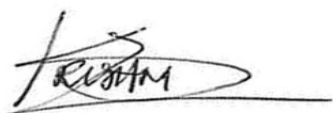


Health Care Delivery Policy and Procedure

Policy Name: Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois – Marketing
Communications Health Literacy Policy and Procedure
Policy Number: MC - 02
Effective Date: 11/01/2009
Revision Date: 2/1/21 **Review Date:** 2/1/2021

Approval Signature



Vice President, Health Data Strat & Nwk Ops

Line of Business

Commercial

HMO

PPO

Exchange

HMO

PPO

Government

HMO

PPO

Approving Body

BCBSIL Policy and Procedure Committee

Date: 1/28/2021

Details

Policy:

It is the policy of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois (BCBSIL) to ensure that member communications comply with applicable federal and state regulations and URAC and NCQA standards. General communications created by Marketing Solutions are intended to clearly and accurately communicate information about health plans.

Purpose:

This policy is intended to help ensure that the sales, marketing and communications materials prospective members and members receive about health plans and related services are clear and accurate. The policy establishes a formal process that includes copy and design guidelines as well as the evaluation of readability using the Health Literacy Advisor software.

Guidelines: (if applicable)

Communication of this policy is important for reasons of awareness and consistency of practice. Greater acceptance of the need to use plain English as much as possible in member communications should help improve outcomes and reduce health care costs. The health literacy policy lists basic corporate standards that will guide users in following the recommended procedures for copy and design.

1. All consultants, managers and contractors will follow the health literacy process for member communications.
2. All member marketing communications will be in plain language. Each piece will be judged separately and scored for readability on the Flesch-Kincaid scoring index within the Health Literacy Advisor software for management review. The software will generate a screen/page certifying that the Word document has been analyzed. The reading level will be noted in a final Word doc attached in Proof HQ when the consultant completes the checklist. Any subsequent changes to the copy in the document will require additional checks with HLA software. Before final version (without DRAFT) is created, consultant will include the HLA certification.
3. HLA certification will be indicated in the “Consultant Required Confirmations” posted in a comment in Proof HQ for every job.
4. The enterprise database will include the phrase “HLA Certified” in the metadata for member communications created after 01/01/2010 or after the implementation of certification.
5. New consultants and contracted communications consultants will be assigned a license and trained to use the Health Literacy Advisor software.
6. All designers will follow the Creative Services Health Literacy Checklist for member communications included in this policy. They will also receive health literacy training, as will any new designers or design contractors.
7. Policy and processes for using the Health Literacy Advisor software will be shared with other areas of Health Care Service Corporation that communicate with members to encourage greater readability of member communications and create as much consistency as possible across divisions.
8. Special client requests and exceptions to this policy will be managed individually as the need arises with clients, consultants and designers.

Note: Although the health literacy process benchmarks best practices, the software should never be expected to take the place of good business judgment and sensitivity to a client’s needs.

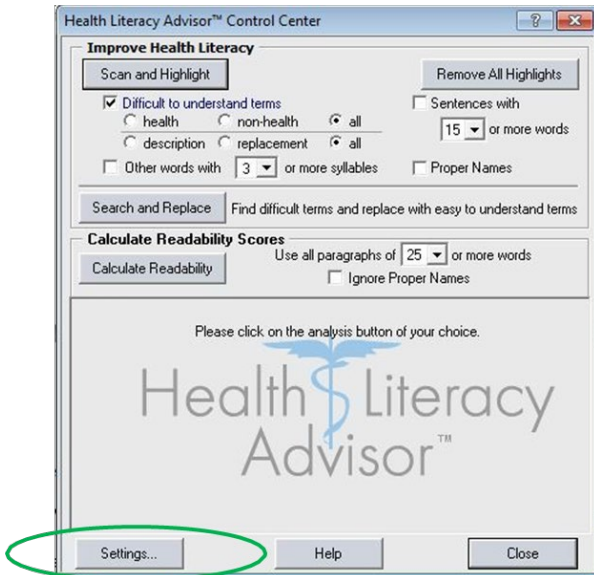
Procedure:

Consultant Health Literacy Process

1. Review the file content with consideration of targeted audience, message and tone. Replace jargon and long words (three syllables or more) that may be hard to understand with simpler words. Make longer sentences shorter, but not awkward or choppy.
2. Open the file in Microsoft Word. If the file is a PDF, copy the text and paste into a Word document. Select the Health Literacy Advisor (A) button from the Add-Ins Tab on the tool bar.

