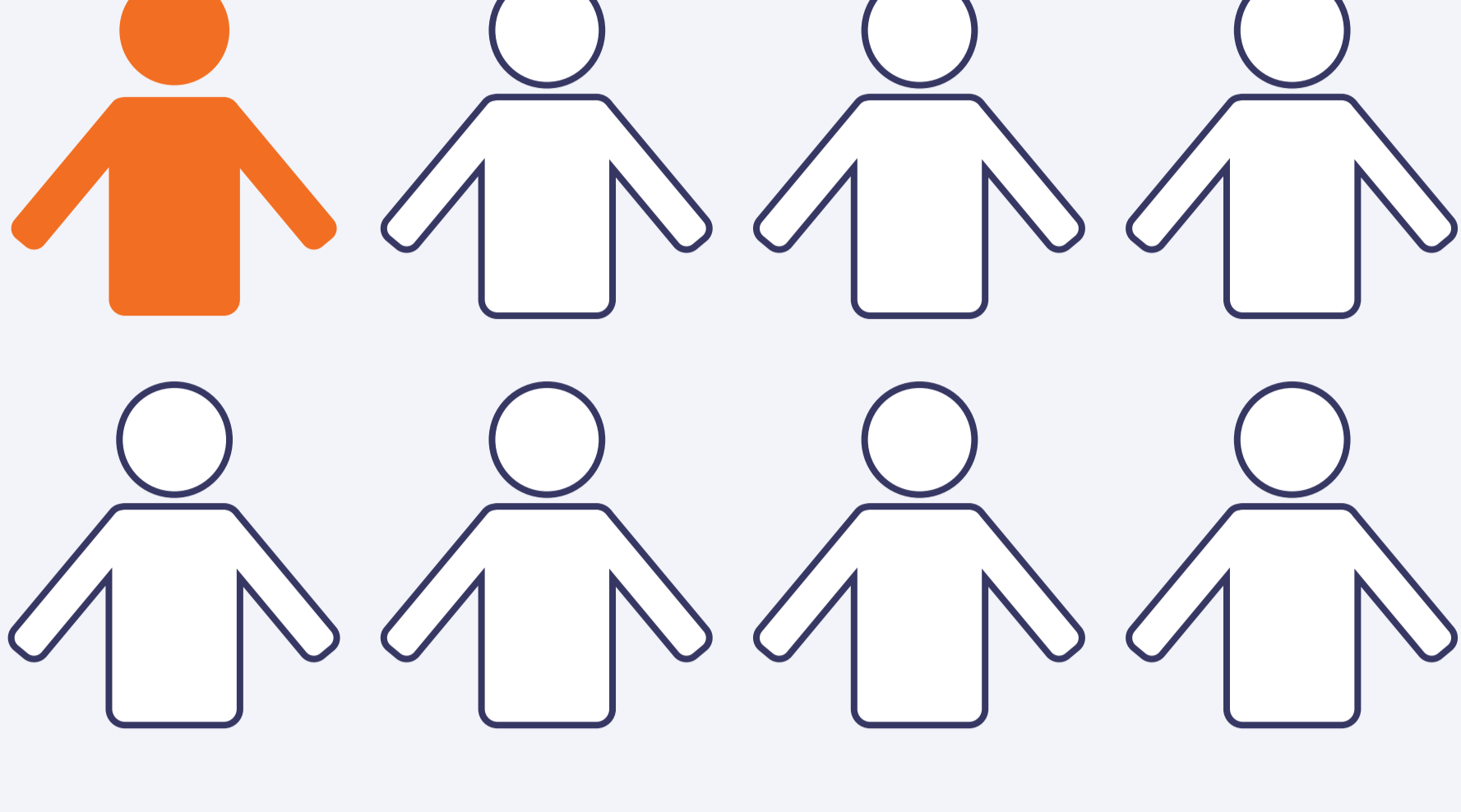


The Health Literacy Epidemic

Health Literacy is "the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions." [1]

– Institute of Medicine, "Health Literacy: A Prescription to End Confusion".

