

# NLM Guide to the APHA 2004 Annual Meeting

November 6-10, 2004

Washington, DC

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The list below highlights sessions at the American Public Health Association (APHA) 2004 annual meeting related to improving access to information, including presentations by staff from the National Library of Medicine (NLM). NLM will also have booth #649/749, beside the CyberCafe in the exhibit hall.

Note that this list is not exhaustive and that there may be other sessions related to information access in public health. APHA provides a complete list of sessions through their Web site at <http://www.apha.org/meetings/schedule.htm>.

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## NLM Exhibit, Booth #649/749.

Exhibit hours:

Sunday, November 6, 2:00 pm – 7:30 pm

Monday, November 7, 8:30 am – 6:00 pm

Tuesday, November 8, 8:30 am – 6:00 pm

Wednesday, November 9, 8:30 am – 12:30 pm

To learn more, visit NLM's Web site at <http://www.nlm.nih.gov> NLM is also an active contributor to the [PHPartners.org](http://www.phpartners.org) Web site.

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## Saturday, November 6

9:00AM – 5:00PM Continuing education institute #1005

*Public Health Knowledge: Acquisition, Management and Generation*

Participants in this CEI will learn specific strategies for staying informed about developments in public health and principles of personal knowledge management. Participants will be introduced to principles of evidence-based practice and have opportunities for hands-on use of Internet resources to find the best evidence available to support decisions. This CEI will also review resources for finding statistics and data sets as well as authoritative health education materials.

## Sunday, November 7

8:00AM – 6:00PM Continuing education institute #2018

*Health and the Environment: National Library of Medicine Information Resources for the Public Health Workforce*

This CEI will focus on resources from the National Library of Medicine that provide information related to environmental health and toxicology. This session will include opportunities for hands-on practice with a number of resources, including TOXNET, Haz-Map, Tox Town, TOXMAP, and the Household Products database.

**Monday, November 8**

8:30AM Paper presentation; Session #81812

*Evaluating and addressing the information needs of an urban public health department through an academic health sciences library/health department partnership*

Barbara L Folb and Barbara A. Epstein, Falk Library of the Health Sciences, University of Pittsburgh

Meeting the information needs of public health practitioners requires access to materials in a broad range of disciplines and expert information retrieval advice and training. Providing an information rich environment in a cost effective and timely manner is challenging for most health departments. One solution is building partnerships between public health agencies and academic health sciences libraries. The Public Health Information Alliance (PHIA), a partnership between the Health Sciences Library System (HSLs), University of Pittsburgh and the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) was created for the purpose of providing access to library services and information resources to ACHD. The project was funded as a demonstration project for eighteen months with a grant from the National Library of Medicine beginning in March 2003. Initial tasks included the collection of data on current information needs and information seeking practices of ACHD employees. An Internet-based survey was created for this purpose. Survey response was good, with 141 surveys completed from a department of approximately 350 employees. It measured Internet use for work, confidence in using the Internet, use of specific websites with public health content, and use of search engines, databases, and non-Internet sources for content location. Specific barriers to accessing information were identified. Based on the survey results, PHIA developed a program including a website, onsite training, access to print and audiovisual materials, and library reference services. Program usage and quality were evaluated. This program is a cost-effective model of information access that can be adapted to other public health agencies.

8:30-10:00AM Poster session, Board 5; Session #87310

*TOXMAP: Mapping a path to environmental health information*

Martha Szczer, Colette Hochstein, David Hale, Chris Krahe, and Carina Hassan.

Specialized Information Services, National Library of Medicine/National Institutes of Health/HHS and Aquilent, Inc.

Almost every day, a particular chemical facility or chemical is mentioned in the news or by the press. In such cases, public health professionals are often consulted by their own or by other agencies, by the press, and/or by concerned citizens, to provide accurate, relevant information. TOXMAP, a web-based mapping resource developed by the National Library of Medicine's Division of Specialized Information Services, can be an ideal reference in such cases. TOXMAP provides detailed information regarding facilities and their releases. It uses maps of the United States to help users visually discover data from the EPA's Toxics Release Inventory (TRI), and provides tools to analyze the data via trends over time, and charts/graphs showing relative percentages. It also provides direct links to authoritative information (from the Hazardous Substances Data Bank/HSDB) regarding the chemicals released at many facilities, such as human health effects and environmental fate. It also offers access to an extensive array of references to literature on the toxicological effects of these chemicals by enabling searching of NLM's TOXLINE via chemical name and geographic terms. Participants will develop an understanding of how TOXMAP can help them learn about chemical releases and releasing facilities within the geographic area/s they specify. They will be able to identify situations in which it can assist them in identifying and sharing accurate information about specific chemicals and the facilities that release them. Participants will also learn about how feedback from public health professionals was used to improve TOXMAP and enhance its usability.

