

Public Health Outreach Project Description

Title: Health Sciences Information Service Outreach to Alaska's Public Health Professionals

Staff: **Kathleen Murray**, MLS, Manager, Health Sciences Information Service, University of Alaska Anchorage serves as the principal investigator
Patricia Owen, Health Program Manager I, Health Promotion Program, Section of Community Health and Emergency Medical Services
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Organization: University of Alaska Anchorage

Date: October 15, 1998 – April 30, 2000 (extended to April 30, 2001)

Objectives:

The objectives of this proposal are to:

- Increase awareness of national and state health information resources and services
- Increase access to the Internet and other information resources within the state
- Train public health nurses and emergency medical services personnel in the productive use of the Internet and state health information resources
- Provide support for the Alaska Health Education Library Project (AHELP project)

Target Audience:

The primary target group will be the public health nurses. EMS personnel will be the secondary target audience.

Needs assessment (methodology and results):

In addition to the statistics showing past use of library services, the Department of Health and Social Service, Division of Public Health had just completed a survey of its staff (1998). This will provide the baseline data concerning public health services staff.

Based on an analysis done by Lark Hackney, IT coordinator for the Division of Public Health, Section of Nursing; approximately half of the 22 health centers have recently acquired Internet connections. The following public health nursing locations did not have current Internet connections: **Delta, Dillingham, Ft. Yukon, Galena, Glennallen, Haines, Homer, Palmer, Seward, Tok, and Valdez.**

The public health nurses have identified the following information literacy competencies that they wish addressed in the training sessions:

- Access the following sites, browse the menus, conduct a search for specific health information, and follow links for related sites:
- National Library of Medicine
- National Network of Libraries of Medicine, Pacific Northwest Region
- Alaska Department of Health and Social Services
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- National Institutes of Health
- Utilize the National Library of Medicine's Medline database via GratefulMed and PubMed
- Utilize the print and electronic resources of the Alaska State Library and the University of Alaska Health Sciences Library.
- Search a health information database (such as healthfinder.gov, PedInfo, or Mental Health Net) for client and professional education materials.
- Obtain information about and from the Alaska Health Education Library Project (AHELP)
- Join a listserv, respond to messages, and post a message.
- Use a chat room or bulletin board to share or request information from other nurses and/or public health professionals.

Intervention:

Face-to Face training was scheduled for Anchorage, Bethel, Dillingham, Fairbanks, Juneau, Kenai, Ketchikan, Kodiak, Kotzebue, Nome, and Sitka. To date, all site visits, with the exception of Bethel, have occurred. A workshop at the Mat-Su clinic, an hours drive northeast of Anchorage, was provided during the course of the subcontract.

Tutorials and Print Options for Smaller Sites are still being developed. Training resources will be mailed to each clinic or region in print, via cd-rom or via the Internet as a web-based tutorial. At a minimum, a cd-rom for itinerant public health nurses will be created and distributed by the conclusion of the subcontract.

Video Conferencing was listed as one option which has since been rejected.

Purchase Computers for five sites.

Promote Enhanced Communication by paying for an extra phone line and ISP charges for eleven public health clinics.

Training and other materials developed:

Training packets include the PubMed end-user training manual, a diskette with a list of public health related bookmarks and printed material concerning state-specific health resources. In addition, a CD ROM with PHN resource materials

(protocols, policies, selected health information) will be provided to each clinic with itinerant nurses. Members of the PHN administrative team along with the library staff will determine the content of this cd-rom.

Website (developed as part of project and how maintained):

The Health Sciences Information Service (<http://www.lib.uaa.alaska.edu/hsis/>) has had a website for the last four years. During the course of this subcontract, websites of interest to public health professionals have been expanded. However, one goal still remaining, is to create subject access to the various sites via a dynamic web page. Since this goal may be delayed due to other commitments by UAA's web librarian, a separate listing of public health sites will be created before the conclusion of the subcontract on the Healthcare Provider page.

Evaluation (methodology and results):

Statistics have been kept on library service requests. One measure of the success of this proposal will be an increase in the actual number of requests for information services from HSIS.

