

Editorial

The Taichung Statement on Health Literacy (2025): sustaining action on health literacy to promote health for all

From 23–25 November 2025, more than 300 participants from 21 countries gathered in Taichung, Taiwan for the 11th Asian Health Literacy Association Conference—“Health Literacy and AI for a Healthy World.” Over three days, participants engaged in robust and critical dialogue on how to build and sustain health literacy programs at community, regional, and national levels. They examined health literacy’s role as a key social determinant of health and an “enabling factor in promoting health” (World Health Organisation 2017 p. 3), including its capacity to address rapidly emerging and interconnected challenges to human and planetary well-being. This included the importance of health literacy, including digital health literacy (Van Kessel et al. 2022), in addressing growing concerns about the spread of health mis- and disinformation across digital platforms. (Purnat et al. 2025)

Participants identified a range of concrete, actionable strategies to strengthen people’s ability to access, understand, critique, and use health information—ultimately contributing to more equitable outcomes for all. Discussions emphasized the value of national policy frameworks and independent evidence-based information (free from vested interests) delivered through new digital technologies as particularly important in creating supportive environments that “makes implementation easier and more effective.” (Nutbeam 2025 p. 2)

Recognizing that information and meaning are socially constructed and shaped by social contexts, the conference highlighted the important role of critical health literacy in advancing structural health reform. This includes the development of strategies to support knowledge and reflection on the role of vested interests, policy settings, and power relations in influencing health outcomes. (Abel and Benkert 2022, Tian et al. 2025) Critical health literacy was positioned as an essential part of public health, that plays a central role in supporting rights-based, participatory approaches that empower communities to mobilize, demand accountability, and advocate for evidence-informed health reform. (International Union for Health Promotion and Education 2023, Sørensen 2025)

More broadly, the conference reflected on the continued importance of the principles and actions of the Ottawa Charter (World Health Organisation 1986) including the role that health literacy can play in creating supportive environments, strengthening community action, and reorienting health systems toward prevention and equity. As the Shanghai Declaration (2016) recognized, globalization, the internet and climate change have “fundamentally changed the world

and how it operates,” posing both “unprecedented threats to human health and well-being as well as new, and exciting, frontiers for promoting health.” (World Health Organisation 2017 p. 1) The Ottawa Charter continues to offer a foundational framework for integrating health literacy into broader public health strategies and for advancing sustainable, participatory approaches to health promotion. (Thomas et al. 2025)

The following statement recognizes the need for continued dialogue about the important role that health literacy plays in improving the health and well-being of people and planet. (Van den Broucke 2014) The ten action points in the statement aim to guide and facilitate continuing and sustainable programs at the community, regional and national levels to promote health literacy around the global communities.

1. Health literacy shall be considered and promoted as an essential component for the fulfillment of fundamental health and human rights of all individuals in society.
2. Health literacy shall be recognized as a critical part of healthcare and community health services in all countries.
3. Health literacy is crucial for health promotion, disease prevention, illness management, self-care, and rehabilitation. It is necessary to help enable individuals to manage their health within their physical, mental, and social contexts.
4. Health literacy programs at the individual and community level shall be initiated in education settings beginning in family and early childhood settings.
5. Health literacy education and capacity building shall be essential programs for the education of all healthcare and public health professionals at all levels. It must be fully recognized as a fundamental skill for health professionals. Education for healthcare and public health professionals must encompass digital health, digital health literacy, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) for healthcare to ensure readiness and proactivity for modern medical/health environments.
6. Levels of health literacy and its indices within the population shall be evaluated and monitored periodically to allow for appropriate interventions throughout the life course and over time.
7. Health literacy intervention programs at the community, regional and national levels shall be developed and implemented through multi-disciplinary approaches, including hospital and system accreditation.

8. Strategic action to establish, promote, and sustain health-literate organizations shall be integrated into all national policies and programs, and included in emergency/crisis contingency action plans.
9. Governments, health systems, and civil society shall strengthen critical health literacy initiatives to equip individuals and communities to identify and counter mis- and disinformation. This includes building skills to evaluate evidence, understand commercial influences, and navigate digital environments where harmful or misleading content circulates.
10. Health literacy shall be a critical driver for global health and is essential for achieving the goals of the World Health Organization and other international health agencies.

