



# CHRC News

Vol.1, No. 2, October 1998

A Service Funded by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners

Welcome to the second issue of CHRC News. In this issue you will find new information on how to contact us, the CHRC training schedule, a CHRC FAQ and the first profile in a new series about Massachusetts libraries which provide consumer health information.

## **CHRC IN REALITY, NOT CYBERSPACE!**

The CHRC is coming to a site near you. Find out more about CHRC's services and about health reference information at one of the following classes.

- **Oct. 15. 9:30am-12:30pm. Metrowest RLS, 135 Beaver St., Waltham. (781-398-1819)**
- **Oct. 26. 9:30am-12:30pm. Boston Public Library Copley Sq., Boston. Rm. CO5&6 (617-536-5400)**
- **Oct. 28. 9:30am-12:30pm. Central Mass. RLS, 8 Flagg Rd., Shrewsbury. (508-757-4110)**
- **Nov. 10. 10:00am-1:00pm. Mercy Hospital, DeLesio Conference Center, Medical Staff Conference Rm., 271 Carew St., Springfield (413-748-9050)**
- **Dec. 9. 10:00am-1:00pm. Bridgewater State College, Moakley Center, Bridgewater. (508-279-6139)**
- **Dec. 11. 10:00am-1:00pm. Memorial Hall Library, Elm Square, Andover. (978-623-8400)**

Learn about the librarian's role in providing consumer health information; rediscover basic consumer health resources in print and on the internet; share tips and techniques for the health reference interview; discuss evaluation and selection of resources; and find out what the CHRC, your regional reference center and BPL can do for you.

No pre-registration is required and all workshops are free to staff from regional member libraries. Attendees may receive three Professional Development points for participating.

Directions to the workshops will be posted on the MLIN web site at least two weeks prior to the date of the workshop:

**[http://www.mlin.lib.ma.us/ce\\_mblc.htm](http://www.mlin.lib.ma.us/ce_mblc.htm)**

If you have questions about the workshops contact: Marlene Heroux at the MBLC at: 617-267-9400.

## **CHRC CONTACT INFORMATION UPDATE**

**Please note our new email address:**  
TreadwellQ&A@mgh.harvard.edu

## Sorry, Wrong Number!

If you are having difficulty getting through on the toll free number, 1- 877-MEDI REF, check with your switchboard operator to see whether they have 877 numbers programmed into the switchboard. Since the 877 and 888 numbers are fairly new toll free numbers, some organizations haven't yet done the necessary programming. If you cannot get through, call 617-726-8600 and ask for the Reference Desk.

## CONSUMER HEALTH REFERENCE CENTER HOME PAGE NOW AVAILABLE

<http://www.mgh.harvard.edu/library/chrcindex.html>

The new CHRC web page includes information about CHRC services, links to MLIN and our newsletter, *CHRC News*. However, what we hope you will find most useful is the **Internet Resources** section which links to many consumer health internet resources chosen for their authority and comprehensiveness.

Here is a quick tour of that section which contains links to sites on the following topics:

- **Choosing Health Care Providers**: includes the *American Board of Medical Specialties*; the *American Medical Association Physician Select* service, which provides information on virtually all licensed physicians in the U.S., *Massachusetts Medical Society's Physician Referral Service* and the *Massachusetts Board of Registration in Medicine* database of physician profiles.
- **Diseases, Disorders & General Health Information: Major Resources** - Thirteen sites that cover a range of medical information, including the *American Medical Association*, *NOAH*, *Dr. Koop's*

*Community*, and *Healthfinder* from the U.S. government. A couple of our favorites are the *National Health Information Center* (<http://nhic-nt.health.org/>) -- check out the Health Information Resource Database -- and *MedicineNet*

(<http://www.medicinenet.com/>) with information on diseases and disorders, written by board certified specialists.

- **Diseases, Disorders & General Health Information: Specific Resources**: Resources by topic, including AIDS, Alzheimer's Disease, Alternative Medicine, Arthritis, Cancer, Children's Health, Women's Health, Disability and Rehabilitation, Dental Health, Drug Information, Diabetes, Genetics and Rare Disorders, Heart Disease, Mental Health, and Nutrition.
- **HealthNews**: a number of sites for checking news reports including the excellent *Biomedicine and Health in the News* at <http://www3.uchc.edu/~uchclib/bhn/>
- **Massachusetts Info**: Massachusetts health information sites - help us expand this one. See "Wanted: Massachusetts Health Organizations" below.
- **Medical Journals**: Another favorite, *WebMedLit* (<http://www.webmedlit.com/>) tracks the literature of 22 top medical journals concerned with clinical topics. Each topic page from *WebMedLit* also links to relevant news stories from PR Newswire.
- **MEDLINE**: Free Medline from the National Library of Medicine. Choose either the PubMed or Internet Grateful Med interface - or save time, and contact us for a quick search of the medical literature.
- **Non-English Language & Health Literacy Resources**: Here you will find

predominantly Spanish language resources from a variety of organizations.

