

Strategic Planning for Medical Library and Information Services in Delaware

Methodology:

Working with the Delaware Division of Libraries and the Delaware Academy of Medicine, Himmel & Wilson, Library Consultants, created a consulting team comprised of partners, Ethel Himmel and Bill Wilson, and associate consultants, Diane Wolf, medical librarian recently retired from the Christiana Hospital Library (DE), and Jane Fisher, director of the Rutherford (NJ) Public Library and former consumer health librarian for the New York Public Library to facilitate the development of a strategic plan for medical and health library services for the State of Delaware. The plan, "A Prescription for the Future" aligns with the First State Quality Initiative Project with the Delaware Division of Libraries strategic plan for library services.

The project began with a planning meeting November 30th, 2007 at the Christiana Hospital in Newark to enable the consultants to gain an overview of the current status of health/medical information delivery systems in the State of Delaware. Participants at the meeting included representatives from hospitals, state agencies, a nursing school, health centers, non-profit health and dental networks and associations, and interested stakeholders.

Following the initial meeting the consultants conducted literature searches and site visits to hospital, academic, and public libraries where key professionals were providing medical or consumer health information. Interviews were conducted with librarians and administrators at the Owens Campus Library of Delaware Technical College, the Nanticoke Memorial Hospital, the Beebe School of Nursing, the Bayhealth Medical Center, the Division of Public Health, and the Christiana Hospital Library. Interviews were also conducted with the three Consumer Health Librarians in Kent, New Castle, and Sussex Counties and with the Community Health Librarian at the Junior Board Cancer Resource Library in Newark.

In order to include input from users of the medical and consumer health library services, web surveys were conducted with members of the Delaware Nurses Association, the Psychological Association, and the Academy of Family Physicians. Interviews were also conducted with three public library managers/directors in each county to learn their perspectives on the consumer health program within their county.

Based on the literature searches, interviews, and the site visits the associate consultants prepared best practices documents to serve as the basis for developing the strategic plan. These documents were posted on a website for interested stakeholders to review prior to the second meeting of the planning group.

The second meeting of the planning group was held April 25th, 2008 at the Bayhealth Medical Center in Dover. Participants discussed the draft documents and began work on identifying strategies to address the issues identified. They also examined the framework used in a balanced scorecard environment.

Following the second meeting more interviews were conducted, the best practices documents were revised, and the draft plan was developed and posted for review prior to the third and final meeting, held June 23rd at Bayhealth. The draft plan was finalized based on input and comment at the June 23rd meeting.