THE PUBLIC LIBRARY AND CONSUMER HEALTH: MEETING COMMUNITY NEEDS THROUGH RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION AND COLLABORATION

by Erica Burnham, Consumer Health Information Coordinator and Peggy Falls, Outreach Coordinator

This year in an unprecedented collaboration between the Public Library Association, the Medical Library Association and the National Library of Medicine, a conference entitled "The Public Library and Consumer Health" was held just prior to the American Library Association Mid-Winter conference in Washington, D.C. The program included a number of speakers at the general sessions and four workshops, each of which was presented twice, allowing everyone the fullest participation possible.

Dr. Tom Ferguson, a familiar face to those librarians who attended MLA 2000 in Vancouver, gave the keynote address. A longtime online health enthusiast, Dr. Ferguson believes that the proliferation of email as a means of communication and the incredible growth of a computer-savvy public has erased the digital divide. He encourages physicians to be aware of the power of online chat rooms devoted to health issues and to investigate the possibility of adding email to the doctor-patient relationship.

Carla J. Funk, Executive Director of MLA, announced the new Consumer Health Credential (CHC) Program. Conceived as a program to work in tandem with as well as independently from AHIP, this new opportunity gives librarians recognition for a variety of different professional development activities that improve the quality of health information services for the public. For more information: http://www.mlanet.org/education/chc/index.html

Heidi Thiessen Sandstrom, from the Pacific Southwest Region of the NN/LM, gave a wonderful overview of the consumer health movement from "Our Bodies, Ourselves" to NLM's present outreach efforts, which provide collaborative opportunities for academic, public and special libraries. It is anticipated that another round of sub-contracts for Electronic Access to Health Information for the Public will become available in May 2001.

Ann McKibbon of McMaster University and Rose Marie Woodsmall of NCBI were the presenters of the Finding and Understanding Evidence-Based Literature workshop. Through a PowerPoint presentation and hands-on examination of samples from the medical literature, the criteria used in EBM evaluations were explained and illustrated. A significant point made by Ms. McKibbon was that evidence-based healthcare means that evidence is used to help make clinical decisions, not to dictate practice.

Michele A. Spatz, Director of the Planetree Health Resource Center in The Dalles, OR, presented Planning and Managing the Consumer Health Library. Ms. Spatz gave an overview and history of the center she directs and showed how this library integrated the concepts of consumer need, professional responsibility, accountability, and health literacy into its day-to-day operations. In addition to the importance of information resources, Ms. Spatz stressed two factors vital to the success of a consumer health information center:
- Enlist an advocate who believes in the value of consumer health information who can address concerns from the medical community and the community-at-large.
- Develop a competent, trained staff, both professional and volunteer.

According to Ms. Spatz, "Your staff is your most valuable asset."

Ruth Holst, from Columbia Hospital in Milwaukee, gave a workshop on Fundraising and Grant Writing Strategies. A former member of the Biomedical Library Review Committee at NLM, Ms. Holst discussed how to find, write and carry out grant or contract opportunities. The workshop attendees represented quite a range of experience, from the absolute beginner to some who had written many successful proposals. The workshop gave everyone an idea not only of how to sell an idea to a review committee, but how to recognize a well-written and thoughtful grant application.

NLM staff presented two of the workshops. Consumer Health Information on the Internet, presented by Cecilia Durkin, Consumer Health Librarian at the NLM National Network Office, was not limited to NLM sources but provided background for the librarian new to this subject, and covered a broad range of consumer information sources. Ms. Durkin is the author of MLA's new BibKit on consumer health. The other NLM workshop was a panel presentation on National Library of Medicine Information Resources. Six panel members described information available via MEDLINE*plus*, PubMed, ClinicalTrials.gov, Toxicology and Environmental Health, and the NLM Gateway.

Dr. Donald A.B. Lindberg, Director of NLM, spoke about its new mandate in the field of consumer health and the remarkable advances made since 1997, when MEDLINE was made available for free.

