

Friday, October 12, 2012

Dear Colleagues,

October 13 marks the second anniversary of the signing of the Plain Writing Act, which was enacted to "improve the effectiveness and accountability of federal agencies to the public by promoting clear government communication that the public can understand and use." This anniversary is a good time to reflect upon the importance of plain language. As an agency whose mission it is to protect and promote public health, we are obligated to frequently share important information with the American people. Our communication must be clear, concise, and reader-friendly to best facilitate interaction with all of our stakeholders.

Following the passage of this law, I selected the Office of the Executive Secretariat (OES) to lead the implementation of this Act, and we have already met several of its requirements. We have collaborated with other agencies to enhance training opportunities for staff, developed a strategic implementation plan, identified Plain Language representatives throughout the agency, and identified strategies for strengthening our collaborations with the public.

Let's continue to hold ourselves to the highest standards of transparency and accountability. I encourage each of you to continue to apply plain language principles to your daily work and to take advantage of the training opportunities provided by the agency to learn more about plain language.

For more information:

- Contact our Plain Language Team in OES:
 - Kathy Weil (Kathy.Weil@fda.hhs.gov)
 - Julie Frandsen (Julie.Frandsen@fda.hhs.gov)
 - Marilyn Khan (Marilyn.Khan@fda.hhs.gov).
- Visit the Plain Language Action and Information Network (PLAIN) web site at: <http://www.plainlanguage.gov/index.cfm>.
- Contact your Plain Language representative or an OES Plain Language Team member.

Sincerely,

Margaret A. Hamburg, M.D.
Commissioner of Food and Drugs