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Health Literacy 101: Increasing Literacy Reduces Health Disparities

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Health Literacy 101:

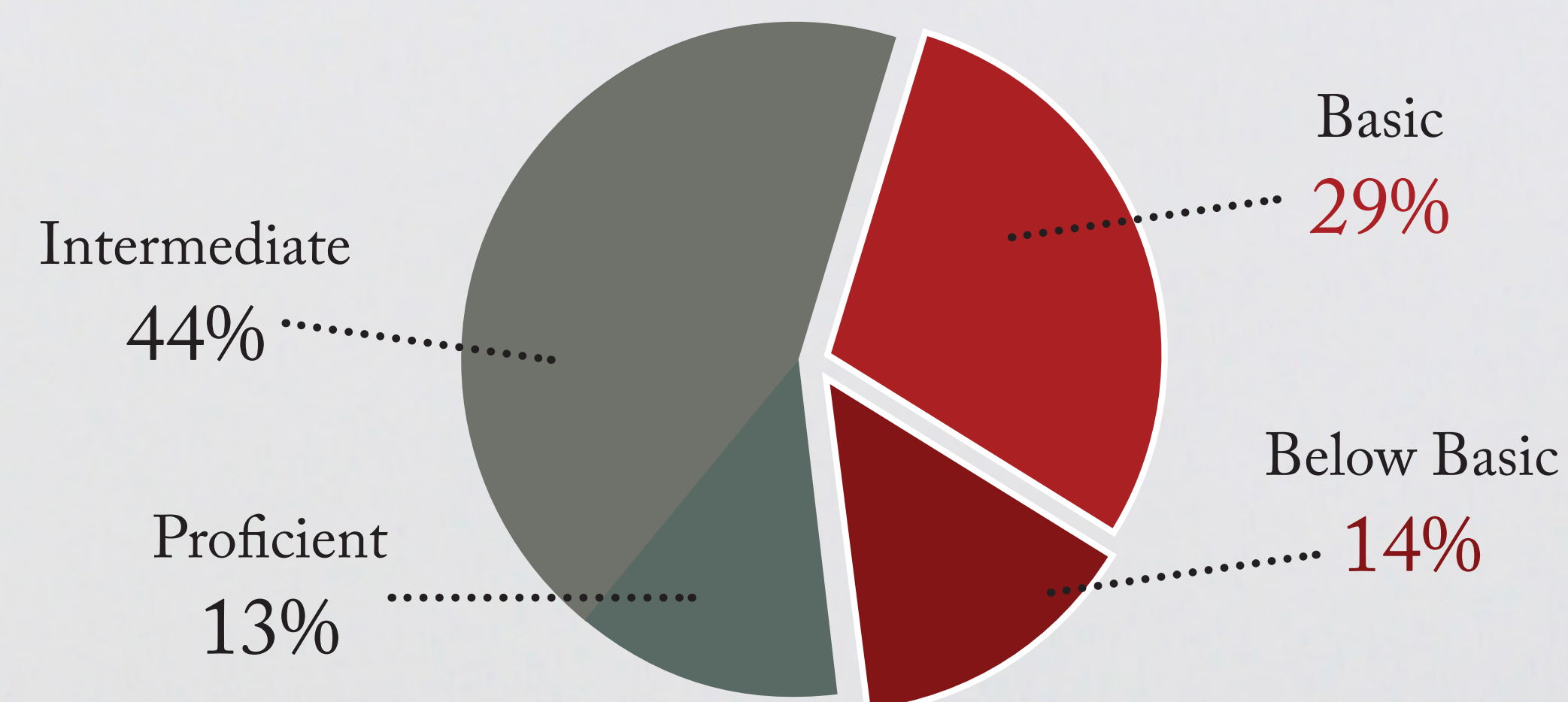
Increasing Literacy Reduces Health Disparities

Why does Health Literacy Matter?

“ Health disparities are *preventable* differences in the burden of disease, injury, violence, or opportunities to achieve optimal health that are experienced by socially disadvantaged populations. ”

~CDC, 2013

What is Health Literacy?



From the National Assessment of Adult Literacy in 2003

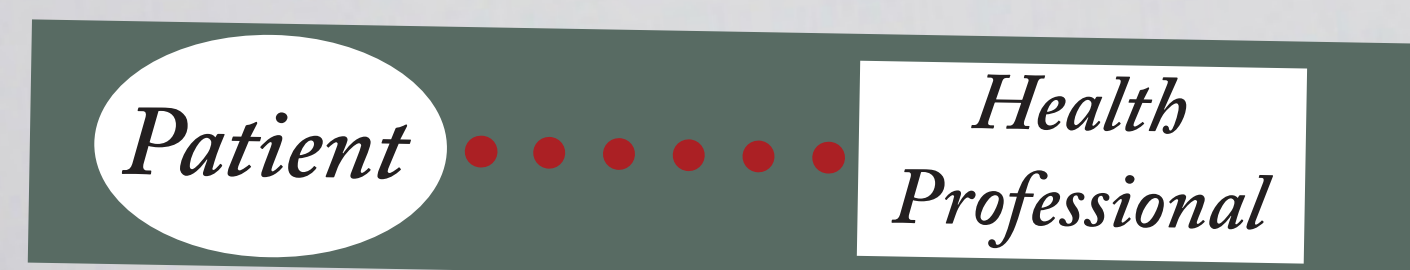
“ The degree to which individuals have the capacity to *obtain, process and understand* basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health care decisions ”

~Healthy People 2010

“ ...understand and *act on* health information ”

~Pfizer Clear Health Communication, 2012

• Two Sides to the Story •



BOTH sides are responsible for *clear communication*

It's needed to **effectively:**

- Fill out a patient information form
- Follow discharge instructions
- Manage medications
- Care for a loved one's health
- Keep appointments
- Select and understand insurance
- Identify signs and warning labels
- Research health information
- Sign consent forms

- Underutilization of services
- Increased medication errors
- Poor understanding of health
- Increased ER visits and hospitalizations
- Poor health outcomes
- Increased healthcare costs for all

Low Health Literacy leads to:

Communication tools:

- Plain language
- Easy-to-understand materials
- Questions & self advocacy
- Teach-back technique
- Visual and audio resources
- Cultural competence

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