In a panel presentation moderated by Becky Lyon, Deputy Associate Director of Library Operations at NLM, and featuring participants in the NLM/Public Library Partnerships pilot project, regional representatives Jane Fisher of the New York Public Library and Bernie Todd Smith from ViaHealth Medical Library in Rochester, described their consumer health projects, both funded by either NLM or NN/LM. The NN/LM was featured several times over the course of the two-day conference, mainly for the benefit of the many public librarians in attendance.

Funding for the development of new projects was discussed in a panel led by Angela Ruffin, the head of NLM's National Network Office. Representatives from the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration highlighted the development of grants and contracts from federal sources.

The program was well received by all the attendees, but naturally was of great interest to the public librarians. Both public and health science librarians enjoyed the opportunity to meet new colleagues and exchange views. We look forward to many more programs courtesy of the numerous library associations and anticipate opportunities to participate in collaborative consumer health projects throughout the region.

HEALTHINFOQUEST
http://www.nnlm.nlm.nih.gov/healthinfoquest/

Using Pathfinders:
Pathfinders are a time-honored tradition in public libraries. HEALTHINFOQUEST pathfinders are designed for public librarians and health information specialists. Each pathfinder reflects the intuitive nature of reference work. Pathfinders are not meant to be used with clients, but as learning opportunities for enhancing confidence in your ability to retrieve information. Users are encouraged to follow their inclinations to browse links within links and explore the wealth and variety of quality health and medical information available on the World Wide Web.

Disclaimer:
Keep in mind that HEALTHINFOQUEST is designed for information specialists and not for the lay public. Pathfinders are not designed to be used at the point of client contact. Experiment until you find what works best for you.

Starting:
You can begin with any pathfinder. The Terminology pathfinder is a good place to start as it is the logical beginning for most health and medical reference questions. Knowing where and how to find correct pronunciations and definitions of terms can help you put your client at ease in a situation where clear communication is imperative. Other pathfinders may be used in any order for independent learning or review.

The pathfinder categories are:

> Cancer
> Diseases, Disorders, Conditions
> Health Care Providers
> Health Statistics
> Homework Assignments
> Medical and Assistive Devices
> News
> Parenting
> Prescription Drugs / Dietary Supplements
> Procedures and Therapeutic Options
> Support and Discussion Groups
> Terminology
> Tests

Time commitment:
Each pathfinder is designed as a step-by-step process through several online resources. The goal is to provide maximum opportunity for busy professionals to examine a resource with minimum time commitment. It should take less than 15 minutes to go through any particular pathfinder. However, the more you explore the available information the more time you can spend.

Warning:
The dynamic nature of the World Wide Web can result in unexpected changes to any resource at any time. There is no guarantee that a path that worked one time will work the next. However, the process of finding information integral to HEALTHINFOQUEST should still allow you to adapt to any changes and find the information you are seeking.

For more information on enhancing your experience using HEALTHINFOQUEST Pathfinders, see http://www.nnlm.nlm.nih.gov/healthinfoquest/help/enhance.html

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PDAS AND WAPS IN HEALTH CARE

by Joanne Jahr, Network Programs Coordinator

Two new terms have recently entered our professional lexicon — PDA* and WAP.* A simple search using any online search engine, will pull up references to hundreds, if not thousands, of citations and articles about mobile wireless devices, also known as handhelds, WAP-enabled devices or PDAs. For some understanding of their use by health care providers, the following recent articles might be useful.

The New York Times Business section of Monday, January 8, 2001, carried an article, "Digital Doctoring," http://www.nytimes.com/2001/01/08/technology/08HAND.html?pagewanted=all which discussed the current boom in PDAs . Despite questions and challenges, the user rates should rise quickly over the next few years (http://www.mbizcentral.com/m-business_story/mobile-med)

To help you assist your patrons, the following web sites might be useful:

First and foremost, you can find tutorials, useful links, downloads and frequently asked questions at "Palm Organizer," http://endeavor.med.nyu.edu/research/pda/pilot/ compiled by the NYU School of Medicine.

