

Networking Opportunities

The National Network of Libraries of Medicine regional office for your area (also known as your Regional Medical Library) can be an excellent source of information about potential partners and ongoing outreach projects. Funding opportunities for health information outreach may even be available. Find information about your Regional Medical Library at <http://nmlm.gov/>, or call 1-800-338-7657 from within the United States. Here are some other networking opportunities to consider:

If you represent a health science or hospital library

1. Make an appointment to meet with school librarians to demonstrate MedlinePlus, especially at high schools with health careers programs. While you provide this service to the school, you can find out about their library and explore opportunities to work together.
2. Make contact with staff that provide health education at medical clinics and hospitals, especially those with medically underserved clients. You can help them with their education services and they can provide you with access to health professionals or patients who would benefit from learning about health information resources.
3. Get to know public librarians, who often make great community partners. Public libraries provide Internet access to individuals who may not have access at home, school, or work. They also can provide training space and have direct contact with members of diverse age, ethnic, income, and professional groups. They are often looking for affordable ways to expand the resources they can offer to their communities.
4. Make appointments with community college faculty in health-related disciplines. They may have student internships and community service activities as part of their curriculum. They can provide you with contact to professionals-in-training, while you can enhance their health curriculum by providing skill training to their students.
5. Get to know people in state health departments who are engaged in public health promotion or health education. They often conduct educational programs and services and can provide access to groups of consumers and patients. In turn, you can contribute to their educational mission by offering demonstrations and training on health information, both to staff and to clients.

If you represent a community-based organization or public library

1. If you have a local medical school or academic health science center in your area, visit the library and see what types of services are provided to the community. Often health science libraries have outreach coordinators who would be interested in partnering with you.
2. Visit libraries in area hospitals. You may find good resources and potential partners there. Libraries that have consumer health collections are listed on the National Library of Medicine's MedlinePlus Other Resources web page at <http://medlineplus.gov/otherresources.html> and many of these are hospital libraries. You can find a listing of other health science libraries—including hospital libraries at <http://nmlm.gov/members/>.

Getting Started with Community-Based Outreach

Planning and Evaluating Health Information Outreach Projects, Booklet 1
Outreach Evaluation Resource Center
National Network of Libraries of Medicine, National Library of Medicine, 2006 [reprinted 2008]