

Title:

**Electronic Access for Reliable
Health and Medical Information**

Outreach Award:

Access to Electronic Health Information

To:

Sno-Isle Libraries
7312 -35th Ave. NE
Marysville, WA 98271-7417
www.sno-isle.org

Submitted by:

Chari McRill
Oak Harbor Library- Health Reference Center
1000 SE Regatta
Oak Harbor, WA 98277
cmcrill@sno-isle.org
360-675-5115, 360-679-3761 (fax)

Covering the period:

September 1, 2004 – March 31, 2006

Final Report Submitted:

April 10, 2006

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

1) Summary/Introduction

This project provided the residents of Island County, Washington, electronic access to credible health information and community resources through a partnership between Sno-Isle Libraries and Whidbey General Hospital. The intent of this project was to connect patients, their families, health care professionals, the general public and library staff with the resources needed to answer their health questions in a timely, reliable and confidential manner.

Two Medical resource sites at Whidbey General Hospital, with a direct electronic link to the Library district's health related databases were established. Workshops were presented to health care professionals, general public and the island staff of Sno-Isle Libraries.

2) Geographic Region/Number of Counties

The target regions were Whidbey and Camano Islands of Island County, Washington.

3) Collaborations/Partnerships

A formal partnership was formed with the Whidbey General Hospital.

Whidbey General Hospital
101 N. Main St.
Coupeville, WA 98239
360-678-5151
www.whidbeygen.org

Other organizations that offered strong support and encouragement included:

Island County Health Department
Public Health & Human Services
1 NE 6th St.
Coupeville, WA
360-679-7350
www.islandcounty.net/health/

Island County Community Health Advisory Board (CHAB)
P.O. Box 5000
Coupeville, WA 98239
www.pioneernet.net/chab/

Senior Services of Island County
51 SE Jerome St.
Oak Harbor, WA 98277
360-679-6620
www.islandseniorservices.org

4) Training

- There were a total of 18 workshops conducted as part of the project. Our goal was to present 14 workshops.
- There were no sessions where half or more participants were from minority populations.
- There were a total of 182 participants in the project's sessions. Our goal was to present to at least 150 individuals.

The breakdown of participants by:

Health care or service provider	58
Health sciences library member	0
Public/other library staff member	40
Member of the general public	84

5) Training Sites

Oak Harbor Library Meeting Room
Oak Harbor Senior Center Computer Room
Whidbey General Hospital Conference Room
Freeland Library Meeting Room
South Whidbey Senior Center Computer Room
Camano Island Senior Center Computer Room

Presentations were held at six locations. It was necessary for each of the training sites to have internet access.

6) Exhibits

Not Applicable. The award did not include major displays.

7) Resource Materials

7.1 Training Materials for the Workshops:

Workbook: *Locating Reliable Health Information on the Web.*

An 11-page interactive workbook was developed and utilizes fill-in-the-blank and True-False questions to assist learning.

Handouts: (handouts were provided to different groups, depending on the focus of the workshop)

1. Medlineplus Guide to Healthy Web Surfing
2. Sno-Isle Recommended Web Sites- Health
3. Health InSight: A Consumer's Guide to Taking Charge of Health Information
4. Class Evaluation
5. Practice- Questions & Answers for Locating Reliable Health Information
6. Certificate of Completion (continuing education hours for health care professionals)
7. Other Language Resources (NN/LM)
8. Locating Easy-to-Read Patient Materials
9. Overlake Hospital Medical Center's- "Virtual Medical Library" list
10. 24 Languages Project
11. Related Web Sites (from EthnoMed)

Copies of the workbook and handouts are being mailed, in addition to, a copy of:
Check-list for Health Workshops.

7.2 Promotion/Marketing Materials included the following:

Brochure promoting the Hospital's two consumer computers:

"Looking for Reliable Health Information? Go Online at Whidbey General Hospital"

Brochure promoting Sno-Isle Libraries:

"Health Information Resources Available through Sno-Isle Libraries"

The two brochures are being mailed.

