

Support HB 1578 / SB 589

Understanding Basic Health Information Saves Lives



Background

Empowering individuals to manage their health care depends on their ability to obtain, process, and understand health care information, a skill known as **health literacy**. Regrettably, many Texans lack the knowledge required to effectively manage their health and prevent disease. A staggering 80% of Americans, including Texans, grapple with health literacy, with half of all healthcare consumers struggling to navigate the healthcare system. This deficit leads to:



Inefficient use of preventative health care, particularly vital in treating chronic diseases like diabetes and heart disease.



Increased healthcare industry costs, with an estimated \$4.8 billion spent annually on administrative expenses alone.



More dosing errors and patient non-adherence to medications or treatments, resulting in \$1.5 billion in lost patient earnings per year.



Increased emergency room visits, longer hospital stays, and higher mortality rates.

Problem

Limited health literacy in Texas contributes to increased healthcare costs, inefficient use of resources, and poorer health outcomes. Low-income Texans, especially our elderly population and individuals with limited educational attainment struggle to access accurate health information, seek preventive care, and choose the appropriate level of care, leading to unnecessary emergency room visits and hospital admissions.

Solution

Texas must address health literacy at the state level and develop strategies to improve patient outcomes and reduce health care costs. Improving communication between patients and providers empowers individuals to be stronger advocates for themselves in medical settings.