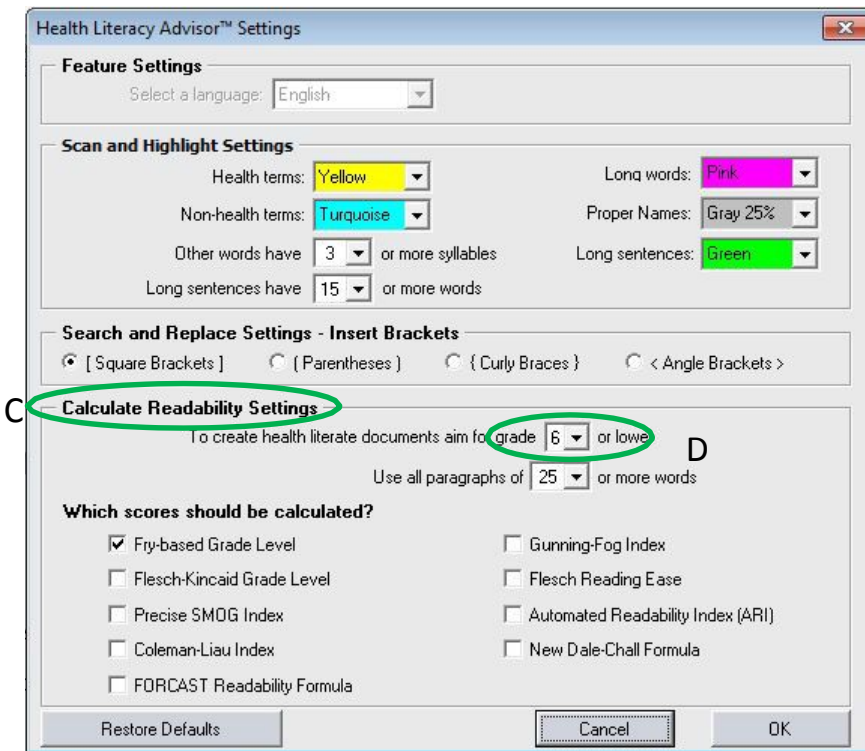


When the Health Literacy Advisor Control Center screen appears, click Settings (B) button at the bottom of the screen.



B

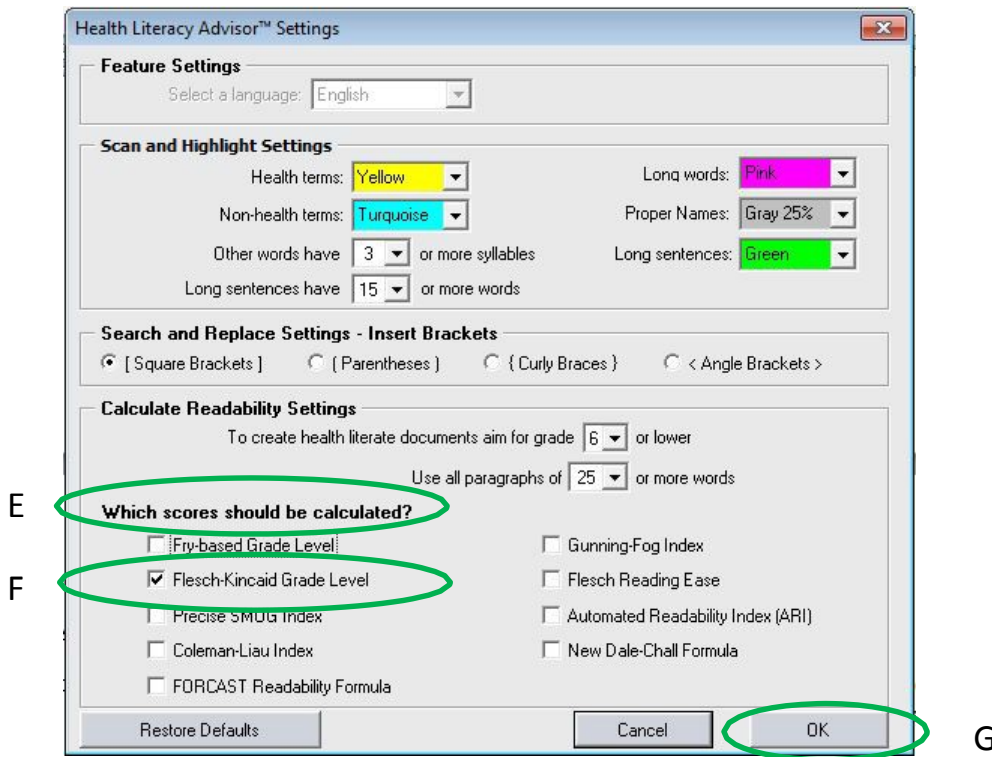
Under Calculate Readability Settings (C), find “To create health literate documents aim for grade or lower” (D), then click the down arrow and select 6.