- **Organizations, Support Groups and Toll Free Numbers**: Includes links to national specialty societies such as the *American College of Cardiology* and the *American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons*, many of which make their patient education materials available from their web sites.
- **For Librarians**: Some online collection development tools include core bibliographies for consumer health from *HealthNet* in Connecticut and the *Consumer & Patient Health Information Section (CAPHIS)* of the Medical Library Association

If you have comments or suggestions for the CHRC web page please tell us.

Email: TreadwellQ&A@mgh.harvard.edu

Fax: 617-726-6784

Phone: 1-877-MEDI REF

### **WANTED: MASSACHUSETTS HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS**

Are you a librarian at a Massachusetts health organization? Do you have a web site? If you answered "Yes!" to both these questions we want to hear from you!

We want to develop the Massachusetts Information section of the CHRC home page to include the web sites of as many Massachusetts health organizations as possible. Currently this section includes:

- AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts
- Alzheimer's Association of Massachusetts
- Commonwealth of Massachusetts Board of Registration in Medicine
- Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Health & Human Services

- Massachusetts Association of HMO's
- Massachusetts Dental Society
- Massachusetts Department of Public Health
- Massachusetts Health Promotion Clearinghouse
- Massachusetts Health Web
- Massachusetts Hospital and Health Systems
- Massachusetts Medical Society
- Massachusetts Prevention Centers

If you want to be added to this list or if you want to recommend a Massachusetts web site, please send the web site address to:

Email: TreadwellQ&A@mgh.harvard.edu

Fax: 617-726-6784

Phone: 1-877-MEDI REF

### **MASSACHUSETTS MODELS - NEW SERIES**

This is the first in a new series of profiles of libraries throughout Massachusetts which provide consumer health information. **Jeanette Hudson, librarian at the Community Health Library at UMass Memorial Health Care in Worcester**, describes her model of service with its focus on serving individuals. The Community Health Library is a member of the Central Massachusetts Regional Library System.

#### *The Community Health Library*

What could be more individual than one's health? Since 1993, the Community Health Library at UMass Memorial Health Care in Worcester has responded to the *individual* health concerns of its patrons. While our primary mission is to serve patients and families at UMass Memorial, we are also open to the public in the greater Worcester area.

### *The Library Collection*

The library holds more than 1500 books, 200 videotapes and 100 audiotapes. Selection decisions are based on direct response to the approximately 150 reference queries received each month. We record the subject of each reference query and ask patrons to specify their interests and concerns on their registration forms. The results are collated, checked against the library holdings and purchases are made according to need areas not addressed by the current collection. It is notable that we rarely receive requests for "typical" patient education materials (overviews, fact sheets, brochures, etc.)

The dynamic nature of health information requires frequent evaluation for currency. Items older than three years are targeted for weeding, but new research may change medical practices more frequently. Staff regularly consults medical news to ensure that the collection reflects current practices.

### *Reference Services*

Roughly half of reference requests are made by telephone and information is mailed to the patron. In addition to our print reference collection, our resources include OVID databases with 45 titles in full text, OCLC FirstSearch, IAC Health Reference Center (HRC) provided courtesy of MLIN, a file of about 200 reliable health information web sites, and a subscription to the NORD (National Organization for Rare Disorders) databases.

Our collection of health newsletters, journals and magazines supports the IAC HRC index. In general, we subscribe to publications which are indexed on HRC but not available in full text.

### *Patron Privacy and the Need for Easy Access*

Not everyone feels comfortable discussing one's bowels with a stranger. In order to make materials accessible to the independent researcher, the library collection has just been converted from an in-house classification system to LC. We take liberties with our subject headings and add headings which match terms used by our patrons. Besides facilitating patron independence, this will position our library for networking opportunities with other libraries. Most of our internet-able patrons report frustration in trying to locate specific information on web sites. In response, we have designed an in-house Community Health Library home page which features links to actual documents and articles on diseases and conditions.

### *The Future of Community Health Information*

As health care consumers, we are increasingly called upon to make decisions about our own health. Reliable health information is the best possible resource available to us. The Community Health Library strives to provide health information which addresses the unique concerns of *individuals*.

