

RESEARCH BRIEF:

# Health Literacy Among Teens With Special Health Care Needs and Their Parents

Typically, parents handle the health care of their children. As teens enter adulthood, teens start to manage more of their health care. Health literacy (HL) of parents and teens can influence this transition.

We need to know more about how teens begin to manage more of their health care, especially in minority populations, such as teens with special health care needs (SHCN). It is ideal for parents and teens to have adequate levels of HL during this transition. This is because teens with SHCN have complex health care services.

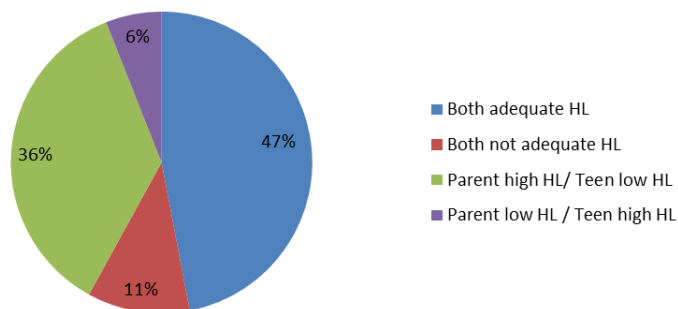
We studied the relationships between teen and parent HL. We had 278 pairs of teens (ages 12 to 18) and their parents complete surveys. All teens were enrolled in a Medicaid accountable care organization and had SHCN.

Overall, 52% of teens and 83% of parents had adequate HL. We looked at the degree of matching between teen and parent HL levels. In over 50% of the teen and parent pairs, there was someone with low HL. This may put teens with SHCN at risk for poor health outcomes.

HL levels of teens and parents should be considered when providing care to teens with SHCN.

1 Nutbeam D. 2000. "Health literacy as a public health goal: A challenge for contemporary health education and communication strategies into the 21st century. Health Promotion International, 15(3): 259-267.

**Teen and Parent HL Levels**



[continued]

**For more information, visit [www.NationwideChildrens.org/CPHER](http://www.NationwideChildrens.org/CPHER)**



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# The Center for Population Health and Equity Research

Nationwide Children's Hospital's Center for Population Health and Equity Research (CPHER) is a network of researchers and clinicians dedicated to generating new knowledge about what works (and what doesn't) to improve health outcomes and health equity for populations of at-risk children and families.

Our research explores the impacts of health care delivery and funding models, community interventions, and health policies. We envision that our findings will drive improvements in quality, outcomes, disparities, and cost through innovative approaches to health care financing, resource integration, community engagement, and health care.



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