Posters Announcing Up-coming Workshops
(15-20 distributed in the area of the workshop)

Bookmarks Announcing Up-coming Workshops (approximately 100/workshop)

Newspaper Announcements

Email Distribution Lists

8) Web Sites

The hospital created a website that introduces users to the two health computers. The introductory page explains how the computers were obtained and includes a short survey asking for input from anyone using the computers. Patrons are then directed to a Sno-Isle Libraries Health Page that lists the following-

- 1) Recommended Health Web Sites,
- 2) Health Databases that Sno-Isle subscribes to,
- 3) Library Catalog,
- 4) Hospital Home Page.

Hospital consumer health web page:

URL: <http://localhost/survey/>

Sno-Isle Libraries web pages (that consumers are directed to):

www.sno-isle.org/page/?ID=2046

www.sno-isle.org/page/?ID=1099

.

9) Document Delivery

Not Applicable.

10) Approaches and Interventions Used

10.1 Identifying and Scheduling Sessions

Organizations were contacted to determine if they would like to have a workshop presented to their staff or members. In some instances, organizations contacted us because they had heard by word of mouth that we were presenting workshops. Often an organization could not schedule a time for a workshop but would send one or two staff members to a workshop that was being presented to another group.

Organizations that were contacted included the following:

1. AAUW- American Association of University Women
2. Fleet and Family (Support services for NAS- Whidbey Naval Air Station)
3. Friends of the Library (on Whidbey)
4. Home and Hospice Nurses
5. Island County Health Department- Nursing Division
6. Island County Health Department- Environmental Health

7. Regency on Whidbey (Assisted Living Facility)
8. Senior Services of Island County
9. SHIBA- Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors (on Whidbey)
10. Summer Hill (Assisted Living Facility)
11. Visiting Angels
12. Visiting Nurses (of Island County)
13. Washington State- DSHS (on Whidbey)
14. Washington State- Aging & Disabilities Services Administration (on Whidbey)
15. Whidbey General Hospital Nursing Staff
16. Whidbey General Hospital's Support Groups

10.2 Promotion/Marketing

Workshops were advertised in various newspapers, flyers were printed and posted in public locations, and email was sent to several groups.

Press Releases concerning upcoming public workshops were emailed to the following organizations:

1. Chambers of Commerce
2. City of Oak Harbor Youth services
3. Coupeville Examiner
4. Crosswinds
5. Everett Herald
6. Friends of the Library
7. HOW- Homeschoolers on Whidbey
8. NAS Fleet & Family
9. Northwest Navigator
10. On Whidbey!
11. Pulse- A Publication of Whidbey General Hospital
12. Senior Center for Camano Island
13. Senior Center for Oak Harbor
14. Senior Center for South Whidbey
15. South Whidbey Record
16. Whidbey Marketplace
17. Whidbey News Times

Posters of up-coming workshops were distributed to the following locations:

1. Movie theatres
2. Grocery stores
3. Libraries
4. Schools

5. Senior Centers
6. Swimming Pool
7. NAS (Whidbey Naval Air Station)
8. City Halls
9. Skagit Valley College
10. Coffee Shops

Bookmarks were handed out at the five island libraries.

Brochures – two brochures were developed:

1) The library brochure is entitled:

“Health Information Resources Available through Sno-Isle Libraries”.

It lists the health resources available through Sno-Isle Libraries, and will be distributed to all 20 of its’ branches, in addition, it will be delivered to physician offices, health clinics, mental health offices and dental offices on Whidbey and Camano Islands.

2) The hospital brochure is entitled:

“Looking for Reliable Health Information? Go Online at Whidbey General Hospital”
and will be handed out to patients, family and friends that are visiting the hospital.

10.3 Training

A workshop, entitled: “Locating Reliable Health Information on the Web” was developed and then was adapted to focus on specific needs of different groups.

Those focuses included:

- 1) General Public, basic information. The other workshops build upon the public workshop.
- 2) Library Staff, emphasizing reference interview, types of health questions, ending with hands-on practice questions for each web site and database.
- 3) Health Care Professional, emphasizing health literacy, locating materials in a foreign language, professional nursing sites.
- 4) Environmental Health, emphasizing the TOXNET databases

In addition, approximately 40 volunteers at the hospital were trained to assist patrons in using the computers.