A web site for health care providers has been put together by the library staff at the University of Arizona which can be accessed at http://educ.ahsl.arizona.edu/pda/index.htm An example of library service for users of handheld devices in the form of journal tables of contents can be found at http://www.ahsl.arizona.edu/journals/ejrnls/pda.cfm

RNPalm is an online journal dedicated to the use of mobile computing in nursing located at http://www.rnpalm.com/

If you yourself have a PDA, you can learn how to use it more effectively by visiting http://www.nearlymobile.com/basics/index.htm and http://www.howstuffworks.com/pda.htm?printable=1

Finally, the deputy director of the health sciences library at the University of Washington has compiled a web page that includes comparison shopping for PDAs, clinical references, databases and spreadsheets at http://healthlinks.washington.edu/primeanswers/palm/

Please be aware that hackers are now writing viruses for handhelds. As a result, both Symantec and McAfee are releasing software to protect some handhelds, such as the Palm OS, from malicious code. The programs reside on the devices and scan information transferred from a desktop computer as well as information beamed in through infrared ports or by modem.

Information from Symantec can be found at http://www.symantec.com/avcenter/palmscanner.html and from McAfee at http://www.mcafee.com/wireless/default.asp

* WAP=Wireless Application Protocol, an open international standard for applications that use wireless communication, e.g., Internet access from a mobile phone.
* PDA=Personal Digital Assistant, a small hand-held computer used to write notes, track appointments, etc. A widely-known example is the Palm™ Pilot.

NOTE: THIS IS A NEWSLETTER. THE LINKS AND INFORMATION ARE UP-TO-DATE WHEN PUBLISHED AND ARE NOT UPDATED AFTER THE PUBLISHED DATE.

DSL FOR THE LIBRARY
by Bryan Vogh, Internet Coordinator, NNLM/SEA

What is DSL and is it right for the library?

DSL stands for Digital Subscriber Line. In the simplest terms it is a copper cable like a telephone cable that provides access to a computer network, usually the Internet. The major factor that determines availability is the presence of switches that handle DSL lines at the local phone company's switching office. The next factor is the distance that the computer is from the switch as the line may run a very circuitous course to the location! Distance in terms of feet of cable from the switch at the telephone company office determines the ultimate speed of the connection, much like the quality of the telephone line determines how fast a 56K modem connects. If the distance is too great, DSL will not be available, and the longer the distance the slower the connection. Most providers can do an approximate distance trace from the switch using a telephone number.

There are many types or flavors of DSL available. It is important to know which type is marketed locally when evaluating the benefits of a DSL connection.

Many companies make up names for their products, Megaspeed DSL may sound fast, but it could be the slowest type of DSL connection available!

Two major considerations for DSL are the upstream and downstream speeds. These are the speeds that data move to the computer (downstream) and the speed that data is carried out to the network (upstream). The different types of DSL connections all have different speeds. Some types are symmetric, both upstream and downstream speeds are the same, and some asymmetric with the downstream being faster than the upstream in most cases.

Major types of DSL service include:

IDSL - ISDN DSL - works like an ISDN line, but is always on and cannot be upgraded
ADSL - Asymmetric digital subscriber line has greater downstream capacity and is the most common type of DSL
G.lite - A "flavor" of ADSL that allows both telephone traffic and network traffic on the same line
SDSL - Symmetric digital subscriber line similar to ADSL, but the downstream and upstream speeds are the same
HDSL - High-bit-rate digital subscriber line and
VDSL - Very high-bit-rate digital subscriber line

