

## ADVANCING HEALTH LITERACY THROUGH EVIDENCE-BASED PRIMARY HEALTH CARE POLICY

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### WHY?

- 59% of Australians are not health literate (ABS, 2006)
- Economic cost: US \$73 Billion per year (AMA, 2003)
- Increasing complexity of health care
- Human cost

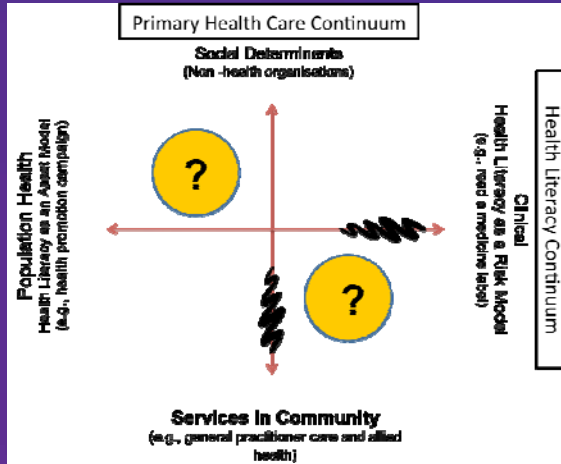
“The degree to which people are able to access, understand, appraise and communicate information to engage with the demands of different health contexts in order to promote and maintain good health across the life-course.”

Rootman & Gordon-El-Bihbety (2008)

**Aim** Identify the characteristics (drivers and barriers) of a Primary Health Care (PHC) system that supports and enables the development of health literacy

**Policy Environment**

Policy relevance is bound by the scope of health literacy and the dimensions of primary care systems



# Research Questions

- **Key components of health literacy?** (Published Research)
- **Factors that influence the development of health literacy?** (Published research)
- **Do factors differ across population groups?** (Published reviews and grey literature through Australian and international sources, key informants and reference group)
- **Policy drivers and barriers in primary health care systems?** (Published reviews and grey literature through Australian sources, key informants and reference group)
- **Options for improving health literacy?** (Published research, grey literature and linkage and exchange processes with key professional groups)
- **Strategic leaders?** (Linkage and exchange processes with key groups and professions)
- **Measures to determine the impacts of health literacy?** (Published research, grey literature and linkage and exchange processes)

# Search Process

## Grey Literature

- General search - 21 documents
- Reference group – additional documents

## Review Articles

- 2504 found
- 23 relevant
- 4 high quality

## PubMed Search

- 2268 Found
- 842 title relevant
- 382 abstract relevant
- Quality – formal appraisal
- Formal extraction

## Other Databases

- 434 found
- 401 title relevant
- 149 abstract relevant

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# What Counts as Evidence?

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## Commentary articles

- ❖ Policy relevant
- ❖ Quality appraisal?

# Policy Implications

- ❖ CLARIFY STRATEGIC POLICY OPTIONS FOR PRIMARY HEALTH CARE
  - ✓ Impacts on health outcomes
  - ✓ HL as a population asset
  - ✓ HL as a deficit to be managed in PHC services
- ❖ THE CONTRIBUTION PHC ORGANISATIONS CAN MAKE TO INTER-SECTORAL ACTION IN HL (GIVEN THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE HEALTH AND HOSPITALS COMMISSION)
- ❖ IDENTIFICATION OF GAPS IN THE EVIDENCE BASE INCLUDING ECONOMIC EVALUATION

# Policy Implications

- ❖ **A NATIONAL HEALTH LITERACY STRATEGY?**
  - ✓ Asset building in the population
  - ✓ Deficit management among vulnerable groups
  - ✓ Who is responsible?
- ❖ **HEALTH PROFESSIONS, CONSUMER ORGANISATIONS AND SERVICES ADOPT HEALTH LITERACY ADVANCEMENT AS A GOAL?**
  - ✓ Building a national alliance
- ❖ **CLINICAL PRACTICE TO INVOLVE ROUTINE ASSESSMENT OF HL AND INTRODUCE EVIDENCE BASED HL PRACTICES?**
- ❖ **HEALTH LITERACY PROMOTION TO SUPPORT HEALTH SERVICES IN ADDRESSING PUBLIC CONCERN**