Global Health Literacy Academy

KEYNOTE · CI ADVOCACY IN ACTION 2026

Health literacy – a key to success in CI advocacy

Where science meets experience · Brussels, 22–23 October 2026

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Founder, Global Health Literacy Academy · Health Literacy by Design™

WHERE SCIENCE MEETS EXPERIENCE

Health literacy builds the bridge



WHERE SCIENCE MEETS EXPERIENCE

A cochlear implant is not a one-off operation.
It is a lifelong journey.

And at every step, people, families and professionals must find, understand, judge and use information to make it work.

WHY IT MATTERS

Hearing is a global health priority

430M+

people worldwide need rehabilitation for disabling hearing loss today

2.5B

people are projected to live with some degree of hearing loss by 2050

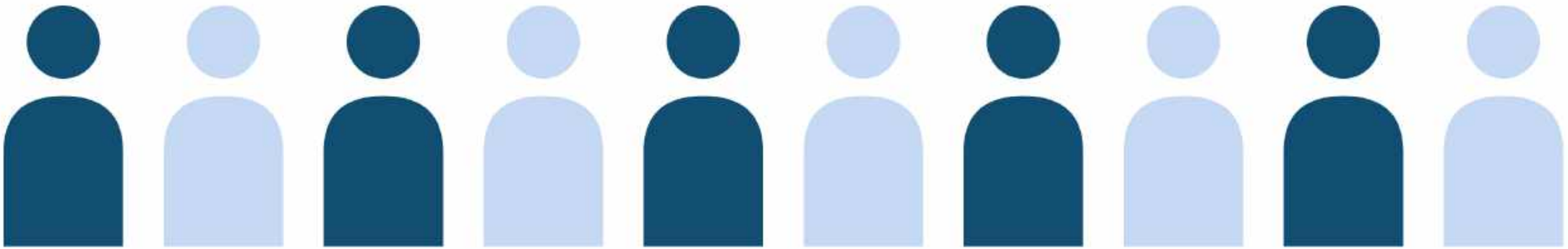
Yet access is unequal

Access to CI services – and to understandable information about them – still depends on where you live and what you know.

Source: WHO, World Report on Hearing (2021)

EUROPEAN HEALTH LITERACY SURVEYS

One in two people face health literacy challenges



25–75% of adults with limited health literacy across 17 countries **(HLS19)**

Sources: Sørensen et al. (2015), Eur J Public Health; M-POHL HLS19 / WHO Europe (2021)

Four competences behind every CI decision

"**Health literacy** is linked to literacy and entails people's knowledge, motivation and competences to **access, understand, appraise and apply** health information in order to make judgments and take decisions in everyday life concerning healthcare, disease prevention and health promotion to maintain or improve quality of life during the life course."

1

Access

Finding hearing services, CI centres and peer support.

2

Understand

Making sense of candidacy, risks, costs and realistic outcomes.

3

Appraise

Judging trustworthy information and weighing options together.

