Nothing affects health status more than literacy skills
   ◦ Health literacy is the ability to read, understand and effectively use basic medical instructions and information.
   ◦ Those with low health literacy:
      • Are often less likely to comply with prescribed treatment and self-care regimens.
      • Fail to seek preventive care and are at higher (more than double) risk for hospitalization.
      • Remain in the hospital nearly two days longer than adults with higher health literacy.
      • Often require additional care that results in annual health care costs that are four times higher than for those with higher literacy skills.
      • They are often embarrassed or ashamed to admit they have difficulty understanding health information and instructions.
      • They are using well-practiced coping mechanisms that effectively mask their problem.
   ◦ 90 Million Americans
      • Adds $58 billion to health care costs

Promoting clear communication through 3 questions
   ◦ What is my main problem?
   ◦ What do I need to do?
   ◦ Why is it important for me to do this?

What can we as providers do?
   ◦ Create a safe environment where patients are comfortable to talk openly.
   ◦ Use plain language instead of technical jargon.
   ◦ Be at eye level with your patient = SIT DOWN
   ◦ Use “Teach Back” to gauge patient understanding of instructions.