Few are Empowered, Most Struggle



Only 12% of Americans have proficient health literacy. The remaining 88% have difficulty with common health tasks like following instructions on a drug label or on a standard childhood immunization schedule.

Huge Economic Impact

Researchers at George Washington University's Milken Institute School of Public Health estimated that the annual cost of low health literacy to the US economy ranges from: [3]



\$106-\$238 BILLION

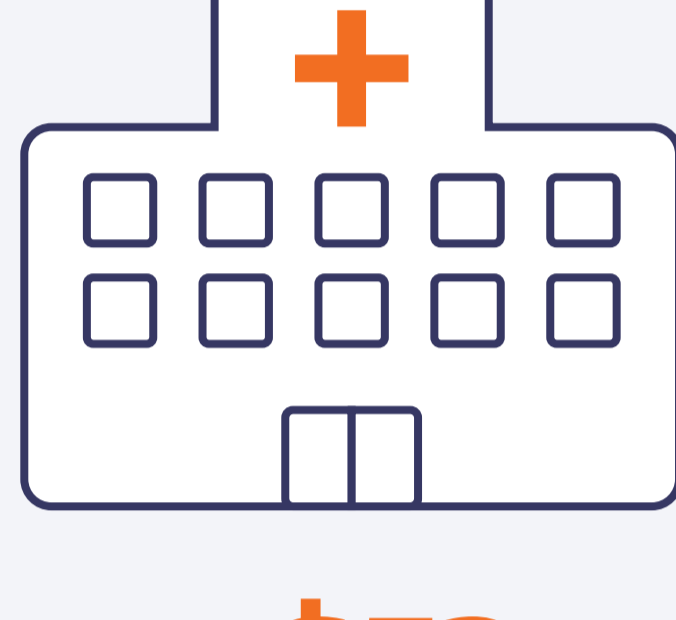
Personal Cost of Illiteracy

According to a 2015 report, people with above basic health literacy spend dramatically less in annual health expenditures than individuals with basic or worse health literacy. The personal cost of health illiteracy is: [4]