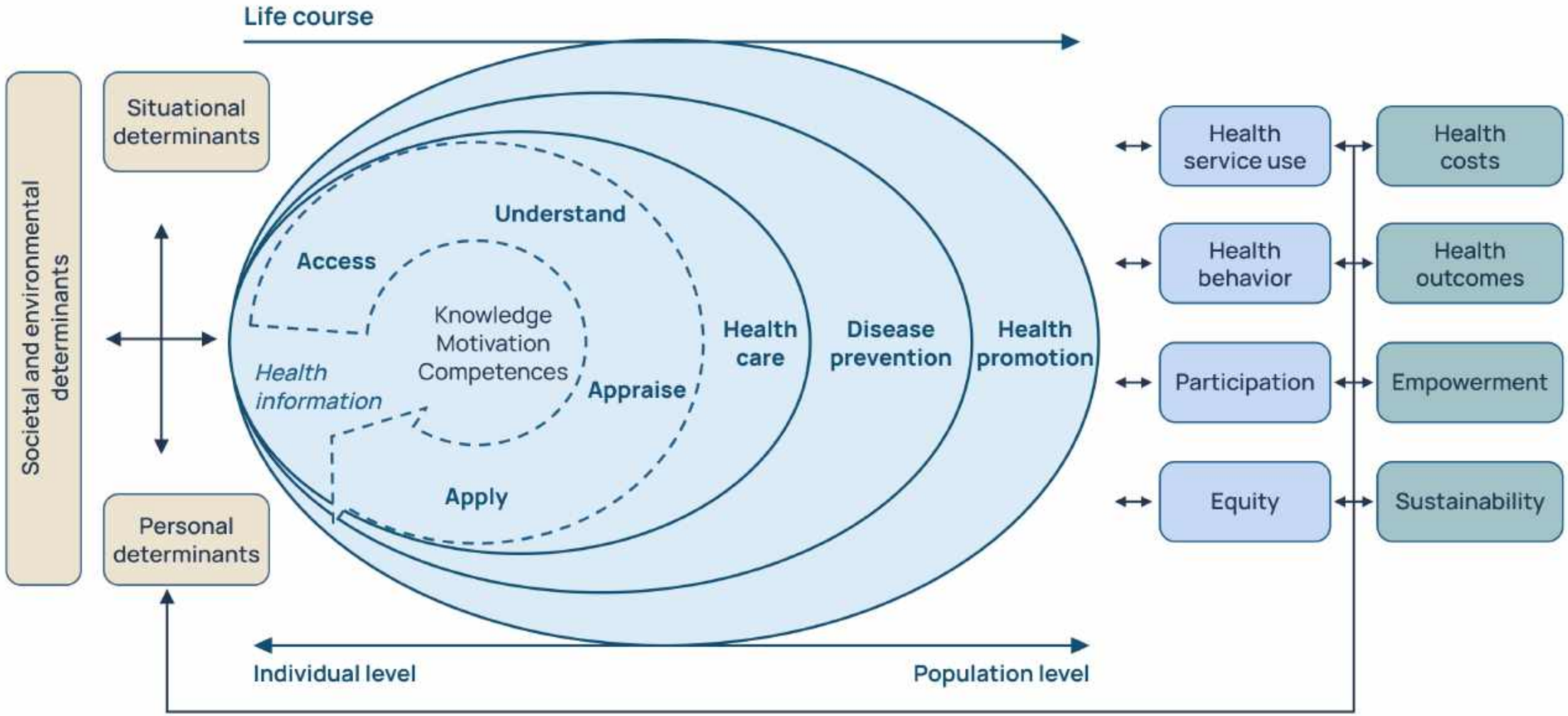
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Apply

Using the implant, rehabilitation and care in daily life.

Based on Sørensen et al. (2012), BMC Public Health

The integrated model of health literacy



Source: Sørensen et al. (2012), Health literacy and public health, BMC Public Health 12:80

