


# The Role of Health Sciences/ Medical Librarians in Promoting Health Literacy Among Providers and Consumers

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## OBJECTIVES

- Overview of the Consumer Health/Medical Librarianship profession
- Resources & Services
- Community Outreach Projects
- Benefits of a GAHL & GHSLA partnership



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## What is Health Information Literacy?



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## DEFINITIONS

- Health Literacy is ...  
...the ability to read, understand, and act on health information. [Pfiizer, 2002]
- ...the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions. [Healthy People 2010, 2000]
- Information Literacy is ...  
...a set of abilities enabling individuals to "recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information." [American Library Association, 1999]
- Working Definition of Health Information Literacy:  
Health Information Literacy is the set of abilities needed to: recognize a health information need; identify likely information sources and use them to retrieve relevant information; assess the quality of the information and its applicability to a specific situation; and analyze, understand, and use the information to make good health decisions.  
[www.mlanet.org](http://www.mlanet.org)



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## Librarians Role in Health Literacy



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## Roles of the Consumer/Patient Librarian

- Collection Management
- Knowledge & Resource Sharing
- Advocacy
- Access & Dissemination of Information



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## Roles of the Consumer/Patient Librarian

- Develop partnerships
- Work with Adult Basic Education
- Partner with community-based organizations



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## Roles of the Consumer/Patient Librarian

- Conduct health information classes at public libraries
- Work with Consumer Health Advocate organizations
- Collaborate with Area Health Education Centers (AHECs)



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## Resources for Librarians (that you can use)

- National Network of Libraries of Medicine <http://nmlm.gov/outreach/consumer/hlthlit.html>
- MLA Health Literacy Resources <https://www.mlanet.org/resources/healthlit/index.html>
- Medical Library Association (MLA) [www.mlanet.org](http://www.mlanet.org)
- Georgia Health Sciences Library Association (GHSLA) [www.ghsla.org](http://www.ghsla.org)
- Atlanta Health Science Libraries Consortium (AHSLC) [www.atlantahslc.wordpress.com](http://www.atlantahslc.wordpress.com)



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## Consumer Health/Medical Health Information Professionals

Are the best guides to  
the best information



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## Health Information Literacy

- Recognize a health information need
- Identify likely information resources
- Assess the quality of the information
- Analyze, understand, make good health decisions



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## Finding & Evaluating Health Information on the Web



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### Content Evaluation Guidelines

- Who is sponsoring the website?
- How often is the site updated?
- Does the site present facts and not opinion?
- Who is the intended audience?



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### Health Literacy Outreach Activities



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### What's are the real issues?



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## Reasons for Low Health Literacy

- Nervous
- Inadequate reading skills
- Age
- Language barrier
- Physical or Mental Disability



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## Outreach Clientele

- MD, MPH, Masters & PhD students
- Clinicians, Faculty, Researchers
- Elementary & High school students



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## Outreach Clientele

- Senior Citizens
- Civic & Churches groups
- Public Libraries
- General public



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# Outreach Efforts



The first photograph shows a woman standing behind a table covered with a blue NLM banner. The second photograph shows two men looking at a laptop on the table. The third photograph shows a woman and a man looking at a laptop together.

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## MOREHOUSE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE LIBRARY

### PROJECT ACCESS: HEALTH LITERACY THROUGH NLM DATABASES

**OBJECTIVE**  
To promote the use of the National Library of Medicine (NLM) consumer health information databases among senior citizens.

**METHODOLOGY**  
1. Present interactive workshops at 4 living and activity centers and to public libraries  
2. Provide each site with a community accessible computer for use to search for health information


**INSTRUCTORS**  
Jan Beaman, J., MS  
Richard B. Whitaker, Dr. MSLS, PhD  
Kimmie Arroyo, M.S.  
Tara Douglas-Williams, MSLS  
Mary White, BS  
Jerrald Mobley, BA

**SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR FUNDERS:** 

**FINDINGS**  
Participants were:  
1. eager to learn the NLM consumer health databases  
2. concerned about their health  
3. very active in the seminars  
4. demonstrated an increased ability to use the NLM consumer health databases

**USE OF FINDINGS**  
We left with additional skills in how to educate the senior citizens. We had several members of the library staff present at the seminars and found that they were great assets as they were able to make the seminars more meaningful experiences for those individuals with visual and other problems such as limited mobility.

**TAKEAWAY**  
One staffer noted how she was able to use her training to find and provide her family with information related to her father's pending heart operation.



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# Outreach Efforts



The first photograph shows a group of people seated at a table in a community center. The second photograph shows a man and a woman looking at a laptop. The third photograph shows a woman and a man looking at a laptop. The fourth photograph shows a group of people seated at a table in a community center.

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## Outreach Efforts



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## Outreach Efforts



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## Consumer Information Websites

- MedlinePlus <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/>
- Senior Health <http://nihseniorhealth.gov/>
- Household products <http://householdproducts.nlm.nih.gov/>
- Pill box <http://pillbox.nlm.nih.gov/>



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## Consumer Information Websites

- Health Finder <http://healthfinder.gov/>
- NIH Health Information Resources <http://health.nih.gov>
- Centers for Disease Control & Prevention <http://www.cdc.gov>



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## Engaging Consumers

Set the Tone by:

- Smiling
- Establishing Eye Contact
- Displaying open body language
- Giving a Friendly greeting



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## Matching the Goals of GAHL

- Improve understanding so citizens access preventive services & stay well
- Provide patient education to help manage chronic conditions
- Help prevent adverse medical events by improving patient-provider communications
- Reduce excess hospitalizations & readmissions with better self-care



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## Summary: Health Information Professionals

- It is our responsibility to provide access to authoritative consumer health resources
- We are committed to empowering the disenfranchised in our communities for a healthy Georgia

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"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."  
Dr Maya Angelou

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## LOVE WHAT YOU DO!! IT MATTERS



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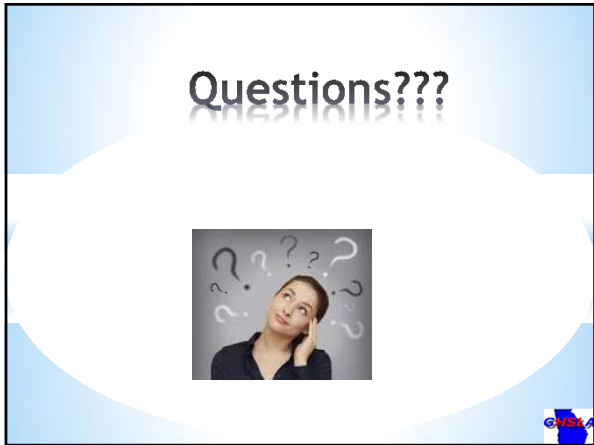
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