

# Health Education and Community Empowerment

Health Education Practice Conference  
October 19, 2011

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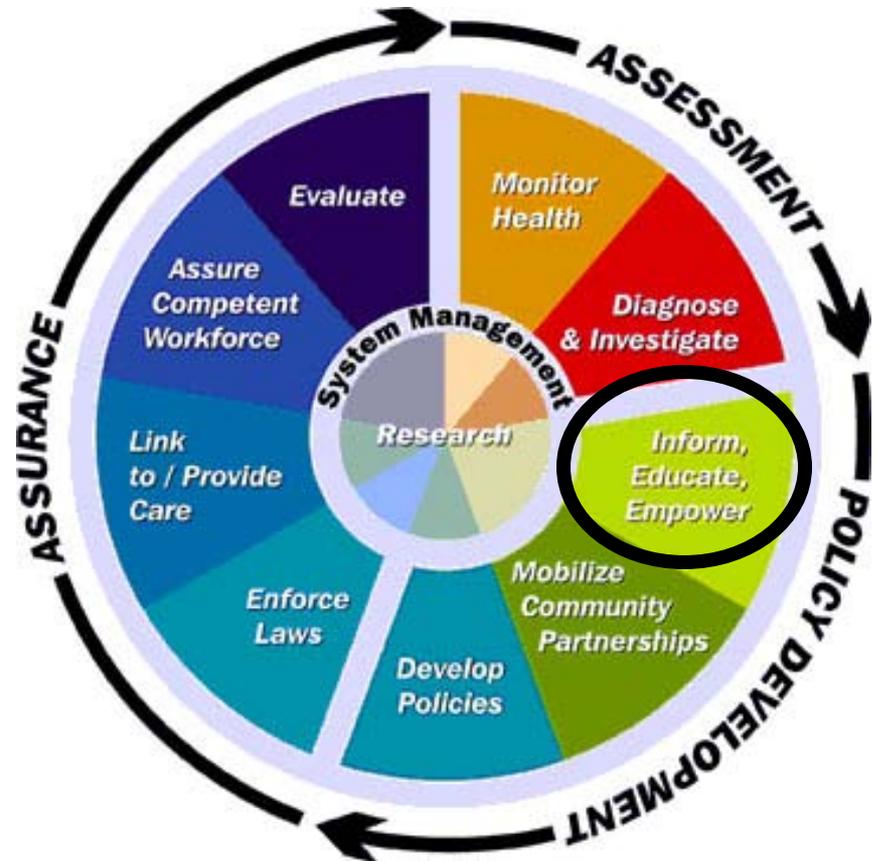
# Advocacy in Action

**October 6 2011, Make Banks Pay Rally**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nXcxa4HeWg4>

# Health Education's Role in Public Health

- Ten Essential Services
  - #3: Inform, educate, and **empower** people about health issues



# Health Educators Have the Skills Needed to Address the Factors that Impact Health

- Ability to learn from and work with other disciplines to inform action
  - e.g. sociology, political science, psychology, and human geography to address health inequity
- Understanding of models and theories that help explain how community capacity can be strengthened, both locally and globally
  - e.g. social planning, social action, and community mobilization theories



# Health Literacy: A Problem in Need of Health Education Intervention

- National Health Education Week theme revolves around Health Literacy (defined as a person's ability to obtain, process and understand basic health information)
  - Poor health literacy is a stronger predictor of a person's health than age, income, employment status, education level, and race
  - Nearly 9 out of 10 U.S. adults have problems finding and using health information
  - In LA County, 53% of working-age adults have low literacy levels that affect their ability to search for and use health information, adopt healthy behaviors, and act on important public health alerts



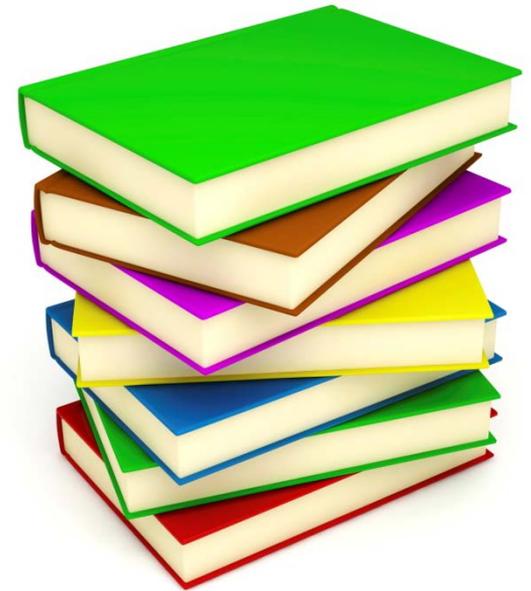
# Health Literacy: A Problem Requiring Health Education Intervention (cont.)

- Improving health literacy skills requires a comprehensive strategy, including:
  - Empowering communities with skills that enable them to exert more control over their personal and social determinants of health
  - Plain language techniques
  - Culturally and linguistically appropriate communication
  - Participatory design
  - Field-tested materials
  - Policy change and advocacy



# Health Education's Community Empowerment Role to Improve Health Literacy

- Health Educators can bridge the gap between the information disseminated by the healthcare/public health systems and consumers' knowledge and skills
- By improving people's capacity to access and use health information, health education goes beyond sharing information and...
  - Influences individual lifestyle decisions
  - Promotes community interaction, participation, and critical analysis
  - Raises awareness of the determinants of health
  - Encourages individual and collective actions which may change these determinants
  - Becomes critical to community empowerment



# Questions



# Sources

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