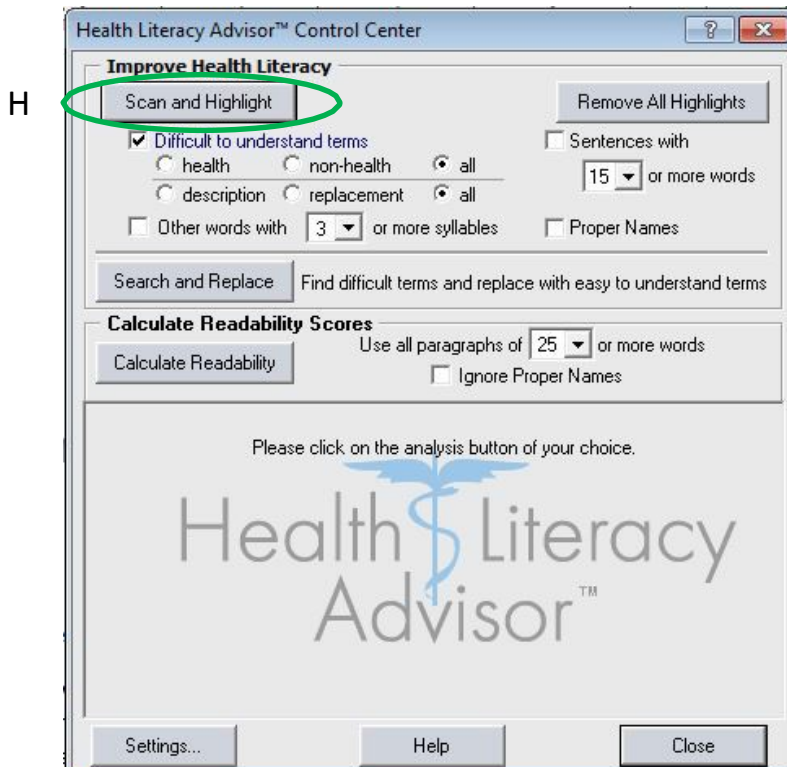
C

D

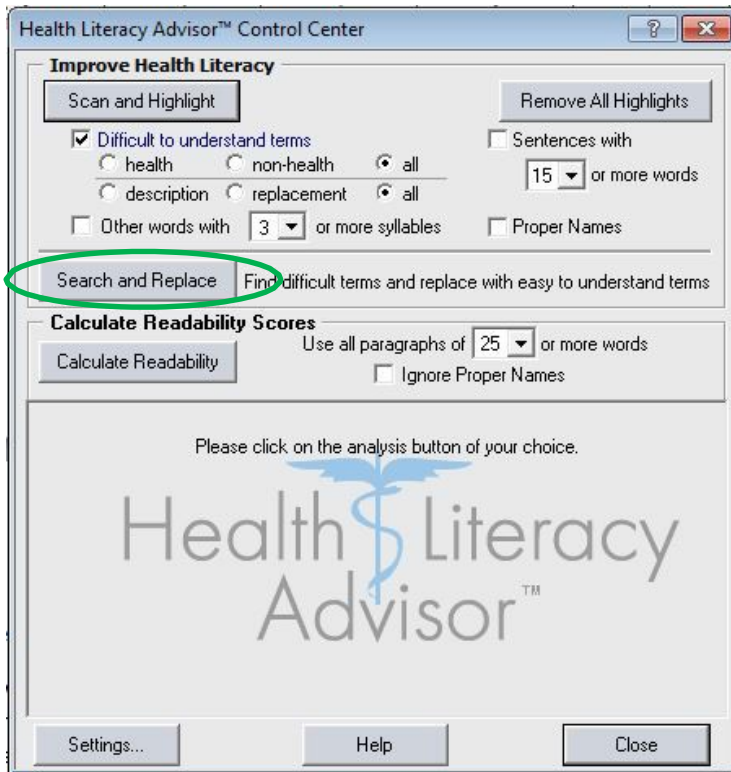
Find “Which scores should be calculated?” (E). Select the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level (F). Deselect any other tools that may be highlighted under this section. Click OK (G).



