PLAINS TO PEAKS POST

Membership Drive a Success

The MidContinental Regional Medical Library mailed membership renewal packets to all of our members in December.

Full Network members received packets that included a brochure about the NN/LM membership program, a form to be completed to renew membership, and a questionnaire asking about library staffing levels, computer and internet access, training and outreach activities and opinions about NN/LM services and membership benefits (for the survey results, please see following story).

Affiliate members received packets with the brochure, renewal form, and instructions for reviewing their DOCUSER record. All libraries were asked to sign the agreement form and return it to the RML office in Salt Lake City.

Many, but not all, of our Full members have returned their agreement forms. The RML strongly encourages all members to return their agreement form if they have not already done so. A problem with the return address on the envelope may account for some missed responses, and several libraries reported that they had not received their packets. Please call your state liaison at 1-800-338-7657 if you did not receive a packet, if you feel your response may have been lost due to the return address error, or if you have questions about the materials sent.

Members who have returned their signed membership agreements will receive their membership certificates in the near future. Certificates are ready for framing and can be used to underscore the significance of your library's efforts to promote health information awareness.

Members who have not returned their membership agreements should do so as soon as possible to insure timely receipt of certificates. If you do not have the membership agreement, please call your state liaison at 1-800-338-7657. One will be sent to you by US Mail or as an email attachment. After completing and signing the membership agreement, return it to the RML office at:

> University of Utah
> National Network of Libraries of Medicine MidContinental Region
> Spencer S. Eccles Health Sciences Library
> 10 North 1900 East, Building 589
> Salt Lake City, Utah 84112-5890.

—*RML Staff*

Member Assessment Provides Data, Insight

Along with membership renewal information, the packets sent out to all Full Network members in December included a questionnaire asking about library staffing levels, computer and Internet access, training and outreach activities and opinions about NN/LM services and membership benefits. The information provided by our Full members was both interesting and enlightening.

Staffing Levels

Excluding the Resource libraries and the Linda Hall Library in Kansas City, professional staff at the 123 responding libraries ranges between zero and seven, while support staff numbers totaled between zero and 14. Fifty-nine libraries reported having one librarian while 24 reported having no full time or full time equivalent librarian. Eighty-one libraries reported no support staff.

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Computers and Connectivity

With only a few exceptions, all libraries, even those with no full-time staff, reported having access to a computer and to the Internet. Almost 80% reported that their Internet connections are high speed, with very few respondents indicating that they use a dial-up connection. A number of libraries were unsure of their connectivity speed.

Ejournals and Consortial Purchasing Plans

Seventy-four libraries across the region subscribe to electronic journals, and almost half of those libraries purchase electronic access through a consortial buying plan. Eighteen of 32 libraries offering suggestions for additional NN/LM services noted the need for a regional purchasing consortium. Liaisons have already begun investigating consortial purchasing services for the region.

Education, Training, and Outreach

Most member libraries provide training on various topics, including PubMed or another MEDLINE database, MEDLINEplus, searching the Internet, using the library, and personal digital assistants (PDAs). Several libraries also reported providing instruction in finding consumer health information and evidence-based medicine.

Most libraries responding also indicated that staff had taken courses during the past year. Librarians in the region primarily took courses sponsored by MLA, MCMLA, their parent institutions, or other organizations.

Eighty-six libraries provide services to individuals not affiliated with their institution, while 28 have formal outreach programs. Outreach generally refers to efforts to raise awareness of health information resources among consumers and health care practitioners who are not affiliated with the institution, and is a major focus of the MidContinental Region and the NN/LM.

Communication

When asked about how librarians communicate within the region, 79 libraries report that meetings are either essential or very important. Similarly, 107 libraries stated that email was a very important communication tool. Individual electronic discussion lists rated differently, with about half of respondents saying that MEDLIB-L and MCMLA-L are essential or very important. More than 30 respondents indicated they do not use MEDLIB-L or MCMLA-L. However, the MCMLA-L list was rated as one of the best ways that the RML communicates with librarians in the region. The RML web site, newsletter, and personal visits from RML liaisons were less frequently used by librarians in the region.

Benefits of Membership and NN/LM Products and Services

When asked about the benefits of NN/LM membership, libraries ranked DOCLINE, NLM databases, consumer health information such as MEDLINEplus, enhanced communication with other librarians and opportunities for continuing education as the most important.

