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WHA Partners with Wisconsin Health Literacy to Simplify Medication Directions

WHA is working with Wisconsin Health Literacy, a non-profit organization dedicated to improving health literacy across the state, to create and deliver clearer medication directions for patients.



Medication directions can be formatted in a variety of ways and can cause confusion for patients. Hourly frequencies (e.g., “take every eight hours”) require math; per day frequencies (e.g., “take three times daily”) require patients to decide when to take their medication; and specific times (e.g., “take at 8 a.m., 4 p.m., and 11 p.m.”) are too specific to fit into different daily routines.

The Universal Medication Schedule (UMS) uses explicit timings such as “morning,” “noon,” “evening” and “bedtime,” so that patients do not misinterpret when to take their medication, while also providing flexibility for patients to fit medications into their schedule. With UMS, patients are also better able to demonstrate how to take their medication directions than they are with directions in other formats. UMS simplify drug regimens for patients and has been associated with improved adherence to medication. Using UMS directions is considered a best practice by the United States Pharmacopeia and the National Council for Prescription Drug Programs.

Contact WHA Chief Quality Officer [Nadine Allen](#) to learn how to implement UMS at your health system. More information on the project can be found on the [Wisconsin Health Literacy website](#).