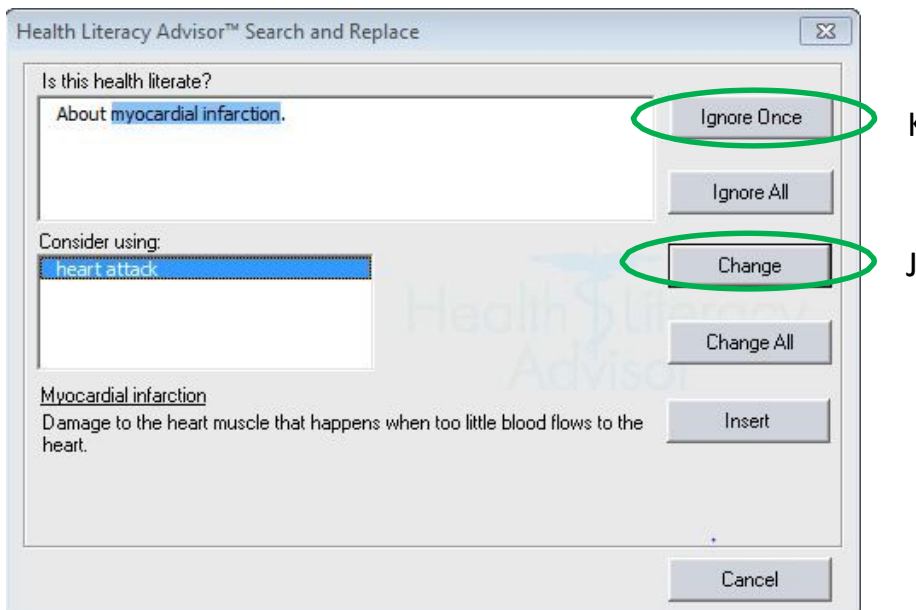
Click the Scan and Highlight (H) button. The Health Literacy Advisor will begin to scan the document and highlight words and phrases that are hard to understand, raise the health literacy reading score or contain medical jargon.



Once the scan and highlighting processes are complete, right-click any of the highlighted words or phrases for health literacy advice, or select the Search and Replace (I) button located on the Health Literacy Advisor Control Center. The Search and Replace dialog box will appear and stop on each highlighted word and phrase to offer simpler options.

