



February 2018

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

We hope this letter finds you healthy, happy, and doing good work. Here is an update on some of the International Health Literacy Association's (IHLA) accomplishments in 2017 and goals for 2018. First, many thanks to you for your work advancing health literacy research and practice.

**IHLA Constitution and Bylaws.** The IHLA Executive Board approved a comprehensive constitution and bylaws in late December 2017. A constitution and bylaws are required for IHLA to be registered as a non-profit, academic-professional organization under U.S. law. The constitution and bylaws are based on three successful, diverse, international, non-profit, academic-professional organizations in public health, health promotion, and mass communication. The constitution and bylaws establish the future processes for IHLA's: elections; member-initiated Divisions and Interest Groups; Standing and Elected Committees; the Executive Board; as well as operating procedures and other organizational structure. IHLA's new constitution and bylaws are available on the IHLA website: <http://www.i-hla.org/about-us/>.

**Two immediate implications of the constitution and bylaws.** 1) The constitution and bylaws encourage members to establish Divisions and Interest Groups. More information about Divisions and Interest Groups is provided immediately below. 2) IHLA's current committees will be converted soon to be consistent with the elected and appointed Standing Committees specified within the constitution and bylaws. More information about this process is forthcoming.

**Interest Groups and Divisions.** IHLA members are encouraged to create Interest Groups based on topics of common interest. There are so many possibilities. It is really up to members to decide <http://www.i-hla.org/get-involved/>. Possibilities for Interest Groups may, for example, include: Health Literacy and Public Health; Health Literacy and Quality Improvement; Health Literacy Coalitions, Health Literacy Qualitative Methods; Health Literacy and Plain Language, etc. Ideally, we hope many Interest Groups will form within the organization and provide an entry for organizational participation by *all* members. The new constitution and bylaws suggest an Interest Group is composed of 15 IHLA members. An Interest Group can then become a Division when their membership equals or exceeds 40 members. In the future, Interest Groups and Divisions will have opportunities for programming at IHLA conferences. More information about this process is forthcoming.

**Vision and Mission Statement.** IHLA's mission and vision statements, approved in 2017, are available on our website: <http://www.i-hla.org/about-us/>. Our thanks to the authors!

**IHLA's Executive Board.** IHLA's current Executive Board will serve for three years (2017-2020). The Executive Board will implement the organization's constitution and bylaws to form Standing Committees. In the future, IHLA members will elect the organization's leadership. A list of current Executive Board members is available on our website: <http://www.i-hla.org/about-us/>.

## Seven 2017 initiatives by IHLA's current membership and Executive Board.

1. *Professional development.* This group offered a pre-course at the fall 2017 International Conference on Communication in HealthCare/Health Literacy Annual Research Conference (ICCH-HARC) in Baltimore, Maryland USA and is working on developing a health literacy professional code of ethics.
2. *Research.* This group organized poster tours at the 2017 ICCH-HARC conference.
3. *Membership.* About 350 people from around the world joined IHLA in 2017. The new constitution provides a route for almost unlimited membership involvement in the formation of Divisions and Interest Groups. Many thanks for your interest and involvement!
4. *Website development.* <http://www.i-hla.org/> expanded in 2017 and significant changes planned for 2018. IHLA recognizes the importance of the site as the organization's home.
5. *Strategic planning.* This subgroup of the Executive Board initiated and advanced the now-approved IHLA constitution and bylaws in 2016-17. In 2018-19, members of this group will help the Executive Board implement IHLA's new constitution and bylaws.
6. *International cooperation.* In 2017, IHLA directly participated in the ICCH-HARC and Institute for Healthcare Advancement (IHA) conferences; IHLA members also contributed to the successful Asian Health Literacy Association meeting.
7. *Business office.* IHLA hopes to have the funds to establish an independent business office to support the organization in 2019. IHLA thanks IHA for serving as an incubator organization in this early stage of development.

Overall, IHLA made significant progress as a viable, international organization in 2017 and will continue to thrive in 2018. A few of IHLA's 2018 goals are to:

- Begin conversion to an organization administered by IHLA's constitution and bylaws
- Encourage the development of member-initiated Interest Groups and Divisions
- Develop the IHLA website
- Expand membership
- Initiate a Council of Affiliates (composed of affiliated organizations)
- Foster international meetings

We urge your involvement and especially hope you and your peers will begin to organize IHLA's Interest Groups and Divisions <http://www.i-hla.org/get-involved/>. IHLA's new organizational framework is an open, de-centralized system where *every member* can be meaningfully involved in activities regardless of their location, or level of expertise, or previous experience.

We welcome and appreciate your participation! Many thanks to our colleagues from around the world who generously contributed to IHLA's growth in the past two years. Please contact us at [info@i-hla.org](mailto:info@i-hla.org) with your questions, ideas and interest.

With our thanks,

**Kristine Sørensen, President**

**Peter Chang, Vice President**

**Sabrina Kurtz-Rossi, Secretary General**