Columbia Health Benefit Exchange.

Sec. 7. Applicability.

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

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

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

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

Sec. 8. Fiscal impact statement

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

Sec. 9. Effective date.

The act shall take effect following approval by the Mayor (or in the event of veto by the Mayor, action by the Council to override the veto), a 30-day period of congressional review as

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provided in section 602(c)(1) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, approved December 24, 1973 (87 Stat. 813; D.C. Official Code § 1-206.02(c)(1)), and publication in the District of Columbia Register.

Chairman
Council of the District of Columbia

Mayor
District of Columbia