**Monday,  
continued**

8:35AM Paper presentation; Session #89724

*Tox Town web site: Teaching tool for introducing environmental health concerns and toxic chemicals found in everyday places*

Cynthia Love, Martha Szczur and Gale Dutcher, Specialized Information Services Division, National Library of Medicine

Tox Town (<http://toxtown.nlm.nih.gov/>) is an interactive web guide to commonly encountered toxic substances and environmental health concerns. It uses color, graphics, sounds and animation to convey connections between chemicals, the environment, and the public's health. Users can explore a Town, City, Farm or other scene, uncovering possible locations of mercury, lead, pesticides and more than 25 other toxic substances. Or users can click on the factory, school, park, dentist office, brownfields and many other pictured locations to learn about possible hazards from mold, indoor air, noise, smog, sun exposure and more. Public health workers can use Tox Town for community outreach, to prepare for presentations to community groups, and to stimulate student and teacher interest in environmental health. They can also use Tox Town for their own continuing education and as a portal to more detailed resources. The process for selecting topics, chemicals, and authoritative links for Tox Town will be discussed, and other web sites promoting public awareness will be reviewed. Case studies and ideas for making the most of Tox Town's resources for public outreach will be included. Tox Town is a resource of the National Library of Medicine and a companion to the extensive information in its TOXNET (<http://toxnet.nlm.nih.gov/>) databases, typically used by toxicologists and health professionals.

8:48AM Paper presentation; Session #81172

*Improving access to credible and relevant information for public health professionals: A qualitative study of information needs in communicable disease control*

Nancy R. La Pelle, E. Hatheway Simpson, Roger Luckmann, and Elaine Martin, University of Massachusetts Medical School

In order to understand the information needs and the current and ideal approaches to information access in one major area of public health, semi-structured key informant interviews were conducted with 12 communicable disease control public health professionals in Massachusetts at their worksite. Examples of the types of information they commonly accessed and how it was accessed were solicited and/or observed where feasible. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed thematically. Information needs ranged from breaking news (e.g. epidemiology of emerging disease outbreaks) and untested programmatic ideas (e.g. how to handle prevention and treatment of West Nile Virus and SARS) to the need for published evidence-based information about better known diseases (e.g. tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS). Current preferences for information delivery mechanisms varied according to the type of information sought. Information about emerging diseases and programmatic interventions to address these were more often obtained from email alert systems and from informal local and national networks of colleagues via telephone, teleconference or special interest listservs. Information about more well-known diseases was often obtained via websites, general or specific journal search engines, or from listservs providing citations to new or updated sources of information about these diseases. Informants identified improvements to the existing information access and delivery systems that could meet their needs more effectively. This session will review areas for improvements identified by informants and suggest models that can be implemented to help public health professionals access credible and relevant information.

**Monday,  
continued**

12:30-2:00PM Roundtable session, Table 2; Session #78255

*A community assessment of online health information use and access*

Amy Leader, DC Department of Health, Terry Kind, Children's National Medical Center, Karin Werner, Unity Health Care, Ed Robinson, Family & Medical Counseling Services, and Karyn L. Pomerantz, George Washington University School of Public Health & Health Services

Health Information Partners (HIPS) is a collaboration of community-based organizations that promote quality online health information to residents of Washington, DC. The goal of HIPS is to reduce disparities in access to and use of health information on the Internet, particularly among low-income residents who have limited access to the Internet. HIPS outreach programs utilize community organizing strategies and adult learning principles to teach people how to use and evaluate health information and learn technology skills in community settings and at health centers. Previous data from HIPS showed that while 66 percent of residents surveyed used the Internet to find information, only 6 percent used it regularly to find health information. As part of a community outreach planning process, members of HIPS conducted three focus groups and ten key informant interviews to better understand where residents currently access health information and to tailor future program strategies to meet residents' needs. Focus groups were comprised of key populations that would benefit from future health information classes, such as those who are HIV positive, current and former substance users, adult learners, teens, and recent immigrants from Central American countries. Key informant interviews were conducted with social workers, community health workers, and public librarians. Qualitative data from both the focus groups and key informant interviews were analyzed for primary and secondary themes about online health information use and access. The themes were then used to guide program planning and community outreach strategies.

