



## Florida Literacy Coalition Health Literacy Project Summary Report

**Agency Name: Florida Literacy Coalition**  
**Project: Health Literacy Project**  
**Funded by: Florida Department of Education**

June, 2008

*“Staying Healthy: an English Learner’s Guide to Health Care and Healthy Living”* is a 102- page student resource book, printed professionally in full color and perfect bound.

Written at the 4th-5th grade reading level, this resource books has a host of photographs and illustrations to help English learners better grasp the concepts and vocabulary presented in the publication. Suitable for high beginning/low intermediate level ESOL learners and above, it is correlated to CASAS and Florida Adult ESOL Course Standards.

With easy-to-read charts and tables, practice dialogs, and “how to learn more” sections, students are encouraged to seek additional information and assistance from expert healthcare professionals; locating free and low-cost healthcare facilities; engaging in open communication and taking on a more active role in their own health care management and healthy lifestyle.

*“Staying Healthy: an English Learner’s Guide to Health Care and Healthy Living – Teacher’s Guide”* is a 111-page publication printed in two colors, three-hole-punched for binder use and individually wrapped publication for teachers.

The teacher’s guide includes ideas for lessons, activities, and ways to facilitate learning. Suggested activities encompass Pronunciation, Grammar, Math, Hands-on Learning, Comprehension and Technology, allowing teachers to adapt their lessons to their students various learning styles. The teacher’s guide also includes suggestions for teaching health content, including points to emphasize, ideas on how to discuss cultural commonalities and differences regarding health care and common health related misconceptions.

The materials and curriculum were pilot tested for a period of eight weeks by a diverse group of 150 adult ESOL students of beginner high/intermediate low levels. The programs were located in Clearwater, Orlando, and Apopka.

Thanks to the students and teachers’ valuable feedback, changes were made to the student resource manual and teacher’s guide to better serve the needs of the Florida adult ESOL student population. The pilot programs produced excellent final projects, showcasing the newly acquired knowledge and skills. Examples of such projects are available for downloading on the FLC website.

## **Student Questionnaire**

At the end of the eight-week long pilot program, students completed an Evaluation Questionnaire. Following is the summary of the responses:

Respondents shared the student resource book with others. 96%  
Avg. of 5 people reached indirectly per student.

Students indicating that they learned:

How to find free or low-cost health care 92%

Vocabulary necessary when talking to a doctor 92%

Vocabulary necessary when buying medicines and reading instructions on how to take them 90%

What foods keep them healthy 92%

About patients' rights and responsibilities 92%

About chronic diseases 94%

## **Student Feedback on Materials/Design**

Photographs in the book were helpful in teaching them the information and vocabulary 92%

Theme pictures were "easy to understand" 100%

Dialogs used in the chapters were "useful and realistic" 98%

Information presented was "just right" 87%

Activities done in class were "helpful" 98%

## **Pre and Post Health Literacy Assessment**

At the end of the eight week-long pilot program:

64% of the students were able to write a question they would ask their doctor (up 14% from the pre-test)

64% of the students were able to name two chronic diseases (up 55% from the pre-test)

63% of the students were able to name three things they can do to stay healthy (up 6% from the pre-test)

39% of the students could name an organization or website they could go to, to find health information (up 26% from pre-test)

43% of the students could name a place they could go to for free or low cost health care (up 22% from pre-test)

85% of students stated that “you should not see a doctor only when you are sick” (up 42% from pre-test)

59% of students understood that “you do not need a prescription to buy over-the-counter medicines” (up 19% from the pre-test)

73% of students understood they “had the right to ask the doctor to repeat, if they did not understand” (up 9% from the pre-test)

45% of students recognized that “people generally do not eat enough fiber” (up 15% from the pre-test)

68% of students stated they “know where to find free or low-cost health insurance (up 25% from the pre-test)

81% of students recognized that “another word for salt is sodium” (up 12% from pre-test)

68% of students recognized that “wheezing, trouble breathing, and a tight feeling in your chest are symptoms of asthma” (up 14% from the pre-test)

44% of students recognized that “another word for checkup is well visit” (up 26% from pre-test)

### **Addendum: (October 2010)**

The *Staying Healthy* curriculum was not designed in the context of a formal research project. A project of this nature would have required significantly more resources than were available.

FLC engaged in a more evidence-based approach, employing certain measures to help insure the quality, effectiveness and relevance of the materials developed.

These included:

- 1) Focus Group: A focus group of adult learners was convened at the beginning of the development process to get feedback from students regarding their needs, interests and existing knowledge related to health, nutrition and health care services.

- 2) Development Team: FLC assembled a development team with a proven track record in developing ESOL and health literacy instructional materials.
- 3) Field Testing: The draft materials were field tested by teachers and students in three ESOL programs and their feedback was used to inform the development of the final curriculum. Students were asked to complete a questionnaire and pre and post health literacy assessments, the results of which are included in this report.

In the last year, FLC has received additional related data. Nine programs funded through ESOL health literacy mini-grants supported by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida reported results that largely reinforce the initial pilot test data. These programs, which used *Staying Healthy* as their primary text, reported that 85% of students who completed the pre and post health literacy assessment improved their scores. The average increase was 42 percent. A corresponding questionnaire also indicated behavior changes among many students. These included eating better, exercising more regularly and a significant number of students who applied for health insurance such as Medicare, Medicaid, Florida Kidcare and private health insurance. Ninety-three percent of students indicated that the health information they learned in class helped them in their everyday life.