



Florida Literacy Coalition, Inc.

NEWS RELEASE

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**Florida Blue Foundation Funds Grants to
Support Health Literacy in Florida**

Fourteen programs across the state of Florida have been awarded one-year, \$5,000 grants for the implementation of a health literacy program to benefit their adult education, ESOL, and family literacy students.

These mini-grants, awarded by the Florida Blue Foundation and managed by the Florida Literacy Coalition, integrate health and nutrition information into the programs' curriculum. The focus is to help students acquire the knowledge, literacy skills, and resources required to navigate the health care system and make informed health decisions.

More than 24,000 adult learners from programs throughout Florida have benefited from this Initiative since 2009.

Congratulations to the following organizations:

- Atlantic Technical College
- Catholic Charities Bureau of Jacksonville
- Collier County Adult Education
- El Sol, Jupiter's Neighborhood Resource Center
- Flagler Technical College
- Literacy Alliance of Northeast Florida
- Literacy Council of Sarasota
- Literacy Volunteers of Collier County
- Miami Dade College - Hialeah Campus
- Pensacola State College
- Safe Children Coalition Inc
- School District of DeSoto County
- UCF Global
- United Food Bank of Plant City

There is a growing recognition among health care providers and adult educators around the country that limited English language and literacy skills can have a significant impact on one's health. According to the National Adult Assessment of Literacy, 14 percent of Americans cannot comprehend basic health information. The study indicates that health illiteracy is especially prevalent among: 1) adults who did not complete high school, with 49 percent having below basic health literacy, and 2) foreign-born adults who speak English as their second language.

People who lack literacy and health literacy skills are much more likely to use medications incorrectly, have at least one chronic disease, spend more time in the hospital, and are four times more likely to have poor health than people with higher health literacy skills. The potential for cost savings and improved health outcomes are significant. Adult education, literacy and family literacy programs can play an important role in helping people to acquire these skills.

“At the Florida Blue Foundation, our mission is to help people and communities achieve better health,” said Susan Towler, executive director, Florida Blue Foundation. “By partnering with the Florida Literacy Coalition and supporting the Florida Health Literacy Grant Initiative, we are making an immediate impact to help people keep themselves and their families healthy while creating sustainable change throughout our communities.”

The Florida Health Literacy Initiative provides training, resources and funding to assist Florida ESOL and family literacy programs to integrate health education into their instruction. The objective is to help students develop basic literacy and English language skills while gaining information to make informed choices regarding their health and nutrition.

“The continued support of this Initiative reflects Florida Blue Foundation’s strong commitment to helping adult learners, many who are new to this country, become informed health advocates for themselves and their families,” said Greg Smith, executive director of the Florida Literacy Coalition. “We look forward to our continued partnership with Florida Blue Foundation and this year’s grant recipients to help students throughout our state achieve better health through education.”

About the Florida Literacy Coalition

Established in 1985, the Florida Literacy Coalition (FLC) promotes, supports and advocates for the effective delivery of quality adult and family literacy services in the state of Florida. As a statewide umbrella literacy organization and the host of Florida's Adult and Family Literacy Resource Center, FLC provides a range of services to support more than 250 adult education, literacy and family literacy providers. Special emphasis is placed on assisting community-based literacy organizations with their training and program development needs.

About Florida Blue Foundation

Florida Blue Foundation enables healthy communities by making grants, building coalitions, and embracing solutions that create a meaningful impact in our communities. More than 8 million Floridians have received services as a result of our community investments since our founding in 2001. Florida Blue Foundation is committed to improve health equity by impacting food security, advancing mental well-being, growing healthy communities, and addressing health disparities. Florida Blue Foundation is a trade name of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Foundation, Inc., an Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. For more information, please visit www.FloridaBlueFoundation.com.

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