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## Health Literacy Still an Issue in Canada

- 60 per cent of Canadian adults and 88 per cent of seniors are not health literate
- ABC Life Literacy launches nine new resources as part of its *ABC Health Matters program*
- Low literacy is associated with poor health outcomes

(Toronto, ON – September 27, 2018) October is Health Literacy Month, a time to increase understanding of health information and for Canadians to take charge of their health. According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, 60 per cent of Canadian adults and 88 per cent of seniors are not health literate.

In recognition of Health Literacy Month, ABC Life Literacy Canada has developed nine new resources for patients and health care providers as part of the *ABC Health Matters program*. Good health literacy means being able to access, understand, evaluate, communicate and use information related to your health and the health of others to make appropriate health decisions.

The *ABC Health Matters program* was created to help Canadians to manage their health more effectively by increasing their confidence when talking about and making decisions regarding health issues. ABC Life Literacy developed a workbook-led workshop, delivered at community learning and health care centres across Ontario. Through the program, adults develop a deeper understanding of how to advocate for their own health as well as the health of their family and gain a better understanding of how to access health care.

“It would be hard to find something more personal to someone than their health,” said ABC Executive Director Mack Rogers. “It can be frustrating and sometimes frightening to feel as if you don’t have control over your own health which is why we created the *ABC Health Matters program*. The program empowers Canadians to manage their health more effectively and increases their confidence in discussing their health issues with health care providers.”

This year, additional resources were developed for the *ABC Health Matters program* to help Canadians take charge of their health during Health Literacy Month. New resources available at [ABCHealthMatters.ca](http://ABCHealthMatters.ca) include:

- Health Passport – pocket-sized guide for patients when speaking with health care providers
- Medical History Card – a place to keep track of medical history to keep with you
- Tips for Your Doctor Visit – sample questions for patients when speaking with their doctor
- You and Your Pharmacist – details of support available from your local pharmacist
- Your Rights as a Patient – your rights and responsibilities as a patient
- Caring for Loved ones – tips for caregivers for how to support and advocate for someone under your care

Tools were also created for health care providers to support communication with patients with low literacy as well as posters for placement in waiting rooms and the pharmacy with questions and information for patients.

“AbbVie is proud to be a founding member of the ABC Health Matters program,” says Stéphane Lassignardie, General Manager of AbbVie Canada. “We believe that every Canadian should be an advocate for their own health. When you understand the health care system, you are better equipped to navigate its intricacies and access the right services for yourself and your family. This will result in improved health outcomes for all.”



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Health Literacy Month is a great opportunity for Canadians to commit to increasing their health literacy and the new *ABC Health Matters* resources will give them the tools to do just that. ABC Life Literacy will also launch an awareness campaign leading up to Health Literacy Month to heighten awareness and access to the free *ABC Health Matters* tools and resources.

*ABC Health Matters* was created with the support of AbbVie Corporation. Two workbooks that can be used for workshop delivery or for learning at home as well as the new resources are available for free download at [ABCHealthMatters.ca](http://ABCHealthMatters.ca).

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#### **About ABC Life Literacy Canada**

ABC Life Literacy Canada is a non-profit organization that inspires Canadians to increase their literacy and essential skills. We mobilize business, government and communities to support lifelong learning and achieve our goals through leadership in programs, communications and partnerships. We envision a Canada where everyone has the skills they need to live a fully engaged life. For the latest news and information on adult literacy please visit [www.abclifeliteracy.ca](http://www.abclifeliteracy.ca), follow us on [Twitter](#) or join our [Facebook page](#).

#### **About AbbVie**

AbbVie is a global, research and development-driven biopharmaceutical company committed to developing innovative advanced therapies for some of the world's most complex and critical conditions. The company's mission is to use its expertise, dedicated people and unique approach to innovation to markedly improve treatments across four primary therapeutic areas: immunology, oncology, virology and neuroscience. In more than 75 countries, AbbVie employees are working every day to advance health solutions for people around the world. For more information about AbbVie, please visit us at [www.abbvie.ca](http://www.abbvie.ca) and [www.abbvie.com](http://www.abbvie.com). Follow [@abbvieCanada](#) and [@abbvie](#) on Twitter or view careers on our [Facebook](#) or [LinkedIn](#) page.

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