HSIS will also track the number of new Loansome Doc participants.

Pre and post tests will be given to training participants. Questions on the tests addressed their familiarity with the Internet and the various information sites that should be of interest to this group. It is expected that post tests will indicate an increased awareness of these areas. In addition, selected clinics will be contacted and asked to subjectively report on their use of the Internet months after the workshop was attended.

The number of "hits" of the HSIS web pages will be compared, before and during and after this subcontract period.

Poster Sessions/Exhibits/Presentations/Publications:

A number of publications were identified as possible announcement vehicles. In reality, Nancy Davis and Matt Anderson were all the contacts that were needed. Through their efforts, workshops have been arranged at two regional EMS conferences and at all but one of the identified PHN clinics.

A poster session was given to the medical librarians of the PNC/MLA this last September.

Partnerships:

Leaders of the following organizations were intimately involved in the workshop development process. Presentations were made to key individuals within these organizations about the goals of this project.

The Alaska Health Education Library Project (AHELP): The Alaska Division of Public Health is creating a statewide clearinghouse of health promotion information and resources to be contained in a new comprehensive database. This project, being developed in cooperation with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is called the Alaska Health Education Library Project (AHELP).

The Alaska Public Health Association has approximately 160 members statewide and holds an annual statewide health conference each year.

The Alaska Health Education Consortium (AHEC) is a statewide organization comprised of persons interested in promoting health and preventing disease and premature death in Alaska through education and preventive efforts.

Marketing:

See above section of Posters ...

Administrative issues:

Interfacing between the state and the university so that bills could be paid was one major issue faced during this subcontract. The other was the decision to add a piece of equipment not planned for during the writing of the subcontract. Both hurdles were jumped.

Challenges Faced:

Public health nurses are incredibly busy. Getting a date scheduled for each clinic was not easy. Turnover in key positions did not help. However, by finding out the correct individuals to contact, all sites have been visited (except Bethel).

It should be noted that teaching EMT folks has its own set of challenges. During the training session on Kodiak, a Coast Guard chopper went down – so all the on-call EMT participants (1/2 the group) went off to save lives!

Public health nurses had received little or no computer training prior to my workshops. I realized at the very first workshop, that very basic information on using browsers would have to be added to the syllabus. In many clinics only one computer was even able to connect to the Internet. This has not changed in most. Much of their “surfing” takes place at home.

Because HSIS services are fee-based, most of the nurses did not/do not feel comfortable calling for our assistance. While the use of library services is promoted, I feel that this barrier still exists.

The subcontract included money to pay for an extra phone line and ISP charges for eleven sites. Getting the state agency to send us the invoices for these ISP charges was a struggle – one that was eventually overcome.

Creating the cd-rom was actually easier in the mechanics than anticipated. UAA's Consortium Library actually has the necessary hardware and another faculty development center on campus can burn mass copies from the master copy created in the library

Deciding on the cd-rom content and getting those documents proved a bit more challenging. A list of items has been developed, but not all have been sent to me. Patient education material is desired, but finding useful, reasonably priced material is still ongoing.

As always, training is not an option during the summer. Everyone goes fishing!

Were Project Objectives Met?

While the project is ongoing, I feel that the objectives have been met. Individual tasks remain, but the primary objective of increasing awareness of medical resources on the Internet has been accomplished.

Sustainability:

The ties developed between HSIS and key individuals within the public health department will be ongoing. Training opportunities are currently being discussed with Patty Owen using funds from a grant she has been awarded. We are also in discussion about distance delivery of workshops using UAA's Blackboard software.

The web site is a critical piece of HSIS' service delivery. Work will continue in all areas, including public health.

I continue to work for statewide licenses for various health resources. Whenever possible, public health nurses will be included in those contracts.

Anecdotes or Other Observations:

You may have noticed that EMT personnel have not been mentioned much during this report. In fact, they seemed to have a much more developed understanding of the Internet and higher comfort level with using this resource. While every effort was made to invite this group to training sessions, with the exception of the two annual conferences where a 90 minute session was a scheduled event, the only EMT's actually trained were in Kodiak and Fairbanks.