+\$556

FOR OFFICE VISITS



+\$52

FOR EMERGENCY ROOM VISITS

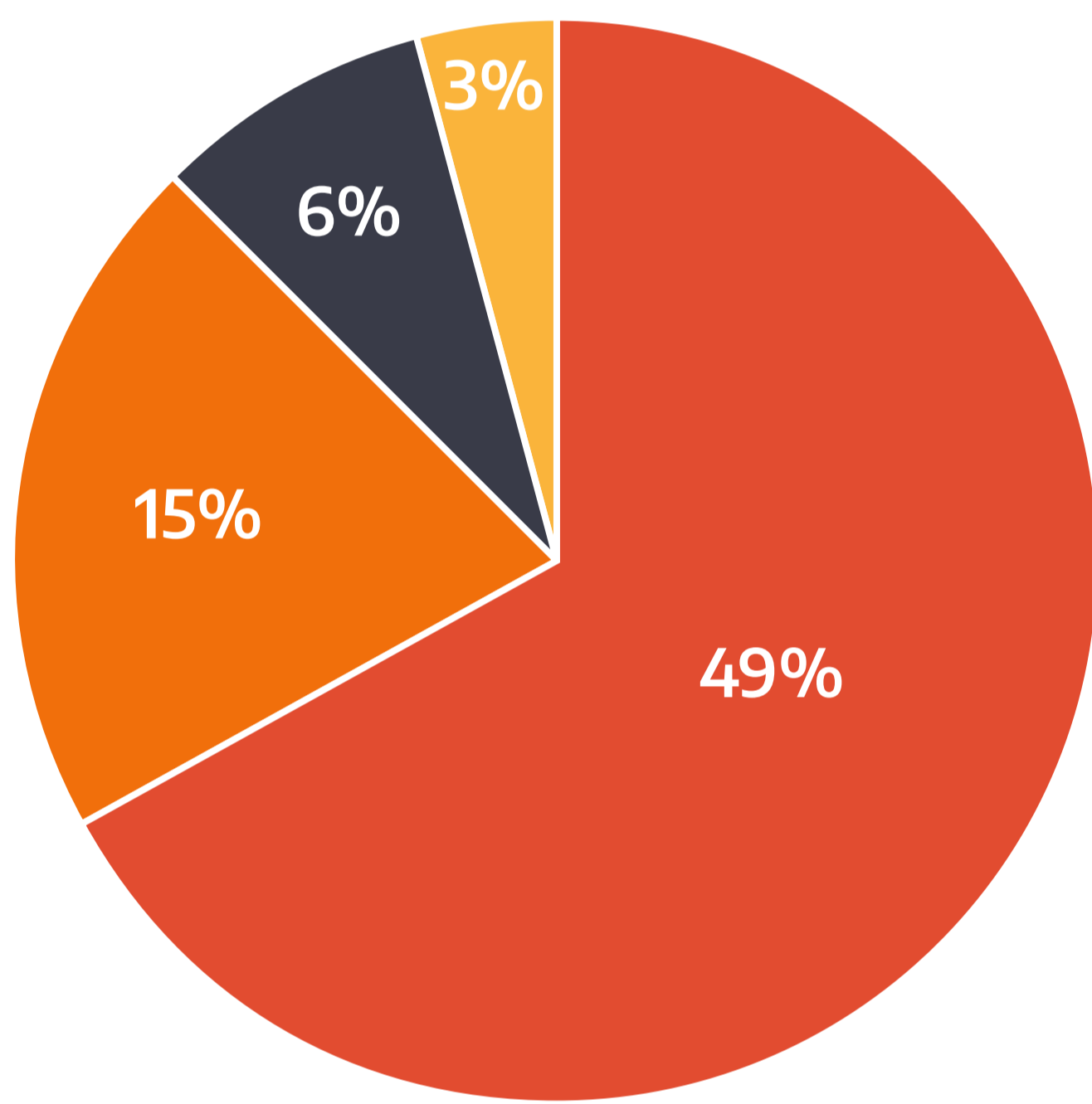


+\$2,939

FOR PRESCRIPTIONS

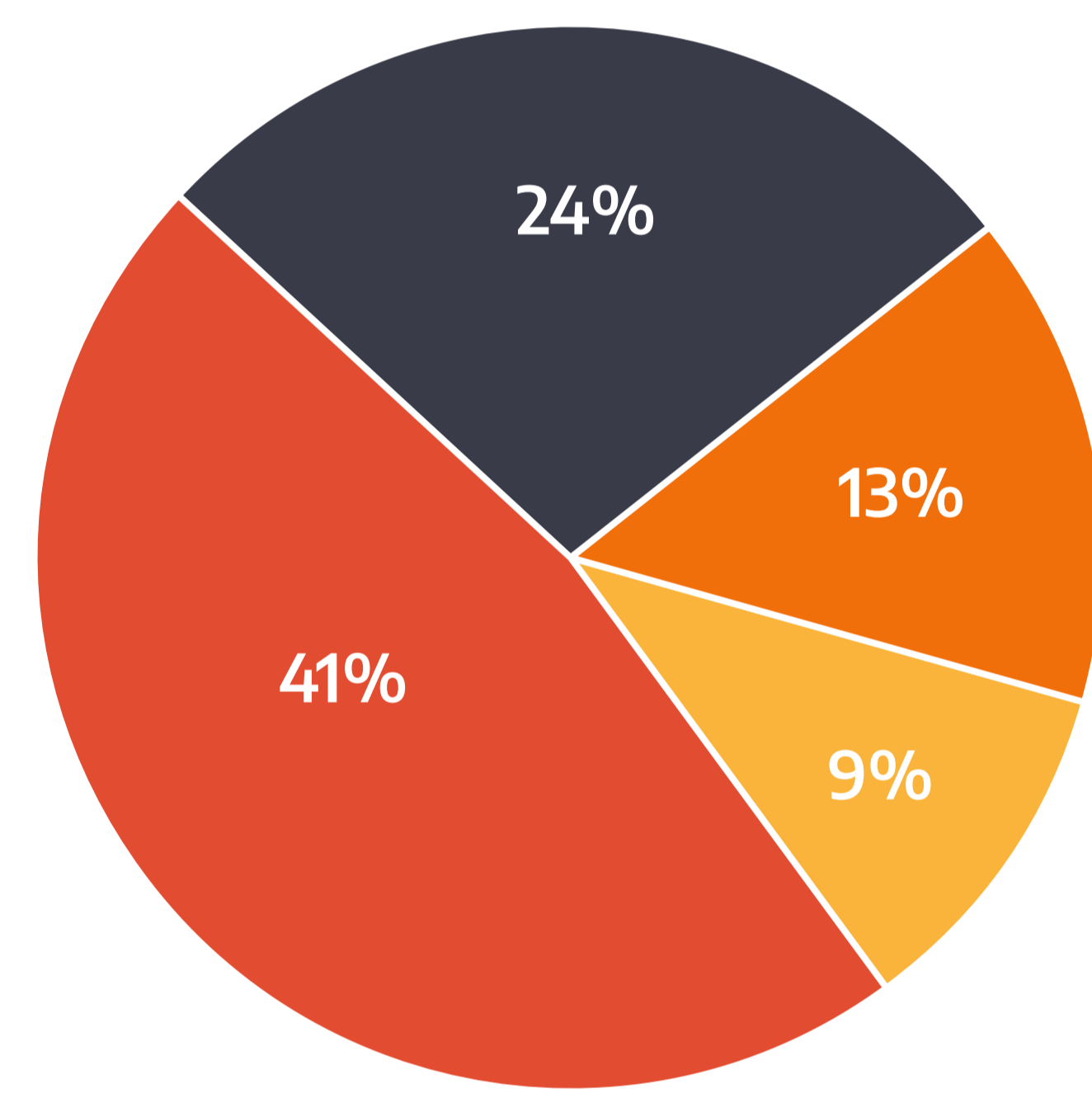
Individuals with the Greatest Need

% Below Basic Health Literacy by Education Level [4]



■ Less than High School ■ High School Graduate/GED
■ Other College Attendance ■ Bachelor's Degree or Higher

