



The New York City Health Literacy Fellowship 2009



**Mayor's Office of
Adult Education**



*The 2007 Health Literacy Fellows with Dennis Walcott,
Deputy Mayor for Education & Community Development,
inside City Hall.*

**The Health Literacy Fellowship is a program of the
Mayor's Office of Adult Education**

Anthony Tassi, Executive Director

Fatima Ashraf, Health Literacy Coordinator

www.nyc.gov/healthliteracy



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

January 1, 2009

Dear Friends:

When I took office in January of 2002, improving New Yorkers' health was one of my top priorities. Today, thanks to a number of aggressive public health measures, I am proud to say that our residents are living longer than the average American for the first time since World War II. As we strive for even greater gains, we must work to foster improved literacy and language skills for all New Yorkers.

Studies show that individuals with limited literacy skills also have limited knowledge about their medical problems, and are more likely to self-report poorer health. Tragically, these individuals are more likely to seek treatment at advanced stages of disease, when treatment costs more and helps less. Medical students can change this by making health care easier to understand—and, therefore, more effective. Through the Health Literacy Fellowship, you can help New Yorkers from all corners of the world and all walks of life make more informed decisions and lead healthier lives.

I thank all of the talented medical students who have committed themselves to this vital initiative, which will quite literally save lives. You are answering the call to be leaders as well as healers, and all New Yorkers are grateful for your crucial work.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Michael R. Bloomberg'.

Michael R. Bloomberg
Mayor

Health Literacy.

Is the ability
of individuals
to read,
to understand,
and
to act upon
health-related information.

Health Literacy

**Also refers to the capacity
of professionals and institutions**

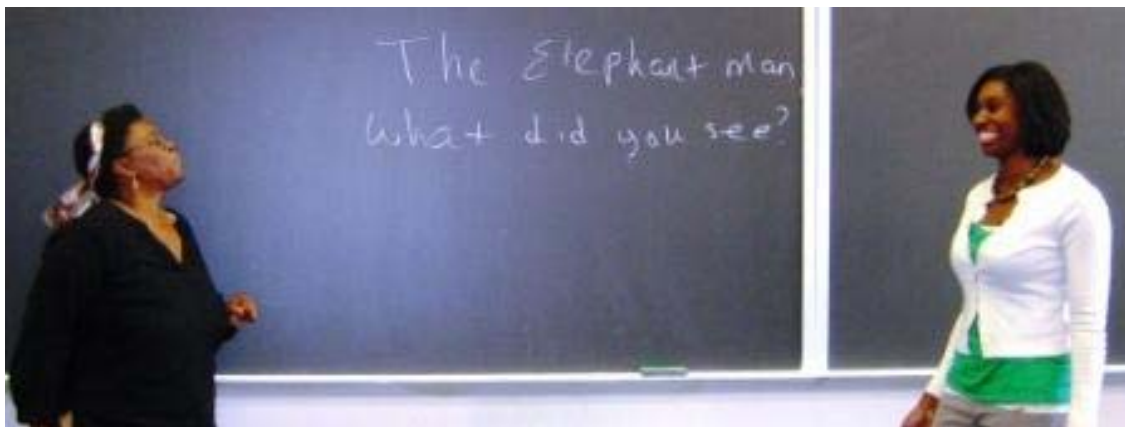
to communicate effectively

**so that community members
can make informed decisions and
take appropriate actions**

**to protect and promote their
health.**

“What I have learned so far as a health literacy fellow is that adult education and the medical sector are a perfect match for each other. Adult learners are eager to learn health information that has an impact on them everyday, and it is a pleasure to work with them.”

Annery Garcia, Health Literacy Fellow, Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education



“This fellowship has made me more aware that communication barriers between doctors and patients are not always obvious. Physicians need to be vigilant about verifying that the patient walks away from each encounter with a clear sense of what took place.”

Wilnise Jasmin, Health Literacy Fellow, SUNY Downstate Medical Center



The Adult Education System

Serves adults from every corner of the world and all walks of life.

