



# Health Policy Literacy



## What is Health Policy?

Health policy refers to decisions, plans, and actions that are undertaken to achieve specific health care goals within a society. (WHO)



## What is Health Literacy?

...the degree to which an individual has the capacity to obtain, communicate, process, and understand basic health information and services to make appropriate health decisions. (HRSA)

## What is Policy?

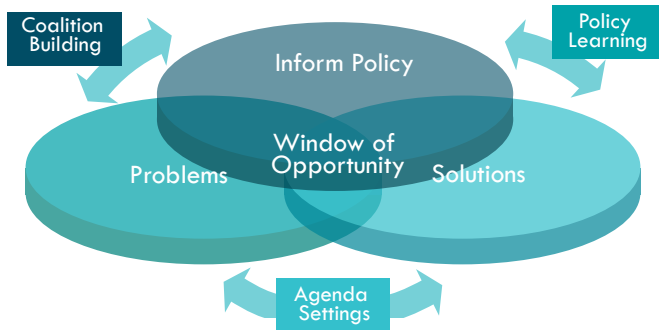
“...law, regulation, procedure, administrative action, incentive, or voluntary practice of governments and other institutions.” (CDC)

## What is Literacy?

Ability to read write and communicate understanding.

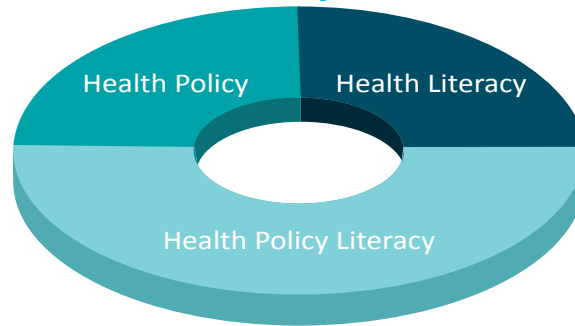
## What is Health Policy Literacy?

Is a definition formed by gathering together the important elements of Health, Policy, and Literacy from the above definitions...





# Health + Policy + Literacy



The Health Policy Research Consortium has integrated a definition that encompasses What Health Policy Literacy is....

*Health Policy Literacy (HPL) is the ability to **read, write and communicate the understanding** of decisions, plans, and actions that are undertaken to achieve specific health goals within a society. (HPRC, 2015)*

Health Policy Literacy allows you to make:

- Decisions about your own health care, environment, and quality of life.
- Plans that impact your community, your life, and your family.
- Actions that will affect health care policy.



# What are social determinants of health?

Social determinants of health are defined as, "the circumstances in which people are born, grow up, live, work and age as well as the systems put in place to deal with illness. These circumstances are in turn shaped by a wider set of forces: economics, social policies, and politics". (Social Determinants of Health Key Concepts External Web Site Icon, World Health Organization)

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/socialdeterminants/index.html>



## Understanding the Social Determinants of Health

According to Healthy People 2020 social determinants of health are "conditions in the environments in which people live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affects a wide range of health functioning and quality of life outcomes and risks."

### Examples of social determinants are:

- Residential segregation
- Quality of education and job training
- Language and literacy
- Access to health care services
- Presence of trash in the community
- Exposure to crime, violence and social disorder

### Examples of physical determinants are:

- Green space/ or areas that contain large spaces of greenery
- Good lighting trees and benches
- Upkeep of buildings
- Bike lanes and roads
- Worksites



# Understanding how the social determinants of health intersects with Health Policy Literacy





6401 Golden Triangle Drive  
Suite 310  
Greenbelt, MD 20770  
[www.hprc.info](http://www.hprc.info)  
Telephone: 301-375-2021  
Fax: 240-582-7846



HPRC  
A CTIS, Inc. Division

Research reported in this publication was supported by the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities of the National Institute of Health under award number 5U54MD00860802. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institute of Health.