Ongoing Feedback, Assessment Important

The next step in ensuring that regional programs are being tailored to meet members' needs will be to hold in-person and telephone focus groups. Full member libraries will be asked to participate in sessions to be held this spring in St. Louis, Kansas City, Denver, and Salt Lake. Librarians in Nebraska and Wyoming will be invited to participate in conference calls.

Your input and your evaluation of the work of the RML are of utmost importance. Our appreciation to all of you who completed and returned our questionnaire!

—*B. Kelly*

Farewells and Welcomes: Personnel Changes at the RML

Wyoming Liaison

Susan Whitson, Wyoming Liaison, moved to Pennsylvania where her husband has a new position. Susan's last day at the University of Wyoming was March 14, 2003. She did a fantastic job introducing libraries and health professionals in Wyoming to RML and NLM resources. In the first six months on the job, she logged 4,650 miles in this effort! The MidContinental Region's loss is the Middle Atlantic Region's gain. Mary Henning has stepped in as the interim Wyoming Liaison.

Technical Director

Michael Carr, Technical Director, departed the RML at the start of May. Michael has created the tools that the RML has used to communicate with Network members via the Internet. His programming has allowed liaisons to add content to the MCR web site, updated our news archive, produced our RML News, and standardized the production of the web version of this newsletter. Michael has provided the RML with the technology foundation for the services it provides.

Public Health and Utah Liaison

Kathleen McCloskey, the first RML liaison to be hired, will be retiring at the end of May 2003. Kay used her expertise in working with public health professionals to establish a framework for our public health efforts that will see us through the rest of the contract. Retirement will allow Kay more time to spend with her grandchildren and to fix up the second home that she and her husband bought in Texas to be closer to them.

Molly Youngkin will start as the Public Health and Utah Liaison on June 1, 2003. Molly already has much RML experience in her former role as the Omaha RML Outreach Coordinator. More recently she has been the Education and Outreach Librarian at Eccles Health Sciences Library. Molly has been busy learning the public health culture in preparation for her new position. We know that you will enjoy working with Molly again.

—*C. Hamasu*

Bioterrorism Preparedness Education: A New Role for Librarians

Recently, bioterrorism has been added to everyone's list of things to worry about. Reports are coming from hospital librarians about questions their patrons have asked on all kinds of bioterrorism topics, from small pox vaccines to agri-terrorism.

How can librarians prepare to serve their patrons with this new information need? What do we as librarians need to know and where do we go for answers to these types of questions? This will no doubt require knowledge of what is being done in your state and will provide an exciting opportunity to become involved in implementing bioterrorism programs and planning. Many opportunities— collaboration with the public in general, with public health professionals and with staff in the various agencies involved in addressing issues of bioterrorism—have opened up for librarians due to the concern over bioterrorism.

Funding Focus Areas Include Information

Bioterrorism funding from Congress that came after September 11, 2001, focuses on assisting states' efforts to organize and plan for terrorist activity. There are focus areas that address disaster planning, communications/surveillance and networking infrastructure, laboratory readiness to identify and handle biological agents, hospitals' readiness to receive patients in case of an attack, and health information dissemination, education, and training.

Health departments are now busy putting together their plans and deciding how to evaluate their current levels of preparedness. In addition, they are developing training materials and deciding what the workforce needs to know in order to respond to a terrorist attack. Every state health department has a health information officer who prepares statements that are released to the public to provide accurate and up-to-date information on situations as they arise.

Opportunities for All Kinds of Libraries

Health science libraries have opportunities in this new arena to network and support the information needs of: health professionals, including veterinarians; bioterrorism educators in each state; public health departments; public libraries; and consumers.

Possible areas to offer information support:
Community hospital librarians could contact public health professionals and their staff committees working with emergency preparedness to see what information needs they have. Librarians could offer to host a patient information fair or staff a booth at a local health fair informing consumers about available resources. If they write grants for professional or consumer health information, they could include bioterrorism information sources in their collection plans.

Academic librarians could contact their state bioterrorism preparedness educators, the health information officials at the state health departments, and serve on planning committees. Bioterrorism information resources would be a popular topic for a presentations at various health association meetings in the state.