12:30-2:00PM Roundtable session, Table 6; Session #85569

*User trends for Spanish speaking women and their families through the interactive online resource Nacersano.org*

Lilliam V. Acosta-Sanchez and Beverly Robertson, El Centro de Enseñanza del Embarazo, March of Dimes

The March of Dimes has made it a priority to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate health information to the Hispanic community. Nacersano.org was launched in 2003 to serve the growing need for trusted educational information in Spanish on maternal and infant health issues, including preconception, genetics, birth defects, and pregnancy complications. The growth rate of the U.S. Hispanic population is a factor of both high fertility rates and immigration. This translates into a large number of Hispanic women of childbearing age with interest in and concerns about their pregnancies. Given the growth rate of the visitors to the site it is obvious that there was a need to be filled. Through a unique tracking system, the Nacersano.org team can evaluate the site's traffic volume, access and browsing patterns, referring domains, internal and external searches and session duration. Through the statistical data and user trend information the team updates the site content and architecture. Nacersano has experienced steady growth since its launch in September 2003, reaching hundreds of thousands of people. The success of the site is primarily a result of Web ad placement on search engines such as Google and Spanish language portals, free email capabilities, an easy-to-navigate site and the interactive tool kit. Nacersano.org has been a primary resource for Spanish speaking women and their families, and presents more targeted healthy messages with a quicker turn-around time. The presenters will discuss the lessons learned from user trend results, which are being used to create appropriate content and increase outreach efforts.

**Monday,  
continued**

12:30-2:00PM Roundtable session, Table 7; Session #85879

*Public health and libraries in Arizona collaborate to produce web-based public health information centers*

Catharine Riley, Maricopa County Department of Public Health and Jeanette McCray, University of Arizona

AZHealthInfo.org is a Web-based resource designed to facilitate access to public health and consumer health information for public health professionals and the citizens of Arizona. It is being developed by the Arizona Turning Point Project, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson, and administered by the Maricopa County Department of Public Health, in collaboration with the Arizona Health Sciences Library of the University of Arizona. Other partners include the Arizona Local Health Officers' Association, the Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records, and the Mel and Enid Zuckerman Arizona College of Public Health. AZHealthInfo.org contains information and links to pertinent public health statistics and consumer health information resources in each county, as well as statewide, national and international resources. A key component of the project involves visits to every county to train public librarians and local health department officials how to access AZHealthInfo.org and input local information and therefore become local partners in support of the project. Another focus is to connect local public libraries with local health departments and local medical libraries in order to open the lines of communication and thereby enable the public to have more access to up-to-date authoritative public and consumer health information.

12:30-2:00PM Poster session, Board 7; Session #84698

*REACH 2010 Charleston and Georgetown Diabetes Coalition community health information assessment and action plan for online diabetes education*

Barbara A. Carlson, Beverly Highland, Florene Linnen, Gayenell Magwood, and Carolyn M. Jenkins, Medical University of South Carolina

The Internet is a health information tool used widely by health care providers and patients, but little is known about its use among minority populations with disproportionate rates of diabetes and related complications. This poster will present the REACH 2010 Charleston and Georgetown Diabetes Coalition partnership with African American community organizations in two SC counties to learn more about health information-seeking behaviors, health related Internet and library use, and educational preferences for building information technology skills and capacities to better diabetes education. Using a community based participatory action research model, a 10-member Planning Committee aims to increase knowledge and understanding of Internet and public library resources in terms of access, barriers, use, and impact on health in local communities. Members represent the faith community, public libraries, grass-root diabetes advocacy groups, community centers, public education, IT and diabetes supply companies, and diabetes peer-education programs. The Committee developed a 25-question survey instrument to do a community information needs assessment and community health information profile. The resulting issues selection, assets identification, and planned actions form the basis for the next steps in linking people with reliable and culturally appropriate diabetes information. This poster will present survey results, lessons learned, and actions taken in this participatory process to enhance diabetes education through health information technology and innovation.