Jeanette Hudson, Community Health Library, UMass Memorial Health Care, 119 Belmont Street, Worcester, MA 01605.

### *Library Hours:*

Mon.- Wed. 10:00am - 4:00pm  
Thursday 10:00am - 6:00pm  
Friday 10:00am - 4:00pm

**Tel:** 508-793-6104 **Fax:** 508-793-6527

**email:** hudsonj@memorialhlc.org

## IS IT ALL GREEK TO YOU?

“Deciphering Medspeak”-- A new brochure for consumers offering relief from chronic misunderstandings, has been produced by the Medical Library Association (MLA). Its aim is to help people understand “medspeak”, the specialized language of health care professionals. Included are common medical terms and abbreviations -- so “what difference does it make if your doctor’s handwriting isn’t legible. It might mean the difference between ap and AP!” (ap = ante prandium, before dinner; AP = ante-partum, before childbirth.)

The brochure is available in quantities of 50 for \$10.00. Send requests via e-mail to Tomi Gunn (mlams@mlahq.org) or by regular mail to:

Tomi Gunn  
Medical Library Association  
6 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 300  
Chicago, IL 60602-4805  
Tel: 312-419-9094; fax: 312-419-8950

The entire brochure can be previewed in a series of panel-by-panel images on the MLA home page:  
<http://www.mlanet.org>. An html version will be available soon.

## A TIP FROM CHRC

Have you ever wanted to find reviews of consumer health books without flipping through numerous issues of *Library Journal* or similar publications? With your access to the InfoTrac SearchBank databases you can use a variety of databases, including Health Reference Center database and General Reference Center (Magazine Index) to search

for book reviews. We use General Reference Center because it has more reviews than Health Reference Center.

To find reviews of books about prostate cancer:

- Select the General Reference Center database and choose the Power Trac advanced search.
- Pull down the index menus and select Title (ti) then type “book reviews” in the search box.
- Now, type “prostate cancer” in the search box.
- Combine the two as shown below.

This search can be further limited by using the date index or specifying a particular journal using the journal index. You can also search for particular titles or subjects.

Be careful with Author searches as Infotrac searches for the author of the book review and **NOT** the author of the book.

Massachusetts General Hospital

Return to: EasyTrac    General Reference Center

? PowerTrac    New Database    New Search

**Search Results**

R3 R1 and R2 (26 hits)

R2 Ti Prostate Cancer (386 hits)

R1 Ti Book Reviews (415755 hits)    View

**Click in the entry box and enter search expression**

Title (ti)   

You can also find reviews of videos by searching for “video reviews” in the title.

## **CHRC FAQ's**

Here are answers to some of the most common questions we have received since the CHRC opened. Please feel free to contact us if you have other questions about the CHRC.

### **Q. Can members of the public use the CHRC or contact the CHRC by themselves?**

A. The CHRC is a mediated reference service, meaning that we answer questions from librarians only. Contact us on behalf of your users, but please do not refer your users to us directly. If a member of the public does contact us directly we will refer them back to their local library or to Boston Public Library.

### **Q. When should I contact the CHRC?**

A. You should contact us when you, the librarian, have determined that your user's question cannot be answered by local or regional resources. Local and regional resources may include your Regional Reference Center and Boston Public Library.

### **Q. Is document delivery a CHRC service?**

A. The CHRC is a reference service so we do not provide document delivery. However, you may request copies of journal articles through Boston Public Library's Journal Document Delivery service. Journal articles requested through BPL are provided free of charge.

### **Q. If I contact the CHRC with a question what kind of response should I expect?**

A. You should expect an initial response within 24 business hours. After that it depends on the question--

We could:

- find a journal article or pages from a textbook that answers the question. If we do, we will fax (or mail, if preferred) the article or pages to you.
- do a quick literature search and send you a list of citations or a list of citations with abstracts.
- refer you to another resource, such as an organization or association.
- identify a web site that answers the question and give you the address.

We will also tell you where we found the information, because librarians always want to know "how did you find it?"

### **Q. What kind of questions does the CHRC answer?**

A. The CHRC answers any questions concerned with consumer health. They may include information on drug interactions, surgical procedures, treatment and therapies, diseases and disorders.

### **Q. Are there any queries that should not be referred to CHRC?**

A. Queries that require information or answers for school reports or queries that are not health related should not be referred to CHRC.

Tel: 1-877-MEDI-REF (1-877-633-4733)

Fax: 617-726-6784

E-mail: [TreadwellQandA@mgh.harvard.edu](mailto:TreadwellQandA@mgh.harvard.edu);

Treadwell Library, Bartlett Hall Extension 1,  
Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, MA  
02114.