All network members could contact their public health departments and hospitals, the reporters on staff at the newspapers and TV stations, police stations, city/county administration, coroners, and others, to offer help in locating bioterrorism information resources.

Nebraska's Bioterroism Preparedness Education Library

In Nebraska, the MCR state liaison became involved early on in the state's bioterrorism planning and as a result a librarian position was written into the bioterrorism preparedness grant. Nebraska now has the only bioterrorism preparedness education library in the nation. In addition, the liaison is a member of the Nebraska Center for Bioterrorism Education consortium.

Librarians must look at the bioterrorism preparedness activities at the state and community level as opportunities to serve both traditional and new audiences in an important and innovative way.

Additional Resources

To find out who in your state is involved in Bioterrorism Preparedness Education, please email your request to Sharon Meeker Medcalf, Bioterrorism Preparedness Education Coordinator for the State of Nebraska at smedcalf@unmc.edu. For more information about how to become involved or on what projects are being developed in your state, please contact your state liaison.

—T. Hartman and K. McCloskey

Virtual Reference Available to Answer Your Questions!

Cindy Perkins, Medical Librarian
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I have used the Virtual Reference service funded by the RML several times since it began in 2002. The first time, I had a physician who wanted to know what organ generates fractionating alkaline phosphate, and I was really struggling with the answer. I recalled receiving an e-mail announcing Virtual Reference at the University of Colorado and the University of Missouri, so I thought I'd take advantage of it. My theory was that perhaps the brain of another librarian was working better than mine—at least at that moment.

With no fear, because after all I had nothing to lose, I dug out the email with all the particulars and hit go. I was connected with the University of Colorado reference desk fairly quickly. The system responded telling me that a librarian would be with me shortly. After being greeted by the reference librarian, I sent my plea for help.

The hardest part was adjusting to the real-time chat conversation. I would type my question, hit enter and the print version would appear on my screen. After again reading what I had typed, I quickly learned to carefully check my spelling and grammar. How embarrassing to send a message with a typo!

The responses I received were prompt. I was asked questions to clarify my question and after a brief wait (which seemed longer than it actually was) I was given text titles, journal citations and even web sites—all within about 10 minutes.

After the call ended, I was emailed a transcript of the virtual conversation. The reference librarian who helped me also faxed information to me later that day. She had taken the time to do a literature search and sent me citations. Above and beyond what was required of her!!!

My second experience with Virtual Reference was just as pleasant. This time my call went to the University of Missouri reference desk. I knew what to expect and was prepared to make sure I did not have

KEY BIOTERRORISM WEB SITES

CDC Public Health Emergency Preparedness & Response Site:
http://www.bt.cdc.gov/

MEDLINEplus Biodefense and Bioterrorism Health Topic:
http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/biodefenseandbioterrorism.html

National Academies' Responding First to Bioterrorism:
http://www.nap.edu/firstresponders/

MLA Bioterrorism Bibliographies and Resources:
http://www.mlanet.org/resources/caring/resources.html

any typos or other mistakes. Unfortunately, this did not work. I hit the enter key to send instead of deleting a word. Oh, well—that is the way it goes.

This second question was just as odd as the first. A patient developed a foot hematoma as a result of a cold injury. The podiatrist wanted to know the procedure to dissect the hematoma, complete with photos (of course). The reference librarian pointed me to a web site that was a compilation of other web sites, where I found some good information.

My experiences with the Virtual Reference service have been positive and I will certainly use it again. Hopefully, though, I will not receive another off-the-wall question for at least a month. Try it! You will like it!

The Virtual Reference Project, funded by the MidContinental Region and managed by Sandi Parker, is currently staffed by librarians at the Denison Memorial Library in Denver, the J. Otto Lottes Library in Columbia, and the Spencer S. Eccles Library in Salt Lake City. Librarians in the region are encouraged to take advantage of this resource! The Virtual Reference service can be accessed through any of the participating libraries' web pages, or by going directly to: http://denison.uchsc.edu/askalibrarian.html.