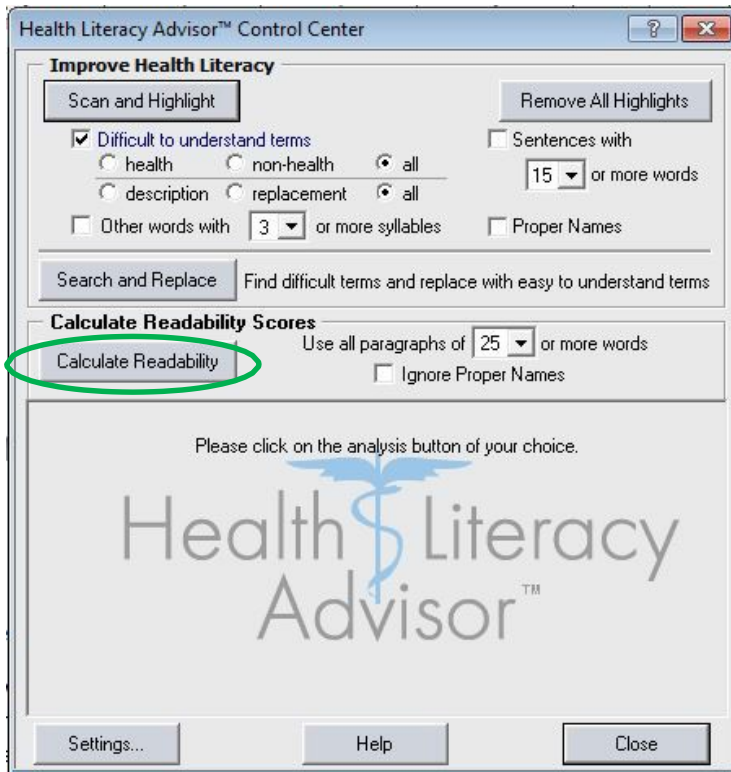


To use one of the simpler words or phrases, highlight the selection under the “Consider Using” section then click Change (J) or select Ignore Once (K). You can also highlight the word or phrase and type in the word or phrase of your choice.



Select the Calculate Readability (L) button. This function will analyze the document and calculate the

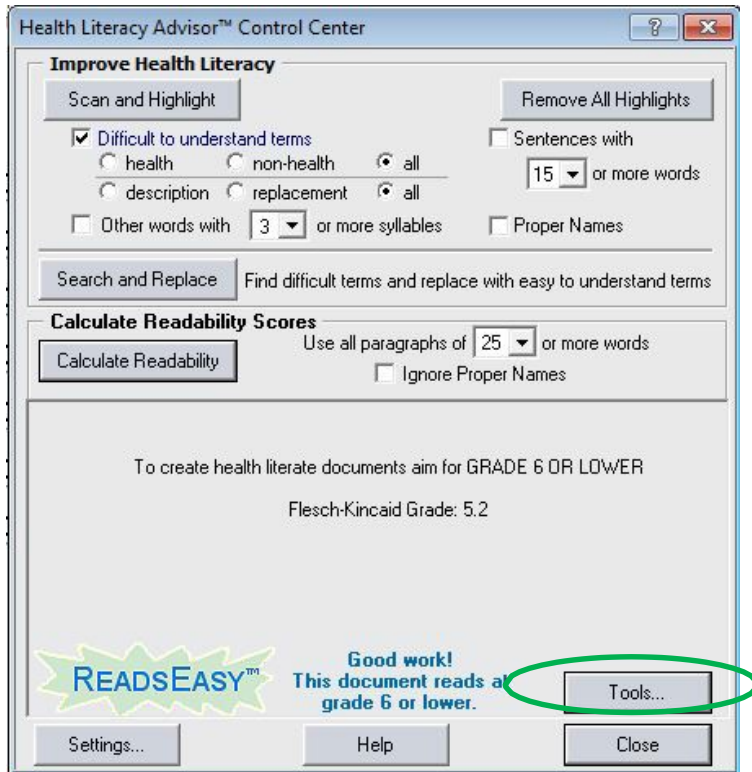
readability scoring using the Flesch-Kincaid Grad Level scoring index. The results will appear when processing is complete.



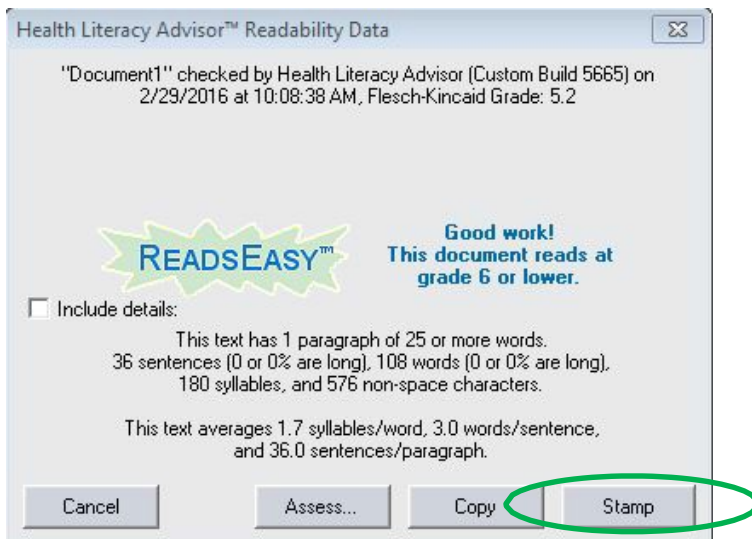
For Government Programs, if the document rates higher than sixth grade, then repeat steps 1 – 4 until the document scores sixth grade level or lower. If the document rates at sixth grade level or lower, the ReadsEasy™ stamp appears. The ReadsEasy stamp only appears if the document meets the targeted grade level.



