

## **Public Health Outreach Project Description**

**Title:** Internet Connections For Access to Information Resources and Training for Public Health Professionals

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**Organization:** W. E. Laupus Health Sciences Library, East Carolina University

**Date:** 1999-2000

### **Objectives:**

- 1) Provide onsite training to public health personnel in the region on PubMed, other databases, and appropriate Internet information sources, 2) Provide 8 hands-on training sessions at the Health Sciences Library teaching lab, 3) Establish Internet Service Provider (ISP) accounts to 19 public health departments, and 4) Establish a listserv that will connect the public health departments for information exchange.

### **Target Audience:**

Local public health care professionals

### **Needs assessment (methodology and results)**

A needs assessment was done at each public health department (19) to determine the impact of the training and the connections. A mini phone survey was conducted of the computer and information resources and needs that currently existed in the region's public health departments. We tried to gather information on the level of connectivity in the region, interest in computer information resources among health care providers, use of computer information resources at the office and at home, and the level of computer competency that existed.

The results of the survey indicated that very little connectivity and training had been done for public health care professionals in the region and the need was great as evidenced by the letters of support. (see results of

survey attached) Based on the answers to the survey, we found that few (maybe 200 out of 950) were using the Internet at all for and even fewer for clinical information. The public health director and an appointed contact that was the computer or data resources person for the department completed the needs assessment.

### **Intervention:**

We visited each of the health departments prior to the Internet connection and spoke with as many health care providers as possible. From these visits, we were able to identify: 1) the level of computer skills that existed, 2) applications of computer information resources (patient care, patient counseling, research, continuing education, etc.), 3) web sites that public health personnel were using and found useful or not useful, 4) some of the motivations for health care providers to use computers in the clinical setting and 5) barriers to information access. This more detailed data helped us to establish onsite training.

8 hands-on training sessions were held in the Health Sciences Library's classroom from February 18 – April 7, 2000 and was supplemented by on-site training.

### **Training and other materials development:**

Internet Training Classes

Introduction to the Web

In the Middle of the Internet

Searching For and Using Web Information Resources

### **Website (developed as project and how maintained):**

<http://www.hsl.unc.edu/ahec/LIS2000> – Public Health Resources

The website was developed by Jean Blackwell of UNC at Chapel Hill and distributed to the North Carolina AHEC's for distribution amongst public health care professionals to help find news, statistics, and quick facts on public health issues.

## **Evaluation:**

Each training was evaluated at the conclusion of the session. An evaluation form was designed and used for this purpose. (see attached)

## **Poster Sessions/Exhibits/Presentations/Publications:**

May 10, 1999 – “Introduction to the Internet Class”  
Beaufort County Department of Social Services, Washington, NC

May, 27, 1999 – “Introduction to the Internet Class” & an information display which consisted of books, audiovisuals, professional articles and literature relevant to seniors, bibliographies of relevant web sites  
Elder Fair (National Senior Day 1999), Northside High School, Pinetown, NC

July 21, 1999 – “Internet Resources and Searching the Web for Current Information,” Social Services Department, Washington, NC

August 19, 1999 – “Interdisciplinary Health Related Issues in Rural North Carolina”, Public Health Department, Washington, NC

May 24, 2000 – Elder Fair 2000, Exhibit of software and hardware, P. S. Jones High School, Washington, NC

May 22, 2000 – “Orientation to HSL’s Services” Wayne Community College, Goldsboro, NC

August 27, 2000 – Fiesta Latina Fair of Services, Snow Hill, NC, display of Spanish Language patient education resources available for loan from the HSL

October, 2000 – exhibit of Spanish Language materials that are available for loan from the HSL for an EAHEC CE program

Bangma, Janet, “Internet Helpful Hints Put Floyd To Rest,”  
DownEast, Winter 2000, pg. 3-4.

Bangma, Janet, “Outreach Librarians On the Edge,” AHEC Review  
Fall 1999, pg. 5, 7, 9.

Norfleet, Evangeline, "Out In the Region", Information on Call, March-April, 1999

### **Partnerships:**

Allied health faculty at the EAHEC provided funds for refreshments at all the 8 hands-on training sessions that were held at the HSL. They also approved funding for the purchase of handout materials for the Fiesta Latina Fair of Services.

By partnering with faculty at the Health Sciences Library at UNC at Chapel Hill, we had hoped to introduce a Train-the Trainer model where Chapel Hill would introduce EAHEC and HSL faculty to advanced public health resources and tools available from the UNCLE (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) system. This fell through due to faculty scheduling difficulties.

### **Marketing:**

We used the newsletters published by the HSL, EAHEC, and Central AHEC to describe the project. Flyers and brochures were developed and distributed by the Outreach Department of the HSL to publicize the project. We also had professional association affiliates to help promote this project.

### **Administrative Issues:**

We were delayed in going forward with the subcontract after it was awarded because the Subcontract Agreement between the University of Maryland, Baltimore and East Carolina University had an issue which was due to questions related to the transfer of equipment ownership to grantees at the conclusion of the grant period.

### **Challenges Faced:**

Encouraging some of the public health department personnel to participate in training was an ongoing challenge. Some of the health directors refused to send personnel to training for a variety of reasons, including limited budget and non-appropriate use of time.

The second challenge we faced was ensuring that the computers did not end up on an individual's desk and not be readily accessible. In some instances, when follow up visits were made, we found that equipment had been moved. A memo was sent to sites reemphasizing the fact that an agreement of receiving the equipment was that it had to be housed in a freely accessible location.

### **Were Project Objectives Met?**

Objective no. 5 was not met: Establish a listserv that will connect the public health departments for information exchange. We hope to continue working with the health departments in completing this objective and in expanding the agencies that were to be involved in the listserv.

### **Sustainability:**

### **Anecdotes or Other Observations:**