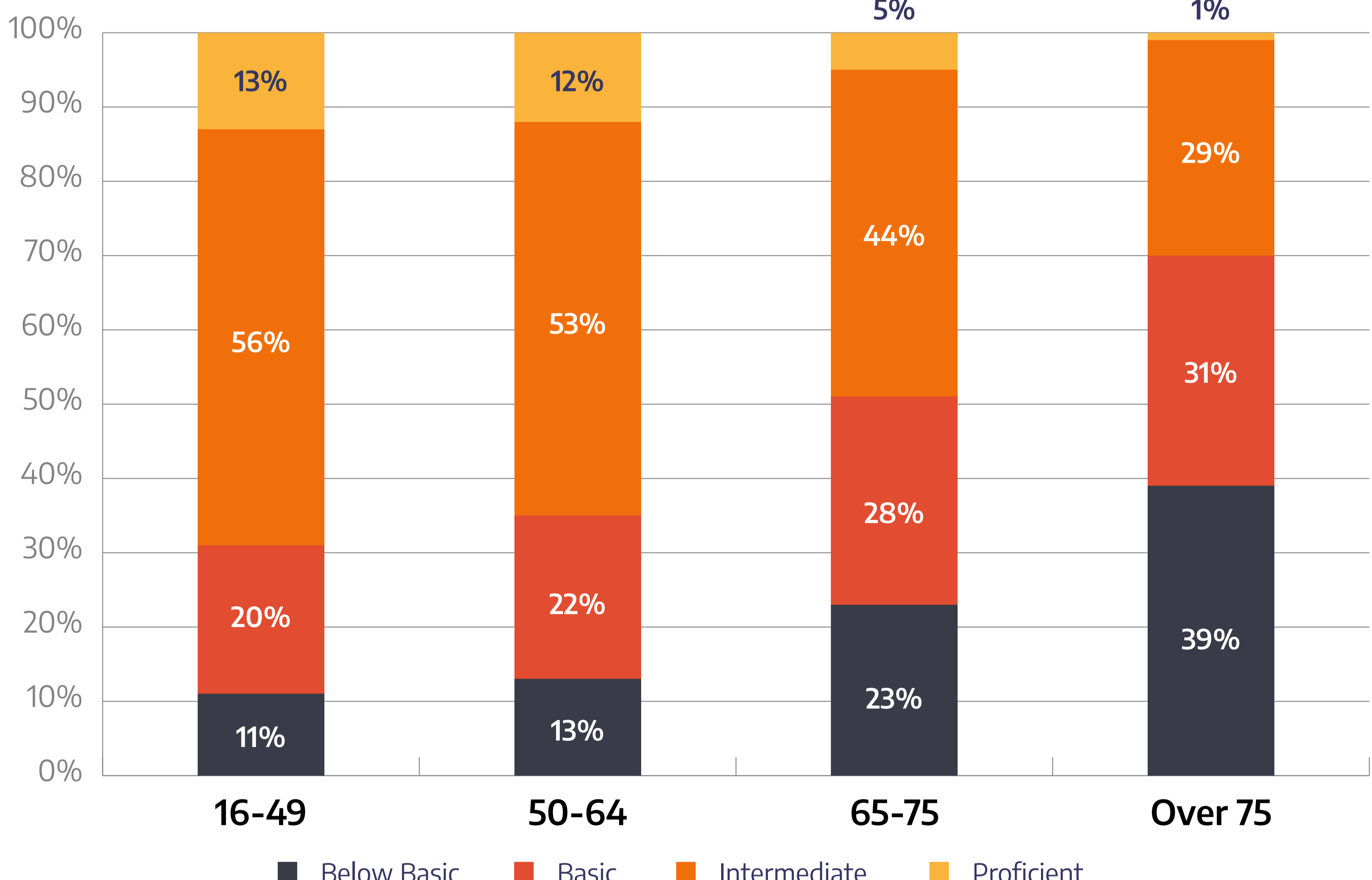
% Below Basic Health Literacy by Racial/Ethnic Groups [4]



■ White ■ Black
■ Hispanic ■ Other

US Health Literacy by Age

[4]



