

NACo's 80TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND EXPOSITION

JULY 10-13, 2015 • MECKLENBURG COUNTY/CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA



Housekeeping

- Please silence all mobile devices.
- This session is being recorded . To view the recording please visit www.naco.org/educational-recordings.
- Questions will be answered at the end of the session.



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Workshop Evaluations

Workshop evaluations forms can be found in the NACo conference app and online at www.naco.org/workshopevals.

Please visit iTunes or Google Play to download the 2015 NACo Annual Conference App!



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Agenda

- Moderator Jessica Beyer, Blue Earth County, Minn.
 - NACIO President
- Brian Lieb, Hennepin County
 - Drop the jargon
Plain language workshop



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What is NACIO?

- NACo affiliate group – county PIOs
- www.nacio.org
- [www.facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/nacio66) – search for National Association of County Information Officers
- Twitter – nacio66

Recent U.S. history

- 1970 IBM memo
- 1979 Carter
- 1998 Clinton
- 2010 Plain Writing Act



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What is plain language?

With everything you publish, your audience should be able to:

- **Find** what they need
- **Understand** what they find
- **Use** that information to meet their needs



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Does it work?

Yes. Results include:

- Increased reader satisfaction
- Increased access to services and benefits
- Increased compliance with regulations
- Decreased costs



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Example – MN air quality forecast

Before






- ~100 jargon-filled words:
- *Pollutant dispersion*
- *Reduced atmospheric mixing*








After

Forecasts

Rochester

Today	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue
				
51 O3	50 PM2.5	54 O3	48 O3	50 O3

Twin Cities

Today	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue
				
51 O3	50 PM2.5	58 O3	49 O3	54 O3



What do these ratings mean?

Example – drug labels

Before

Allergy Tablets

INDICATIONS: Provides effective, temporary relief of sneezing, watery and itchy eyes, and runny nose due to hay fever and other upper respiratory allergies.

DIRECTIONS: Adults and children 12 years and over—1 tablet every 4 to 6 hours, not to exceed 6 tablets in 24 hours or as directed by a physician. Children 6 to 11 years—one half the adult dose (break tablet in half) every 4 to 6 hours, not to exceed 3 whole tablets in 24 hours. For children under 6 years, consult a physician.

EACH TABLET CONTAINS: Chlorpheniramine Maleate 4 mg. **May also contain** (may differ from brand): D&C Yellow No. 10, Lactose, Magnesium Stearate, Microcrystalline Cellulose, Pregelatinized Starch.


WARNINGS: May cause excitability especially in children. Do not take this product unless directed by a physician, if you have a breathing problem such as emphysema or chronic bronchitis, or if you have glaucoma or difficulty in urination due to enlargement of the prostate gland. May cause drowsiness; alcohol, sedatives and tranquilizers may increase the drowsiness effect. Avoid alcoholic beverages, and do not take this product if you are taking sedatives or tranquilizers without first consulting your physician. Use caution when driving a motor vehicle or operating machinery. As with any drug, if you are pregnant or nursing a baby, seek the advice of a health professional before using this product. Keep this and all drugs out of the reach of children. In case of accidental overdose, seek professional assistance or contact a Poison Control Center immediately.

Store at controlled room temperature 2°-30°C (36°-86°F).

Use by expiration date printed on package.

Protect from excessive moisture.

For better identification keep tablets in carton until used.



Made in U.S.A.

After

Drug Facts

Active ingredient (in each tablet)	Purpose
Chlorpheniramine maleate 2 mg.	Antihistamine

Uses temporarily relieves these symptoms due to hay fever or other upper respiratory allergies: ■ sneezing ■ runny nose ■ itchy, watery eyes ■ itchy throat

Warnings

Ask a doctor before use if you have

- glaucoma
- a breathing problem such as emphysema or chronic bronchitis
- trouble urinating due to an enlarged prostate gland

Ask a doctor or pharmacist before use if you are taking tranquilizers or sedatives

When using this product

- drowsiness may occur
- avoid alcoholic drinks
- alcohol, sedatives, and tranquilizers may increase drowsiness
- be careful when driving a motor vehicle or operating machinery
- excitability may occur, especially in children

If pregnant or breast-feeding, ask a health professional before use.