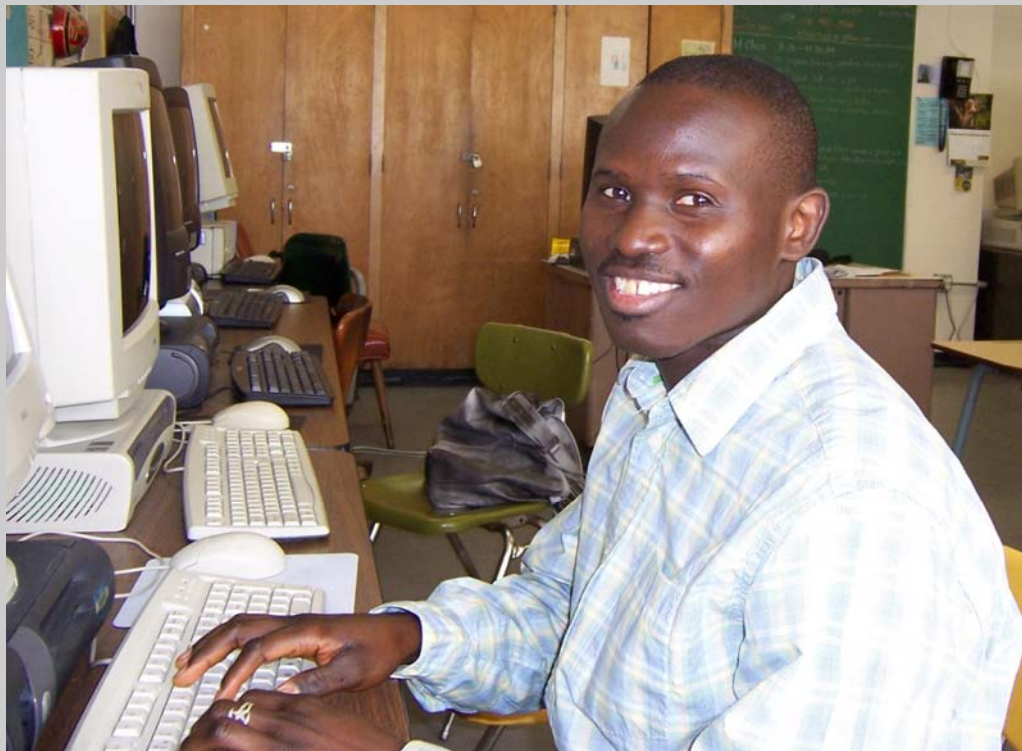
Free classes help immigrants and native born adults achieve their goals, from getting a job to helping their children with homework.

Teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL) and Adult Basic Education (ABE) help adults to improve their reading, writing, and English speaking skills. They also help adults open a bank account, pass the Citizenship exam, and navigate the healthcare system. Teachers are mentors and friends to their students.

Whether located at a public library or community college, adult education classrooms are places of hope, motivation, and strong community ties.

“Working with adult literacy students has been a rewarding and eye-opening experience. To be an effective teacher, I must constantly examine and assess how I present information. This experience has allowed me to practice explaining health in understandable terms. I have also become conscious that no matter what your level of health literacy, retaining and understanding health information is a difficult task.”

Rebecca Lapat, Health Literacy Fellow, Mt. Sinai College of Medicine



“Having a medical student in our ESOL class allowed students to gain the confidence needed to navigate through our medical system here in NY. And it gave the medical student a first hand look at the challenge of working in a non-native English speaking community.”

Kenny Mitchell, Turning Point Educational Center, Instructor

The Fellowship

Is sponsored by the Mayor's Office of Adult Education for a limited number of highly qualified first year medical students in New York City.

Participating students advance their health literacy skills by working with teachers in adult education classrooms. Fellows receive training in adult learning methods and practice with adults students in ESL and/or ABE classes.

As teachers, fellows gain perspective on how individuals learn and process information to make decisions. This understanding improves fellows' communication skills, which are critically important to their future success as physicians.

By teaching health literacy, fellows are building the capacity of community members to manage their health.

Fellowship Goals

To increase understanding of health literacy among medical students.

To improve communication and teaching skills among future physicians.

To make contributions to health literacy research and practice.

To promote collaborations among medical schools, health care facilities, adult education programs, and government.

2008 Health Literacy Fellows



Elaine Cheng
Sophie Davis
School of Biomedical Education



Shumon Dhar
Sophie Davis
School of Biomedical Education



Elizabeth Fouts
Weil Cornell
Medical College



Brandon Greene
Weil Cornell
Medical College



Maya Ilowite
Albert Einstein
College of Medicine



James Jennings Jr.
Touro College of
Osteopathic Medicine



Shashi Kapadia
New Jersey
Medical School



Kendra McDow
Mount Sinai
School of Medicine



Juan Robles
Albert Einstein
College of Medicine



Raman Singhal
SUNY Downstate
Medical Center

The Adult Education Programs

With experienced adult educators by their side, fellows learn about adult education theory and practice. They implement curricula to teach functional literacy skills (reading, writing, speaking, math) and use health topics to improve the educational outcomes of the adult learners.