**Monday,  
continued**

3:15PM Paper presentation; Session #88763

*A Community Health Assessment Resource for Texas (CHART): Enhancing Access to Health Statistics through Collaboration*

William Spears, University of Texas School of Public Health and Helena Von Ville, UTHSC-Houston School of Public Health

The Community Health Assessment Resources for Texas (CHART) was based on two goals: 1) to provide web-based census tract level birth, death, and population data free of charge to users and 2) to offer classes to potential users to help them learn how to find health information on the Internet and uses of the data when it is located. CHART was created through a collaboration between two types of information specialists: public health informatics specialists and librarians. The public health informatics specialists provided knowledge about important community health indicators and how to make data available on the Internet. Librarians are highly skilled searchers, familiar with locating broad types of information in a variety of resources, whether it be online through the Internet or a licensed database or in a book or journal. The CHART strategy brings together public health professionals and librarians in a hands-on workshop environment, giving both the public health professionals and the librarians opportunities to network and develop their own collaborations. This strategy also allows the public health professionals an opportunity to view librarians as critical partners who can simplify the information seeking process. Participating librarians are immersed in the jargon of public health as they learn more about the needs of the community practitioners. Participants in the project hear from both a public health informatics professional and a librarian who demonstrate ways to access and use a GIS-based health statistics resources as well as a Web-based clearinghouse for Texas health data.

4:30-6:00PM Poster session, Board 9; Session #91713

*Creating an effective information architecture for health information resources Web sites: A case study of SAMHSA's Recovery Month redesign*

Justin R Dopke, Web and Technology Solutions Group, ORC Macro

One of the greatest challenges of organizing any kind of information is making it easily accessible to those individuals who need the information. Starting with the online public access catalog (OPAC), librarians and information scientists have faced this challenge. With the advent of the World Wide Web, this problem has spilled out of the library and into the living room. Most large-scale Web sites have had to redesign/reorganize their information to make it searchable, and ALL government Web sites must make their collections accessible to persons with disabilities (Section 508). How is it possible to systematically reorganize a Web site so that the content is logically organized and easily retrieved? By understanding the needs of the audience and the goals of the organization, a comprehensive schema can be developed. Information architecture and usability engineering have proven to be effective methods in making Web sites easier to use while conserving project resources. This poster session will demonstrate the process of information architecture and usability engineering in the redesign of a Federal initiative for addiction recovery Web site. In doing so, it will examine the challenges faced by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) Center for Substance Abuse Treatment Web site in support of the National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month initiative and the methods used to overcome them. The poster will detail the strategies and evaluation of the information architecture and navigation schema for the Recovery Month 2004 Web site and the Recovery Month Portal.

**Tuesday, November 9**

8:30-10:00AM Poster session, Board 2; Session #83830

*Project of Intermediate Advocates: Bringing health information to the community*  
Abdul-Ali Muhammad and Gail Thomas, Project of Intermediate Advocates

The Project of Intermediate Advocates (PIA) is a community health advocacy organization that works to address health disparities in historically underserved communities in Washington, DC. We do this by encouraging people to learn about their health through the Internet. A central project is the A.H.E.A.D. Initiative Training, which involves health fairs/outreach sessions and computer training in accessing health information, especially in the area of HIV/AIDS prevention and care. As part of the A.H.E.A.D. Initiative, free monthly training sessions are offered throughout the Mid Atlantic region for residents, clients, and staff of community health organizations. These sessions focus on accessing information provided online by The National Library of Medicine (NLM)—Medlineplus, Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), HIV/AIDS organizations, and Community resources in, education, housing, jobs, and child and family care. A special emphasis is on translating public health information in order to open avenues for communication about health and disease. Special emphasis is also placed on encouraging individuals to take charge of their own health through early disease testing and health education. PIA also conducts A.H.E.A.D. training sessions at its office site specifically for HIV-positive persons, who then may enroll in a stipend program to perform community demonstrations of the A.H.E.A.D. training. PIA forged a partnership with Health Information Consulting Services, LLC (HICS). This partnership is designed to offer a certificate-based hands-on computer workshop to people in rural areas. PIA and HICS are developing teams of HIV positive clients. These clients are trained to teach other positive individuals to use technology for medical web page navigation and self-education in health topics of interest. These HIV positive presenters then visit HIV/AIDS day treatment centers and community associations to demonstrate health resources with the use of technology. Their aim is to invite and direct people to our training workshop. Partners: PIA partners local organizations to specifically address health literacy by providing the A.H.E.A.D. Initiative training to HIV positive clients and the general public. These organizations include The National Library of Medicine of NIH, George Washington University Medical Research Center, D.C. Department of Health's HIV/AIDS Administration, Health Information Partners (HIPS), Health Information Consulting Services (HICS), Morgan State University, Bowie State University, and DC Public Libraries. Key Points (base location): South East Washington, DC is a historically underserved community. HIV infection rates in Washington, DC have been compared to some of the most devastating countries in Africa and South East D.C. is greatly challenged. PIA contends that access to Health- related information (particularly on HIV/AIDS prevention) is crucial to address this problem. PIA is aggressively addressing health literacy by using HIV positive individuals to teach web navigation skills in health information research.