Keep out of reach of children. In case of overdose, get medical help or contact a Poison Control Center right away.

Directions

adults and children 12 years and over	take 2 tablets every 4 to 6 hours; not more than 12 tablets in 24 hours
children 6 years to under 12 years	take 1 tablet every 4 to 6 hours; not more than 6 tablets in 24 hours
children under 6 years	ask a doctor

Drug Facts (continued)

Other information ■ store at 20-25°C (68-77°F) ■ protect from excessive moisture

Inactive ingredients D&C yellow no. 10, lactose, magnesium stearate, microcrystalline cellulose, pregelatinized starch



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Example – jury instructions

Studies show that most jurors do not fully understand instructions from judges.

- Most thought “malice aforethought” meant a murder must be committed with a mallet
- **Before:** “A preponderance of the evidence”
- **After:** “More likely than not”



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Example – 500px photo site

Fine print includes plain language explanations

User Conduct (legal version is 571 words):

“Basically, you cannot use our site to post pornographic material, harass people, send spam, negatively vote on all photos, and do other crazy stuff. Be reasonable and responsible, don't do anything stupid and you'll be fine.”



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Example – County Home School

Before (530 words with corrections jargon)

- Custodial adults and other approved visitors ...
- Visits shall be subject only to limitations necessary to maintain order and security ...
- A temporary visitors badge will be displayed on each person ...



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Example – County Home School

After

- Concise (289 words)
- Clearer language
- Scannable

Getting there

[Metro Transit](#) bus route 664 provides access to the facility.

Who can visit?

Visits are limited to:

- Parents
- Step-parents
- Legal guardians
- Custodial adults
- Children of residents

Visiting rules

- Visitors may check in 15 minutes before the start of the visit.
- Visitors must present a valid picture identification (e.g., driver's license, state-issued ID card, passport, or a photo ID issued by social services, employer, military or school).
- All visitors must go through a screening process (metal detector and pat search) to enter the facility beyond the lobby.
- No one may wait in vehicles on County Home School property.
- Personal items such as purses, wallets, and cell phones are not permitted in visiting areas.
 - Lockers are provided for storage during visits.
 - Items brought for a resident will be searched and inventoried by correctional staff.
- Visitors are restricted to designated visiting areas.
- Smoking is not allowed and no food or beverages may be brought on grounds. Coffee, pop, and snacks are available at the County Home School.
- Visitors who are intoxicated, hostile or threatening, or who try to bring items that have not been checked by staff, will not be allowed to visit.
- A visit will be ended if a visitor or the resident act violently or inappropriately.
- Police will be called if visitors refuse to cooperate.

Visiting schedule

Day of the week	Visiting hours	Residents eligible for visits
Monday	No visiting	None
Tuesday	No visiting	None
Wednesday	6 p.m. - 9 p.m.	All residents
Thursday	8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.	All residents
Friday	No visiting	None
Saturday	3 p.m. - 5 p.m.	Girls Focus participants
Sunday	3:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. 4 p.m. - 6 p.m.	STAMP & STAMP Plus participants Adolescent & Family Sexual Health participants



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Example of non-plain language

From a letter to a body donor

Dear _____,

The receipt of your pre-death whole body donation consent form is acknowledged.



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Why does plain language work?

We read in patterns

It deosn't mttar in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are, the olny iprmoatnt tihng is taht the frist and lsat ltteer are in the rghit pcale.

The rset can be a toatl mses and you can sitll raed it wouthit pobelrm. Tihs is buseace the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe.



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How to apply plain language

The goal is clear, concise and scannable

- Include only what the audience needs
- Organize so key information is featured
- Use descriptive headings and white space
- Avoid acronyms, jargon and odd capitalization
- Use personal pronouns



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Clear, concise and scannable

Texas.gov



Texas Department of Public Safety
Driver License Division

Driver License Renewal and Change of Address



Welcome

Welcome to the Texas Driver License Renewal and Change of Address system.