10.4 Personnel/Staffing

Three librarians from the Oak Harbor Library –Health Reference Center presented workshops. Chari McRill developed and presented workshops to library staff, the public and health care professionals; Betsy Arand and Joyce Siniscal presented workshops to the public.

Sally Fox, the Whidbey General Hospital Volunteer Coordinator, developed study aids for the computers, purchased reference materials and trained her volunteers to assist patrons signing on to the computers.

Tom Tomasino, Chief Information Officer for Whidbey General Hospital was responsible for the hospital's web design and computer network.

10.5 Hospital Web Site Development

This was the responsibility of the hospital IT's department.

A focus group, formed by the library, was made up of members of various hospital support groups.

11) Evaluation

11.1 Workshops:

1) Participants filled out evaluation forms at the completion of each workshop. The written responses were overwhelmingly favorable; some said the workshop was too short for the amount of material covered others said they wanted it longer to include even more information.

2) A short Pre-Test and Post-Test, based on the stated objectives of the workshop, was given. Results of the tests indicated objectives were met.

Our goal was to present the workshop to at least 150 people; our total was 182.

Our goal was for 75% of the participants attending workshops to report an increase in knowledge and awareness of health and medical information available on databases and the internet. Our post-tests showed 97%.

11.2 Hospital Web Page:

The focus group analyzed the usability of the computers and web pages. For the most part, their comments were favorable but among suggestions offered were to enlarge the font size for sight impaired individuals and simplify the wording on the introductory page.

11.3 Computer Use:

Evaluating the use of the two hospital computers, in numerical terms, is more difficult. The hospital was to have tracked computer use; however, they were unable to compile exact statistics. One reason for this difficulty was that patrons could bypass the online-survey created by the hospital, so that they were using the computers without signing in. Another reason statistics were difficult to compile is that users were not required to fill out a logbook, provided next to the computers.

As a secondary evaluation, hospital staff estimates include the following: Approximately 350 people, in 2005, used the computer in the Mobile Ambulatory Center (MAC). User feedback and written notes to staff have been very enthusiastic and appreciative.

Hospital staff report the computers are also being used for nutritional counseling by the hospital dietician and for patient consultations by the nurses. The computer is used in the teaching process- showing clients how to access various sites. An example is the dietician showing people how to look up nutritional information about food served at some of the fast food restaurants.

It was possible for the Sno-Isle IT department to derive some raw statistics on web page use which originated from the hospital computers.

Numbers in the chart below, indicate number of hits, originating from the hospital computers, for the following URL: www.sno-isle.org/page/?ID=2046.

Please keep in mind the numbers do not bear on the number of individuals using the computer, only the number of hits to this one web page.

Those numbers are:

2005 Jan	0	2005 Sept	63
2005 Feb	19	2005 Oct	52
2005 March	24	2005 Nov	55
2005 April	16	2005 Dec	34
2005 May	114	2006 Jan	71
2005 June	47	2006 Feb	35
2005 July	141	2006 Mar	115
2005 Aug	304		

12) Problems or Barriers Encountered

12.1 Promotion/Marketing

Attempts to use free ad placements in the local newspaper's Calendar or Activity section have not proved feasible as reliability has been a problem, either no information concerning upcoming workshops was printed or the information was incorrect concerning, dates, times or location. The library will consider using paid ads in the future.

12.2 Training

Workshops for the general public were not well attended. We found that workshops directed toward specific groups had much better attendance. In addition, unexpected hospital affairs required canceling workshop presentation to 160 nurses during their staff meeting. This was a matter of unfortunate timing and could not be foreseen or avoided. Fortunately, an in-service was scheduled, however, because it was not on paid time only 52 nurses attended.

12.3. Equipment/Telecommunications

The computer in the Critical Care Unit (CCU) waiting room was stolen along with newly purchased reference medical books. Fortunately, the hospital was able to purchase another computer and it is now securely in place.