Author Contributions

P.C. drafted the original initial manuscript. All other authors critically reviewed the manuscript for content, provided feedback, and approved the final version for publication.

Conflict of interest

T.V.D. is a member of the Editorial Board of Health Promotion International. S.T. is Editor in Chief of Health Promotion International. All other authors none to declare.

Funding

None declared.

Peter Chang¹, Tuyen V. Duong², Enny Rachmani³, Terrence Min-Che⁴, Stephan Van den Broucke⁵, Diane Levin-Zamir⁶, and Samantha Thomas^{7,*}

¹Taiwan Association of Health Literacy and Communication, Chang Bing Show Chwan Hospital, 6, Lukong Rd., Changhua 505, Taiwan

²School of Nutrition and Health Sciences, Taipei Medical University, Taiwan, No 250, Wuxing Street, Taipei 11031, Taiwan

³Faculty of Health Science, Universitas Dian Nuswantoro, Semarang, Jl., Imam Bonjol No.207, PendrikanKidul, Kec. Semarang Tengah, Kota Semarang, Jawa Tengah 50131, Indonesia

⁴Tsai Chung Shan Medical University Hospital, 110, Section 1, Jianguo N Rd., Taichung City 402, Taiwan

⁵Université Catholique de Louvain, Place Cardinal Mercier 1, Louvain-la-Neuve 1348, Belgium

⁶School of Public Health, University of Haifa, Haifa, 199 Abba Khoushy Blvd., Mount Carmel, Haifa 3498838, Israel

⁷Institute for Health Transformation, Faculty of Health, Deakin University, Geringhap St., Geelong, VIC 20000, Australia

*Corresponding author. Institute for Health Transformation, Faculty of Health, Deakin University, Geringhap St., Geelong, VIC 20000, Australia. E-mail: Samantha.Thomas@deakin.edu.au

References

- Abel T, Benkert R. Critical health literacy: reflection and action for health. *Health Promot Int* 2022;37:daac114. <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/daac114>
- International Union for Health Promotion and Education. *IUHPE Position Statement on Health Literacy: a Practical Vision for a Health Literate World*. Paris: International Union for Health Promotion and Education, 2023.
- Nutbeam D. Health literacy as a public health goal: 25 years on. *Health Promot Int* 2025;40:daaf119. <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/daaf119>
- Purnat TD, Wilhelm E, White BK *et al*. Health promotion in the algorithmic age: recognizing the information environment as a determinant of health. *Health Promot Int* 2025;40:daaf119. <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/daaf166>
- Sørensen K. Health literacy for people and planet: empowering collective action. *Health Lit Commun Open* 2025;3:2555288. <https://doi.org/10.1080/28355245.2025.2555288>
- Thomas SL, Kickbusch I, Kökény M *et al*. 40 years of the Ottawa charter for health promotion—reaffirming health for all. *Health Promot Int* 2025;40:daaf143. <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/daaf143>
- Tian CY, Ng CCW, Xie L *et al*. Conceptualisation of critical health literacy—insights from Western and East Asian perspectives: a scoping review. *BMJ Glob Health* 2025;10:e018232. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2024-018232>
- Van den Broucke S. Health literacy: a critical concept for public health. *Arch Public Health* 2014;72:10. <https://doi.org/10.1186/2049-3258-72-10>
- Van Kessel R, Wong BLH, Clemens T *et al*. Digital health literacy as a super determinant of health: more than simply the sum of its parts. *Internet Interv* 2022;27:100500. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.invent.2022.100500>
- World Health Organisation. *Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion*. Geneva: World Health Organisation, 1986.
- World Health Organisation. *Promoting Health in the SDGs. Report on the 9th Global Conference for Health Promotion, Shanghai, China, 21–24 November 2016: all for Health, Health for all*. Geneva: World Health Organisation, 2017.