2:30-4:00PM Roundtable session, Table 4; Session #90789

*A new model for supporting effective research in population studies: The population digital library*

Claire Twose, Susan Rohner, Kathleen Burr Oliver, and Nancy K. Roderer, Johns Hopkins University

The Johns Hopkins Population Center (HPC) is a multidisciplinary group of 53 faculty members who conduct research on diverse population issues. In 2004 the HPC began working with the Welch Medical Library to transform a print collection with traditional library service by developing and testing a new model of information services offering a digital library and liaison librarian services. Objectives of this new service model include: providing core resources through a digital library to researchers where ever they work; increasing collaboration between information professionals and population researchers;

**Tuesday,  
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increasing accessibility to previously hard to find older materials, "gray literature", and, eventually, offering technology to promote data sharing. From December 2003 to February 2004, liaison librarians interviewed many of the HPC faculty to obtain information about journal, database, book and data use and methods of staying current and obtaining needed resources. The Population Associates are drawn from across the University, represent 11 departments and one research center, have offices in three geographically dispersed locations on different campuses and undertake research in over 20 countries. The core set of resources and services identified through these interviews will form the nucleus of the digital library. This will include existing electronic resources plus previously unavailable material digitized by library staff and digital current awareness services. It may also include access to data sources previously maintained by individual researchers. Future evaluation will assess the impact of the digital library and liaison services on satisfaction, use and cost for both faculty and the library.

5:00PM Paper presentation; Session #89804

*Meeting community environmental health information needs in times of crisis*

Cynthia Love, Stacey J. Arnesen and Gale Dutcher, Specialized Information Services, National Library of Medicine

Public health workers may invest significant professional energy attempting to increase community concern about environmental health issues, only to encounter indifference. But what about those times when the community is demanding quick, detailed information because they fear an environmental event may directly impact their health? Do you know what trusted Internet sources of chemical, toxicology and environmental health information are available for your community? Where will you turn to get the background information you need before the five-o'clock TV news interview? Will you have time to research and write handouts for tonight's community meeting? Learn what Internet resources are available to help you meet your community's needs, whether they are interested in that day's chemical spill from a derailed train, mercury contamination that shuts down the local high school or what health effects might be expected from a recently-discovered groundwater contamination problem. Appropriate Internet resources from the National Library of Medicine (<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/>) and other federal agencies will be reviewed, including MedlinePlus (<http://medlineplus.gov/>), Tox Town (<http://toxnet.nlm.nih.gov/>), TOXNET (<http://toxnet.nlm.nih.gov/>) and MEDLINE/PubMed (<http://pubmed.gov>). Case studies will be included.

5:06PM Paper presentation; Session #85935

*Outreach on Wheels: Health Informatics and Literacy Training for a Low-Income Community in Washington, DC*

Stacey Beth Downey, Karyn Pomerantz, and Eduardo Pezo, University of the District of Columbia and George Washington University School of Public Health & Health Services

Promoting health informatics among people with limited literacy skills is challenging. To address this, George Washington University's Partners for Health Information, the DC State Education Agency, Adult Education, and Unity Health Care have partnered to promote health information and literacy. Our innovative approach provides a mobile computer lab, qualified coaches, and bilingual support to a predominantly Latino community in Washington, DC. Most low-income adults in DC do not turn to the Internet for health information. Over 30% of DC residents have low literacy skills. For these potential users, many barriers inhibit use: limited access to technology; low literacy and technology skills; limited online content at appropriate reading level or in their native language. The Children's Partnership confirms the need for practical, easy to read material, easier searching, and "coaches to guide them." A convenience survey of patients visiting DC health centers by Partners for Health Information found that health information was a search goal for 63%, but information on jobs and education ranked nearly as high, 59% and 52% respectively. Drawing on self-efficacy theory, health educators assist clients in acquiring skills to access information on health, jobs, and literacy classes, using adult learning theory to offer material that is relevant, immediately

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useful, and self-directed. This outreach project addresses health and literacy issues together -- with the objective of eliminating disparity, racism, and narrowing the digital divide. Session attendees will take a virtual tour of the mobile unit, view recommended websites, and discuss project results, including information needs, responsive resources, and barriers.