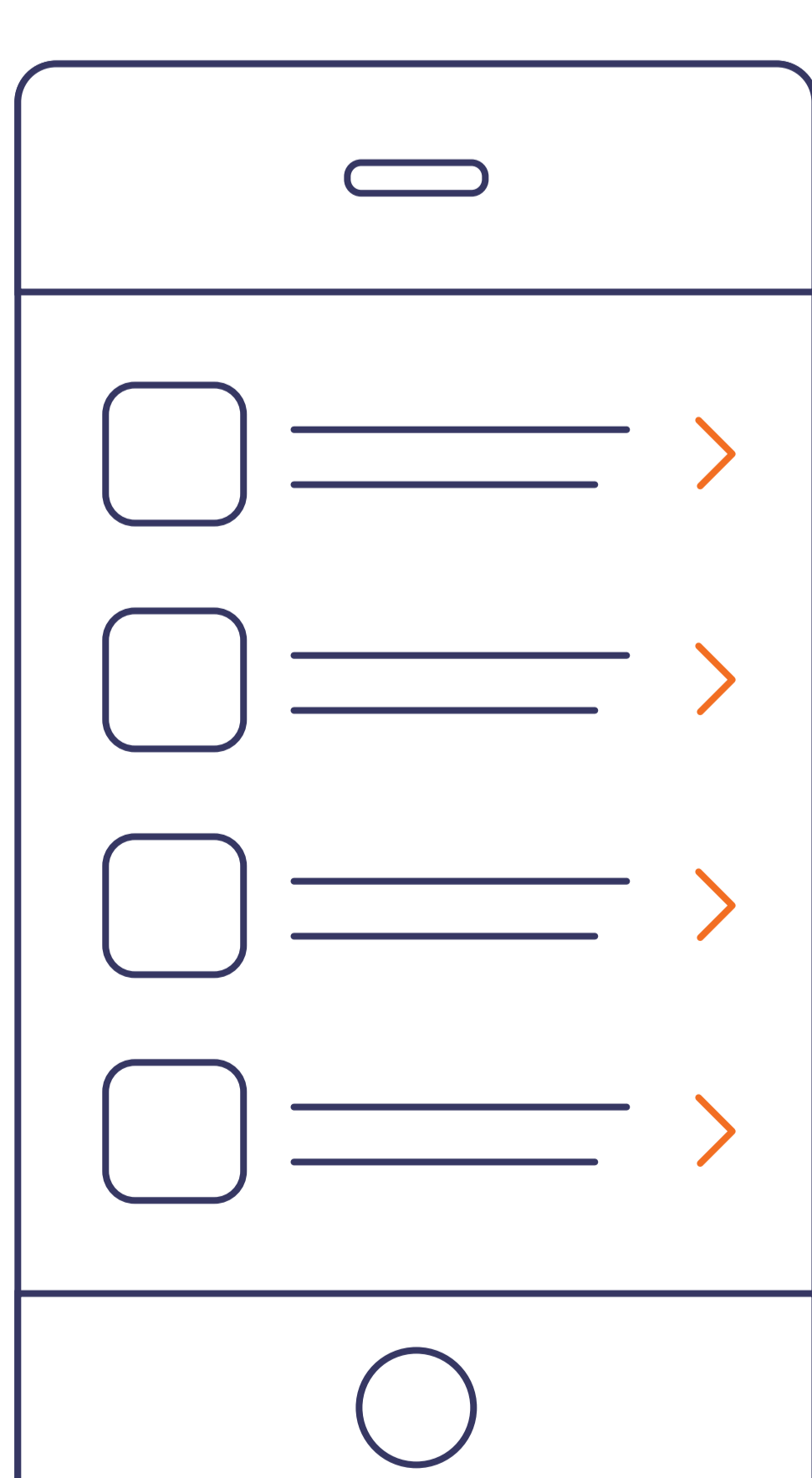
Steps to Improve Communication

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality recommends that physicians and providers utilize these steps as a health literacy toolkit. [5]

- 1 Form a team
- 2 Create a Health Literacy Improvement Plan
- 3 Raise Awareness
- 4 Communicate Clearly
- 5 Use the Teach-Back Method
- 6 Follow up with patients
- 7 Review all of their medications with patients at visits



Digital Tools Should Be Leveraged



92% of Americans have a cell phone and 68% have a smartphone. [4,6]

This patient accessibility should be leveraged, from SMS interactions to digital therapeutics and diagnostics, to engage and inform.

Digital communication can level the playing field for ethnic minorities who are disproportionately effected by low health literacy, as well as personalize the care experience for the patients to their level of comfort and understanding.

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3. Vernon, John A., PhD, Antonio Trujillo, PhD, Sara Rosenbaum, JD, and Barbara DeBuono, MD, MPH. "Low Health Literacy: Implications for National Health Policy". George Washington School of Public Health. 10 Apr. 2007.
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5. "Form a Team: Tool #1." Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. U.S. HHS: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, 05 Feb. 2015. Web. 07 Apr. 2017.
6. Anderson, Monica. "Technology Device Ownership: 2015." Internet, Science & Tech. Pew Research Center, 29 Oct. 2015. Web. 07 Apr. 2017.