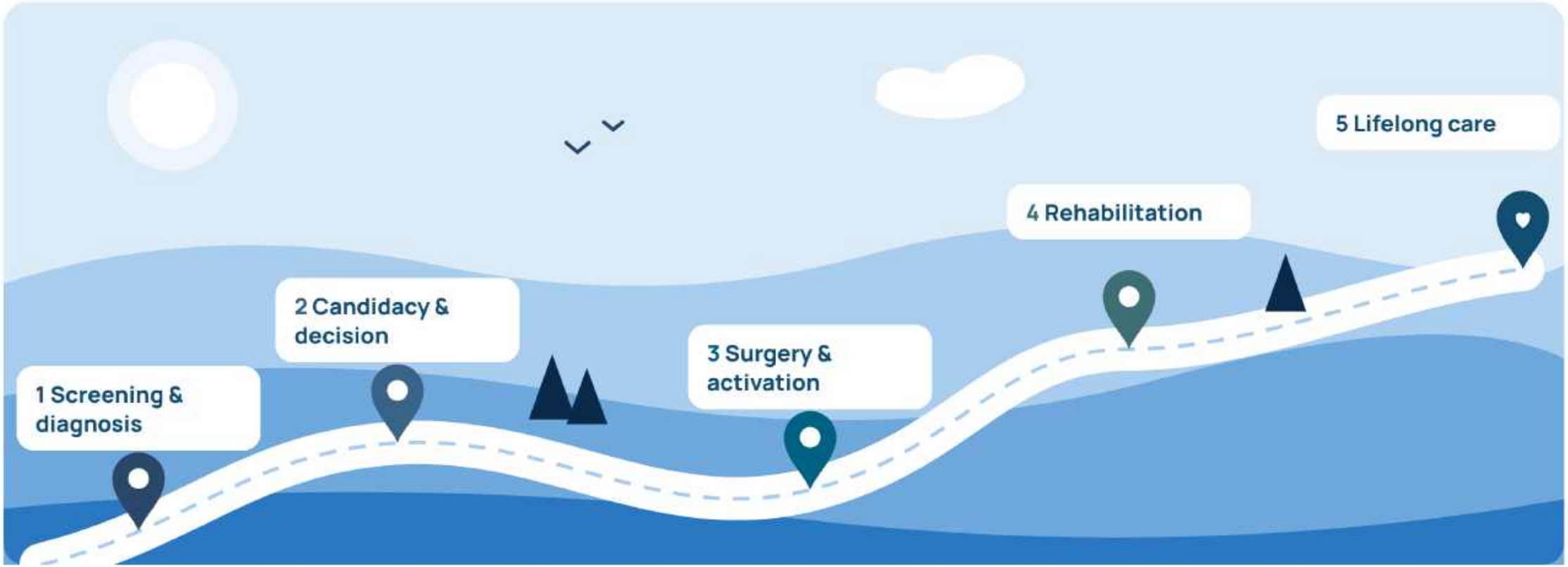
The lifelong CI journey, step by step

1	2	3	4	5
Screening & diagnosis	**Candidacy & decision**	**Surgery & activation**	**Rehabilitation**	**Lifelong care**
Parents and adults understand results and know where to go next.	An informed choice: benefits, risks, expectations and costs.	Consent, device choices and first sound – explained clearly and calmly.	Ongoing therapy, family coaching and confident self-management.	Maintenance, upgrades and the move from child to adult services.

Every step is a possible drop-out point when information is not health literate.

THE CI JOURNEY

A roadmap for lifelong CI care



FROM INDIVIDUAL SKILLS TO SYSTEMS

Health literacy is a shared responsibility

People's skills
CI users, parents, carers and their communities

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System demands
The complexity of services, pathways and funding