Services

- Renew your driver license and/or identification (ID) card
- Change the address on your driver license and/or ID card

What You Need



A printer to print your temporary driver license or ID, which is valid for 45 days. If you do not have a printer, you can renew by phone: 1-866-DL-RENEW (1-866-357-3639)

- A valid credit card (Visa, MasterCard, Discover, or American Express)
- Your current Texas driver license or ID card
- Your Social Security number

Fees

- Renewal of driver license (with or without changing address): \$25
- Renewal of ID (with or without changing address): \$16
- Renewal of driver license with motorcycle (with or without changing address): \$33
- Change of address only for driver license or ID: \$11

This online service is provided by Texas.gov, the official website of Texas. The price of this service includes funds that support the ongoing operations and enhancements of Texas.gov, which is provided by a third party in partnership with the State.

[Continue](#)

Information

Steps to Complete

1. Welcome
2. Login
3. Select Services
4. Enter Address
5. Select Options
6. Review Order
7. Submit Payment
8. Receipt

Frequently Asked Questions

[Eligibility](#)
[Where's My License or ID?](#)
[En Español](#)



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Hennepin.us

Absentee voting

You can vote early by using an absentee ballot, instead of voting in person at the polling place on Election Day.

[Check absentee ballot status for state or federal elections](#)

[Online absentee ballot request](#)

Contact

hc.vote@hennepin.us

Phone: 612-348-5151

Fax: 612-348-2151

300 South 6th Street

012 skyway level - Government

Center

Minneapolis, MN 55487

M-F, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

[Map](#)

[Expand all information](#)

+ Vote by mail

+ Vote in person

+ Vote by agent

+ Military and overseas voters

+ Frequently asked questions

[Collapse all information](#)



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Clear, concise and scannable

Suburban
Hospital
Johns
Hopkins



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Suburban Hospital Johns Hopkins

my health care notebook

Why?

Being an active part of your health care team helps you feel better and helps you get even better care. Starting on Day 1, you can keep track of important information and questions.

My health care notebook helps you stay informed about your care and prepares you for going home.

Who?

This is your notebook, so start using it right away. If you don't feel well, your family care partner can start using it. Ask your nurse if you need help with information you do not know.

When?

Use **my health care notebook** from the start to help staff get to know you and to record important information.

How?

- Fill out **my health care notebook** where you can.
- Talk to your health care team.
- Write down any questions you have.
- Use the back pocket of this folder for important information sheets, such as your

my medicine while i am in the hospital

When you are in the hospital

- Ask your nurse about any medicine you don't recognize.
- If you want, your nurse can give you a list of the medicines you are taking in the hospital. The list may include medicines you will not take when you go home.

When you go home

- The medicine you take may change.
- Look at your **After Visit Summary (AVS)** to know what medicine you must stop and what you must take.
- Only take medicine listed on your **After Visit Summary (AVS)** until you talk to your primary care physician.
- Before you leave, review your medicine with your nurse and ask questions.

My medicine questions for my nurse, physician or hospital pharmacist

What's Inside?

My health care team

My discharge form



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Is it jargon?

If the county agency finds that an individual has received a payment to which the individual was not entitled, whether or not the payment was due to the person's fault or misrepresentation, the individual shall be liable to repay the county the total sum of the payment to which the individual was not entitled.



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Is it jargon?

Rewritten:

If the county agency finds that it gave you money you were not meant to have, you must pay it all back.



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Is it jargon?

It depends on the audience. What about:

- NGO
- Watershed
- Recorder / Registrar of Titles
- Adverse health effects



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How to develop a program

- Make a commitment
 - Official policy and dedicated staff
- Build capacity
 - Resources and training
- Interact with your audiences
 - Promote program and encourage feedback
- Keep the ball rolling

Engage front-line staff; evaluate and improve



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Plain language resources

- www.plainlanguage.gov
Federal plain language information
- www.centerforplainlanguage.org
National organization dedicated to plain language
- www.hennepin.us/writingguide
Hennepin County resource with writing tips and information on plain language



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Questions and Answers

If you would like to ask a question, please go to the nearest microphone.



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Evaluations

NACo values all feedback.

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