### Wednesday, November 10

1:24 PM Paper presentation; Session #82500

*Healthy People 2010 in Action: The National Limb Loss Information Center addressing the needs of people with disabilities*

Leslie J Duncan, National Limb Loss Information Center

The National Limb Loss Information Center (NLLIC), a program of the Amputee Coalition of America (ACA), addresses the needs of the limb loss population and participates in outreach activities to groups and allied agencies that address limb loss issues. Programs/services of the NLLIC include a national hotline, a Web site, the Youth Activities Program, the National Peer Network (NPN), national consumer publications, fact sheets, outreach, and the NLLIC Library Catalog. According to Healthy People 2010, people with disabilities have increased health concerns and susceptibility to secondary conditions. Having a long-term condition increases the need for health promotion that can be medical, physical, social, emotional, or societal. The NLLIC understands the importance of health promotion for people with disabilities, especially those with limb loss. Health and wellness activities within individual program activities are designed to prevent limb loss, prevent re-amputation, prevent ameliorate secondary conditions associated with limb loss. Programs that include health and wellness information include senior step (an outreach program that targets older amputees, their caregivers, and service providers), biofit (a youth fitness program), inMotion (a national consumer publication), an online support group, NPN, an educational conference, and minority outreach. The NLLIC is currently collaborating with Johns Hopkins School of Public Health to develop a self-help course aimed at helping amputees deal with pain and depression and with Walter Reed Medical Center to develop a model peer-training program for servicemen that have lost limbs in Afghanistan and Iraq.

1:42PM Paper presentation; Session #87488

*Christopher and Dana Reeve Paralysis Resource Center*

Joseph Canose, Christopher and Dana Reeve Paralysis Resource Center

Paralysis resulting from diseases, injuries or birth defects is a major cause of disability that limits daily activities for thousands of people in the U.S. All forms of paralysis have a negative effect on the quality of life of the individuals living with paralysis as well as family members and caregivers. Overcoming environmental barriers to community services and the substantial costs associated with basic care, treating secondary conditions, and acquiring assistive technology make it difficult for individuals with paralysis to maintain their health, independence, and quality of life. The primary focus of the Christopher and Dana Reeve Paralysis Resource Center (PRC) is to improve the health, quality of life and community involvement for individuals living with paralysis by providing a comprehensive, national source of information. The PRC's information specialists respond with personalized information to inquiries received through our call center and email systems. Self-help guidance is provided to individuals through the PRC's website, lending library and our new 310 page Paralysis Resource Guide. The PRC is developing educational materials through partnerships with organizations such as the National Center on Physical Activity and Disability and the School of Medicine at the University of New Mexico. The PRC also promotes healthy living and improved accessibility through Quality of Life Health Promotion grants awarded to non-profit community-based organizations providing services. Attendees at this session will be exposed to the demographic profile

**Wednesday,  
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of the paralysis community accessing PRC services including a description of outreach services used to reach national, worldwide, and minority paralysis populations.

2:48PM Paper presentation; Session #84914

*Development of an Online Public Health Informatics Curriculum for the Public Health Work Force*

Nancy J. Allee, MLS and Helen Look, University of Michigan

This grant-funded project is a collaborative effort between an academic health sciences library and a HRSA-funded public health training center. The project featured development of web-based training modules for the public health work force based on needs assessments and onsite training experiences with a large urban, a mid-sized urban, and a rural district public health department. The training modules were developed using state-of-the-art software and video production equipment. The course materials represent a rich variety of digital resources, including narrated PowerPoint presentations, web tutorials, online bibliographies, and other supplemental resources. Built-in evaluative tools will be used to determine the effectiveness of the web modules in increasing the participants' computer literacy and Internet research skills. In addition, statistics on the web-based learning modules will be used to determine both the level of the use and the utility to the target audience. Additional project outcomes are the development of effective strategies for creating online resources and evaluative criteria for successful design of web-based learning modules. These strategies and criteria, as well as lessons learned from the collaboration, are applicable to other online learning initiatives. Ultimately, the training project is designed to yield a model public health informatics curriculum available via the Internet. The curriculum includes training and skill development for effectively finding, evaluating, and using public health information on the Internet.