The amount of time required to set-up for workshops was greater than originally estimated. Often, organizations will have their own network access and the library's laptop is not able to gain access to the web. As an example, even with assistance from the library's IT staff and senior center IT staff, no web access could be achieved for the laptop. The workaround solution was to use the center's computer with the library's projector plugged into their computer so it acted as the monitor. Such workarounds are time consuming and not always dependable.

12.4 Personnel/Staffing

Due to hospital staff time constraints it was often difficult to correspond with the hospital I.T. department. Perhaps, if the hospital had had a medical librarian, that person could have been the liaison to communicate between the hospital and Sno-Isle Libraries.

12.5 Web Site Development

Time constraints, again, created problems for the hospital IT department.

13) Continuation Plans

The hospital IT department intends to maintain the two consumer computers. It will be the hospital's responsibility to maintain the website and Sno-Isle's responsibility to notify the hospital of changes/addition to any of the library's health pages

The library will continue workshops, with the following workshops currently scheduled in 2006:

- May 3 Hospice Nurses and Staff
- May 10 Island County Department of Health, Nursing Staff
- June 28 Island County Department of Health, Environmental Health

A conference presentation is also scheduled for PNLA (Pacific Northwest Library Association) Conference on August 9th, in Eugene, Oregon.

Sno-Isle Libraries serves two counties. This project has been concerned with Island County; our intentions are now to focus our efforts in Snohomish County.

14) Impact

This project will have a positive legacy in several areas:

Most importantly we have, as we set out to do, educated people in how to effectively use web based resources to access reliable health information.

The project has left specific tools in place at Whidbey General Hospital, namely computers and web access to benefit hospital patients, family and friends seeking health information.

Sno-Isle Libraries will continue to present workshops, developed as part of this project and to distribute information to local health care providers describing available health resources.

A wealth of experiences was gained by developers and presenters that will be put to good use in the future.

15) Recommendations for Improvement:

As mentioned earlier in the report:

Workshops have a better turnout if they are targeted to a specific group and their regular meeting as opposed to a workshop for the general public.

16) Responses to Follow-Up Questions (attached):

If answers to the follow-questions are contained elsewhere in your report, indicate where they are located.

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

1. Were your original project goals and objectives met? If not, why not?

We met our three objectives.

First, by establishing two consumer computer sites within Whidbey General Hospital, we provided accurate and reliable electronic health and medical information to the public and health care professionals.

Second, we provided training to health care professionals, library staff and the public on identifying, selecting and using electronic health information.

Third, we developed and disseminated printed materials pertaining to consumer health information on the Internet.

2. What significant lessons were learned which would be of interest or use to others conducting outreach projects? Which strategies were the most effective in implementing the project?

Workshops:

General interest groups preferred the workshops be kept to one hour in length, whereas certain professional groups appreciated a longer presentation with more detailed information.

It is difficult to specifically target groups as there is such as variance of knowledge and abilities among individual participants. Being able to make changes to suit your audience in the workshop as it is underway is vital.

Offering continuing education credit to health care professionals, as an added incentive to encourage them to attend workshops on their own time, could increase participation.

Letting organizations know when your funding period is over, encourages them to schedule workshops at the last opportunity, hence, not allowing time for re-scheduling in case of cancellations.

Promotion:

It could be more reliable to purchase advertisements, in the local newspapers, of up-coming workshops, instead of relying on the newspaper's (free) activity-calendar to be correct.

3. If you were to start all over again, what, if anything, would you change about your goals, project plans, etc.?

Develop a written contract for any partnerships that clearly outline what each member is expected to do and their due date. My mistake was focusing on developing and presenting the workshops and not tracking the activities that the hospital had agreed to complete.

4. What advice or recommendations would you give to anyone considering a similar outreach effort?

Do the project.

Estimate carefully the time it takes to develop an interactive workshop, then immediately double your estimated time.

Just contacting an organization, even if no workshop is scheduled, can be valuable to all parties. In the process, libraries learn how to better serve their community and community members learn about what their library has to offer them.