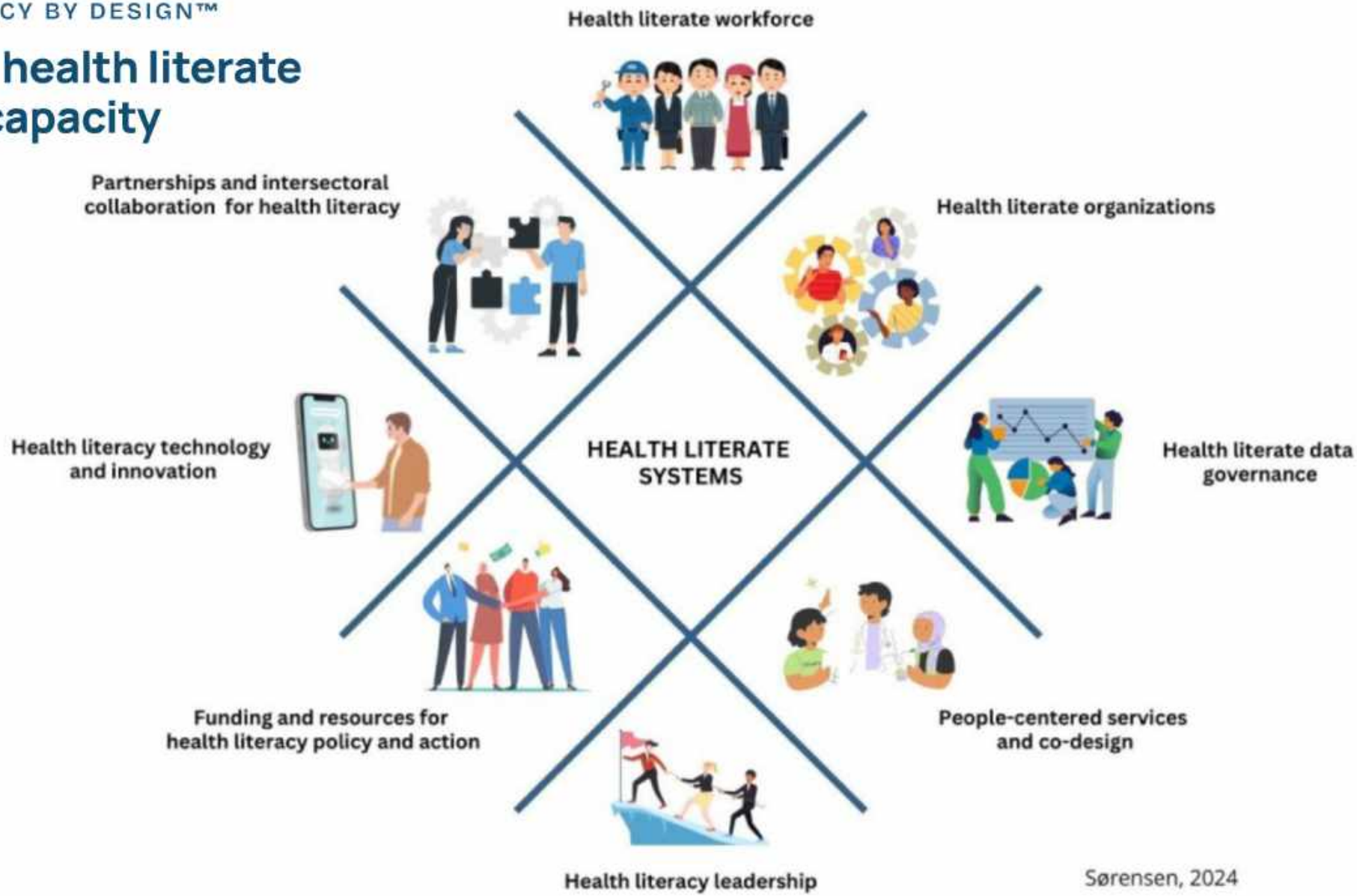
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Health literacy
in action: who gets in, stays in and thrives

Health Literate CI services

- Accessible formats: captions, visuals and sign language
- Teach-back and shared decision-making
- Clear pathways across the whole life course

Building a health literate system's capacity



Sørensen, 2024

MY ADVOCACY JOURNEY

Health literacy advocacy across sectors

Networks

Co-founder of Health Literacy Europe, the Dutch Health Literacy Alliance and the Danish Health Literacy Network

President of the International Health Literacy Association, 2017–2024

Governments

Initiated the WHO M-POHL network on measuring health literacy

WHO national health literacy blueprint analysis; Council of Europe report on health literacy and human rights

Government advice on national action plans

Academia

Integrated model and definition of health literacy (2012)

European health literacy surveys, research and teaching

Industry

Health Literacy by Design™ strategies with life-science companies

Health literacy as a right to understand

Patient community

Patients in the driver seat.

Training young patient representatives

ADVOCACY IN ACTION

Four asks for decision-makers

1 Put health literacy in hearing and CI plans

Fund information, navigation and peer support – not only devices and surgery.

2 Invest in lifelong services

Sustainable follow-up, upgrades and rehabilitation across the life course.

3 Co-design with CI users and families

Let lived experience shape information, services and policy.

4 Measure what matters

Monitor population and organisational health literacy alongside CI outcomes.

“

The future is health literate because we shape it.

Kristine Sorensen

Global Health Literacy Academy

FIVE LEVERS FOR CI ADVOCACY

Unlock. Unblock. Unburden. Unfold. Transform.



Unlock access

Understandable, accessible information from the first screening.



Unblock pathways

Remove barriers in referrals, funding and navigation.



Unburden people

Shift the burden of understanding from CI users to systems.



Unfold potential

Sustainable services that grow with the person, lifelong.



Transform systems

Health Literacy by Design™ across organisations and policy.

Global Health Literacy Academy

Thank you

Let's make CI services health literate – by design.

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