Types of DSL Connections

Type of DSL	Distance	Upstream	Downstream
DSL	36,000	144 Kbps*	144 Kbps
ADSL	18,000	1.5 Mbps#	8 Mbps
G.lite	18,000	512 Kbps	1.5 Mbps
SDSL	18,000	160 Kbps to 2.3 Mbps	160 Kbps to 2.3 Mbps
HDSL	15,000	1.54 Mbps	1.54 Mbps
VDSL	4,000	51 Mbps	51 Mbps

*Kbps - kilobytes per second - 1,000s one thousand bytes per second
#Mbps - megabytes per second 1,000,000 one million bytes per second

Setup costs

A DSL line can require the installation of software on the computer, the addition of a Network Interface Card or NIC, a filter for your phones and faxes and the installation of a DSL modem. Many groups are offering "free setup" or other offers to encourage sign up. Ask for the details of what is covered and what is not in a bottom line price. Some providers allow self-installation of the software and hardware as a lower cost alternative. You may also have options to buy or lease hardware from the company or to purchase a compatible product.

Pitfalls

Keep in mind that you could be dealing with the phone company in addition to your DSL provider. The phone company owns and takes care of the physical lines, and other companies can lease the line from them. This setup can mean that while sign up is with one company to install the hardware, the phone company completes the line installation before your service can begin.

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If you would like to propose topics you feel should be covered in the *Middle Atlantic Perspective*, or, if you would like to write an article, please contact Joanne Jahr at jjahr@nyam.org. Your comments, suggestions and criticisms are welcome.

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TECHNICAL PROGRAMS MANAGER NAMED

George Constance, the Education Programs Coordinator, has taken on additional responsibilities as the Technical Programs Manager for the RML. George will continue to conduct PubMed training classes throughout the region. He will be responsible for maintaining the NN/LM Middle Atlantic Region website and will assist other staff with developing web-based tutorials, statistical reports, and online training manuals. In addition, George will be involved in the development and implementation of programs and services that promote new technologies and improve access to healthcare information. George is also available to assist Network members with their technical questions. Call him at 1 800 338-RMLS or 212-822-7355.

NEW DOCLINE PARTICIPANT ADDENDUM

The most recent institution activated in DOCLINE is:

LIBID	INSTITUTION
NYUSCN (Old LIBID: 10019G)	St. Clare's Hospital and Health Center New York, NY

DOCUSER REMINDER

WE HATE TO SOUND LIKE THE AUNT WHO BORES EVERYONE AT FAMILY GATHERINGS, BUT MAY WE REMIND YOU THAT CORRECTIONS TO DOCUSER RECORDS DO NOT OCCUR VIA MENTAL TELEPATHY OR OSMOSIS. YOU GOTTA MAKE 'EM HAPPEN!!

IF YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS, FAX NUMBER OR AREA CODE CHANGES, YOU MUST CORRECT **ALL** SCREENS IN DOCUSER > UPDATE > CONTACTS (INCLUDING DIRECTOR, INTERLIBRARY LOAN, LOANSOME DOC (WHERE APPLICABLE), NETWORK, REFERENCE, AND SERHOLD). IF YOU DO NOT, YOUR COLLEAGUES WILL NOT BE ABLE TO GET IN TOUCH WITH YOU.

NLM TECHNICAL BULLETIN 2000

The following articles from the current *Technical Bulletin* are available on the Web at:
http://www.nlm.nih.gov/pubs/techbull/tb.html

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NLM Gateway: Your Entrance to the Knowledge
 Resources of the National Library of
 Medicine - e1
NLM adds Drug Information and Medical
 Encyclopedia to MEDLINE*plus* - e2
MEDLINE Indexed Citations and Corrections
 Temporarily on Hold - e3
What's New for 2001 MeSH - e4

Technical Notes - e5
 New Version of the NLM Gateway
 2001 MeSH Browser Available
 NLM Leases MEDLINE and other Databases
  in XML Format at No Charge in 2001
 Finding and Using Health Statistics: A Self-
  Study Course
 Public Working Draft Version of Human
  Sequence Available

Appendixes: 2001 Update Schedule for MEDLINE on PubMed