Select Tools (M) to stamp the document with the readability data. The Readability Data box will appear; if you wish, select the box to include additional details.



Click the Stamp (N) button. The Reads Easy stamp and the readability data will appear on the top-right corner of the document. Save or print a copy of the stamped document for the records. Include a copy of the stamped document in the archive job folder.



Select Close to exit Health Literacy Advisor.

Sample of HLA-certified Document

Choose to Lose

Healthy Weight Really Matters

Obesity is gaining on U.S. adults. Two-thirds of adults age 20 years and older are overweight. One-third of these people are obese. If you eat more calories than you burn, you will gain weight and raise your danger of heart disease, stroke and Type 2 diabetes.

Keep these ideas in mind if you want to lose weight:

- Stick with healthy meals and eat 500 less calories a day.
- Be sure to workout at least two and a half hours a week.
- Choose low-fat or fat-free food.

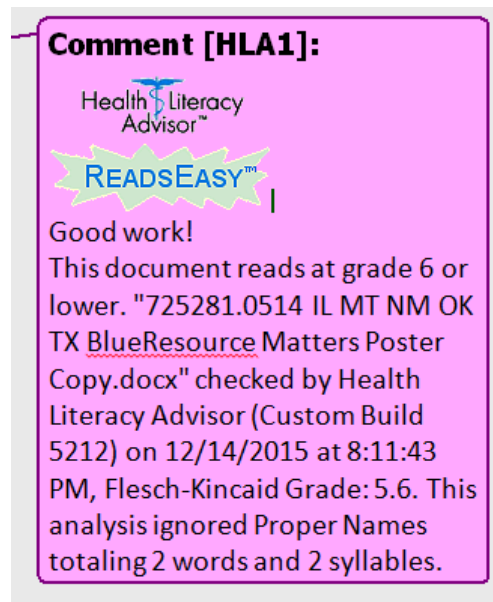
Manage your weight and enjoy your healthy lifestyle.

Obesity is not just an adult problem. About 17 percent of U.S. children are obese. Between 1980 and 2008, obesity rates for adults doubled and tripled for children.

Source: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

725281.0514

Example of HLA Certification Comment



Comment [HLA1]:

Health Literacy Advisor™

READSEASY™

Good work!
This document reads at grade 6 or lower. "725281.0514 IL MT NM OK TX BlueResource Matters Poster Copy.docx" checked by Health Literacy Advisor (Custom Build 5212) on 12/14/2015 at 8:11:43 PM, Flesch-Kincaid Grade: 5.6. This analysis ignored Proper Names totaling 2 words and 2 syllables.

Creative Services Health Literacy Checklist

Just as communications consultants are charged with using Health Literacy Advisor software to simplify content, the designers are responsible for following creative guidelines that enhance the readability and appeal of member communications.

Use a readable font

- Use san-serif fonts like Universe or Helvetica
- Ten point should be the default font size for body text (exception may be made for business reasons, but should first be discussed with management)
- For all Medicare communications, twelve point font is a minimum requirement
- Use different fonts sparingly; no more than 2-3 per document
- Use bold sparingly to highlight text
- Use italics sparingly to highlight text

Plan for page and text layout

- Provide plenty of white space
- Include visuals to break up text
- Use clear headings and subheadings
- Use a combination of short paragraphs and bullet format
- Work toward best use of color.
- Keep design and layout clean and simple

Select effective graphics

- Use visuals that support the text
- Use visuals that are simple and realistic
- Use sharp contrast between background colors and text (avoid tone on tone)
- When changing existing color to black and white applications (such as for POD), make sure photos and shaded areas will translate well
- Use visuals the target audience can relate to, and consider cultural, gender and age diversity
- Select casual lifestyle visuals – avoid a “posed” look
- Use emotive, authentic-looking photography, not just models smiling at the camera