



President & CEO

Catina O'Leary

PHD, MSW

As President & CEO, Catina oversees Health Literacy Media's core activities and programs to set and maintain the strategic vision for the organization. Her primary focus has been on building sustainable health literacy programming to address systemic challenges in the delivery of health care and clinical research, and making health and science information accessible and meaningful to the people who need it most.

Over the past 10 years as President & CEO, Catina has taken HLM from a small home-grown non-profit, to a global-reaching health literacy force, addressing the full spectrum of health and science communication around the world. Catina believes that HLM exists to disrupt the idea that "easy-to-understand" and "accurate" are mutually exclusive, and that using health literacy can empower people with accurate, but clear health information they can actually use, in ways that are accessible, equitable, and meaningful.

Catina, a licensed master social worker, knows that actionable knowledge is the key to changing health behaviors, and that health behavior can improve quality of life. It's this concept, learned from over a decade of community-based activities and research, prior to HLM, that fuels her work here. In her early career, Catina led research at Washington University School of Medicine focused on connecting people at-risk for health conditions, such as HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, with medical and social resources aimed at improving health behaviors, preventing illness, and improving overall health and well-being. She's led multi-site research trials in the U.S. and internationally, and has been actively engaged in every phase of the research process, including writing grants to obtain research funding, developing protocols to obtain IRB approval across multiple sites, hiring and training staff for data collection and intervention implementation, and leading data analysis, reporting, and research dissemination. An advocate for people, transparency, and equity, she joined the Human Research Protection Office's (HRPO) continuing review committee, during her time at Washington University School of Medicine.

Today, Catina's reach extends far beyond the team and work she leads here at HLM. She currently sits on many boards and committees, including the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine's Roundtable on Health Literacy. She is also the chairperson of the International Health Literacy Association's Council of Affiliates and sits on the IHLA Executive Board.