2008 Participating Programs:

Brooklyn Public Library

CAMBA

CUNY

HANAC BEGIN (Begin Education Gain Independence Now)

Mid-Manhattan Adult Learning Center, New York City Department of Education

New York Public Library

Queens Library

Turning Point

West Farms Career & Technology Center, Phipps CDC



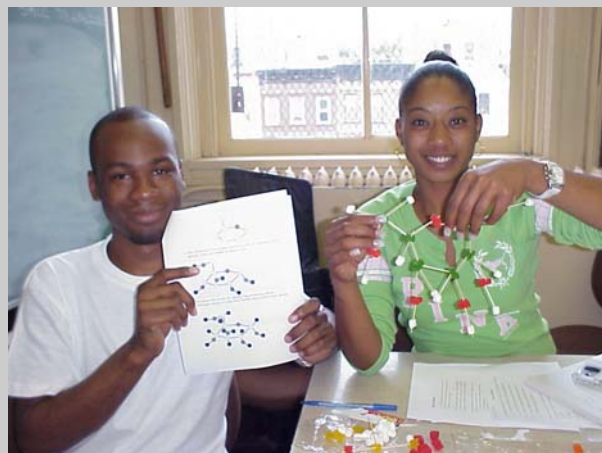
The 2007 Health Literacy Fellows touring City Hall's Bull Pen with Alan Gartner, Chief of Staff to the Deputy Mayor for Education & Community Development.

Having a health literacy fellow has been an **incredible** experience for us – I’ve seen our students benefit from her lessons and our fellow gain a deeper understanding of students who may some day be her future patients. And our adult learner program has gained some **excellent** health-based lesson plans that we will use with other classes. I’m so grateful that the Library has had the opportunity to participate in this valuable program and would **recommend** it to any future medical professional or adult education program.

Judy Trupin

Queens Library Adult Learner Program

Assistant Program Manager





“As a **teacher** with a limited knowledge of **health** literacy,
[the fellow’s] **expertise** in the classroom was needed and
appreciated. Her ability to observe classroom dynamics made both our experiences
meaningful.”

*Deborah Brooks,
Manhattan BEGIN
Instructor*



The Research

Fellows have the unique opportunity to contribute to the growing body of health literacy research and practice. Fellows are paired with researchers and gain experience in advanced researching skills from data collection to statistical analyses. The research projects give fellows a chance to present at conferences or even get published.

2008 Projects:

Computer and Internet Access and Literacy

Lead Researcher: Dr. Iman Sharif, Albert Einstein College of Medicine

Fellows: Brandon Greene, James Jennings Jr., Shashi Kapadia

Health Literacy and Outpatient Pediatric Medication Dosing Errors

Lead Researcher: Dr. Shonna Yin, New York University School of Medicine

Fellows: Maya Ilowite, Elizabeth Fouts

Health Literacy in Adolescent Mothers

Lead Researcher: Dr. Shonna Yin, New York University School of Medicine

Fellows: Juan Robles, Kendra McDow

The Plain Language Project

Lead Researcher: Stefanie Trice, Health and Hospitals Corporation

Fellows: Elaine Cheng, Shumon Dhar, Raman Singhal

The Fellowship Advisory Committee

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New York University School of Medicine

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SUNY Downstate College of Medicine

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Ann-Gel Palermo, M.P.H.

Associate Director of Operations, Center for Multicultural & Community Affairs
Mount Sinai School of Medicine

H. Shonna Yin, M.D.

Assistant Professor of Pediatrics
New York University School of Medicine

Jo Wiederhorn

Executive Director
Associated Medical Schools of New York (AMSNY)

Many Thanks To:

Presenters:

Jennifer Adams, M.D., NYU School of Medicine
Ellen Quish, LaGuardia Community College
Calvin Miles, Grassroots Literacy Coalition
Christina Zarcadoolas, Ph.D., Mount Sinai School of Medicine
David Vlahov, Ph.D., New York Academy of Medicine
Alan Aviles, Health and Hospitals Corporations
Karen Scott-Collins, Health and Hospitals Corporations
Rita Charon M.D., Columbia University
Robert Fullilove Ph.D., Columbia University
Stacie Evans, Lutheran Family Health Center
Jessica Peaslee, Lutheran Family Health Center
Irja Estrella, Lutheran Family Health Center
Harold Freeman, M.D., Ralph Lauren Center
Ira Yankwitt, Department of Education
Wendy Wen, Department of Education
Karen Griswold, Lehman College
Azadeh Khalili, Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (ex-officio)

Institutions:

Bellevue Hospital Center
Elmhurst Hospital Center
Gouverneur Health Services
New York City College of Technology
LaGuardia Community College
The Literacy Assistance Center
Mid-Manhattan Adult Learning Center
Ralph Lauren Center
The United Hospital Fund
Lutheran Family Health Center



The 2008 Health Literacy Fellows after a seminar with Dr. Harold Freeman at the Ralph Lauren Center for Cancer Prevention and Research. Back row L to R: Shashi Kapadia, Shumon Dhar, Elizabeth Fouts, Maya Ilowite, James Jennings Jr. Front row L to R: Brandon Greene, Elaine Cheng, Juan Robles, Kendra McDow, Raman Singhal.

For More Information & to apply:

<http://www.nyc.gov/healthliteracy>

Support for the Health Literacy Fellowship is

generously provided by

The New York Community Trust