*For more information on the project, see the article titled **MCR Virtual Reference Project Underway**, published in the **Plains to Peaks Post**, volume 1, issue 1, and available online at http://nnlm.gov/mcr/news/.*

MEDLINEplus en Español: Información de Salud

*Tone Mendoza, Minority Health Specialist/Biomedical Librarian
Center of Excellence/Archie Dykes Library
University of Kansas Medical Center tmendoza@kumc.edu*

The Spanish-language version of MEDLINEplus, available at *http://medlineplus.gov/spanish/*, is a very useful resource for librarians, primary care physicians, or mid-levels in the field such as physician assistants and nurse practitioners, looking to provide patient information to non-English speaking Hispanic/Latinos on various health topics. It is a useful tool whether one is a seasoned medical librarian, a public librarian, or member of the general public, attempting to furnish for oneself or others health information in a rural or urban setting.

This site offers Spanish language searching for various health conditions and diseases, yet allows the searcher to change the language option to English by hitting the "inglés" button. Users can also switch from English to Spanish from the regular MEDLINEplus site.

Spanish language articles on medical diseases, tests, symptoms, injuries and surgeries accompanied by plentiful amounts of photographs and illustrations support easy understanding of each topic.

Some of the patient education materials are augmented with animated graphics and sound clips. A segment on diabetes, which is relevant to many Hispanics and Latinos in the United States due to unusually high incidence of diabetes in this demographic group, includes usable information with an interactive audio/visual tutorial on diabetes, how it affects Latinos, and a segment on prevention and control.

NLM is also looking at the possibility of adding a Spanish language drug section, which will make this excellent resource even better.

MEDLINEplus en Español is a terrific resource for Spanish speakers in the United States and around the world, as well as for the librarians and health practitioners who serve them.

A Spanish language MEDLINEplus trifold is available at *http://nnlm.gov/mcr/consumer_health/* and promotional bookmarks can be ordered at *http://nnlm.gov/mcr/promo/.*

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http://www.nlm.nih.gov/pubs/techbull/nd02/nd02_issue_cover.html

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New NLM Fact Sheet: Construction of National Library of Medicine Title Abbreviations
MEDLINE® /PubMed® End-of-Year Activities: Schedule Change
Alternatives to the Use of Live Vertebrates in Biomedical Research and Testing Database Released
Daily Updates Resume in MEDLINE®
Related Articles Algorithm Modified for PubMed Citations
Modification to PubMed's® New Send to Function
Author Reply to a Letter to the Editor
New Books Added to NCBI's Bookshelf [Note updated on December 30, 2002.]
MeSH® Tools 2003 Available for Purchase
New Version of NLM Gateway Released - December 18, 2002

Health Services and Sciences Research Resources (HSRR) Database——e2
NICHSR announces HSRR database.

MEDLINEplus® Introduces New Design and Organizational Structure——e3
New version of MEDLINEplus announced.

MEDLINE® Data Changes — 2003——e4
Changes made to MEDLINE during annual maintenance.

What's New for 2003 MeSH® ——e5
Additions and changes to NLM's MeSH for 2003.

Changes to PubMed's® Limits——e6
Details about changes made to PubMed's Limits.

Page Selection, Send to, and Links: Changes to PubMed®——e7
New changes made to PubMed. [Article updated on December 12, 2002.]

Update on Conversion from Wade-Giles to Pinyin Romanization Scheme in Locatorplus——e8
Details on how the Wade-Giles to pinyin conversion affects NLM systems.

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NCBI Offers Molecular Biology Information Resources Training
January 2003 PubMed®, NLM Gateway, and ClinicalTrials.gov Training Manuals Now Available
New Look for the PubMed® Links Menu
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List of Journals Indexed in Index Medicus 2003 Additions and Revisions
NLM Classification Updated
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Cataloging News — 2003——e1
2003 MeSH vocabulary adopted for cataloging.

Journals Database to Offer Suggestions——e3
New feature makes it easier to find journal records.

NLM Authority Records Accessible in LOCATORplus——e4
NLM's authority records now accessible to library users worldwide.

NLM Implementation of Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, 2nd edition, 2003 Revision——e5
Implementation announced.

Access to ClinicalTrials.gov in the NLM Gateway——e6
New feature announced.

Chemicals, Jobs and Diseases (Haz-Map®)——e7
Specialized Information Services (SIS) group introduces Haz-Map database.

New Features in PubMed® LinkOut for Libraries——e8
New features as well as new documentation added.

PubMed's® Summary Display to Include Icons——e9
Availability of free full text in PubMed Central highlighted.

Search Subsets Available in the NLM Gateway Limits Feature——e10
New feature enables users to limit searches using Subsets.

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