

HEALTH PLAN OF SAN JOAQUIN			
Subject: Readability of Written Informing Materials			
Department: Health Education			Policy # C&L 11
Applies to: MC, HF			Scope: Mktg., HE
Effective Date: 09/01/08	Revised Date:	Approved by:	<i>Signature on file</i> Medical Director

PURPOSE

To identify the appropriate reading level of member informing materials and describe the readability assessment process.

POLICY:

- A. Items created for distribution to Health Plan of San Joaquin (HPSJ) members must be written at the appropriate reading level for HPSJ members, as determined by the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), or other appropriate state or federal agency.
- B. The reading level of written informing member materials should be at or below the 6th grade level, as required by the Department of Health Care Services and Managed Risk Medical Insurance Boards
- C. Readability formulas provide a method to easily assess the reading level of most print materials. HPSJ has selected the SMOG Readability Formula to test the reading level of health plan written materials. The formula counts the number of words containing 3 or more syllables and the approximate grade level is identified on a conversion chart based on the total polysyllabic word count. This is the formula recommended by Medi-Cal Managed Care Division (MMCD) in their Policy Letter.

PROCEDURES

- A. Documents that require a reading level assessment include but are not limited to:
 - 1. Evidence of Coverage

2. Disclosure forms
3. Enrollment and disenrollment information
4. Other printed Information including:
 - Descriptions of health plan services, including access to after-hours emergency and urgent care services.
 - How to access linguistic services.
 - How to select a primary care provider (“PCP”), the auto-assignment process, and instructions for transferring to a different PCP.
 - Process for accessing covered services requiring prior authorizations.
 - Process for filing a grievance; process for requesting a fair hearing; letters to members used in the grievance resolution process.
 - Provider directories (except actual listing of providers).
 - Form letters (denial letters, emergency room follow-up).
 - Plan-generated preventive health reminders (i.e. immunization reminders, initial health examination notices, and prenatal care follow-up).
 - Member surveys.
 - Newsletters.

B. Readability assessment

1. The Marketing Department will oversee and review all written member informing materials to assure that they are at an appropriate reading level and translated as necessary.
2. HPSJ departments that require assistance achieving an appropriate reading level will submit the request to the Marketing Department.
3. The Marketing Department will prioritize time sensitive materials that require translation or literacy assessment.

<i>Created by/Date</i>	<i>Revised by/Date</i>	<i>Revised by/Date</i>	<i>Revised by/Date</i>	<i>Revised by/Date</i>	<i>Revised by/Date</i>
R. Morrow 09/08					