National Network of Libraries of Medicine Greater Midwest Region: A Little Local History

by Jacqueline Leskovec

In 1965, President Lyndon Baines Johnson, as part of his Great Society initiatives, signed Public Law 89-239 which created Regional Medical Programs across the country. Also in that same year, legislation known as the Medical Library Assistance Act enabled the National Library of Medicine (NLM) to establish a medical library network. The National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NN/LM®), formerly the Regional Medical Library Network, began in 1967.

Since 1980, the UIC Library of the Health Sciences (LHS) has been the Regional Medical Library (RML) for the now ten states of the Greater Midwest Region (GMR). The GMR staff works to support the mission of NN/LM which is to advance the progress of medicine and improve the public health by providing all U.S. health professionals with equal access to biomedical information and improving the public’s access to information to enable them to make informed decisions about their health.

The current contract funds a $9,000,000 budget spread over five years (May 2006 – April 2011). The staff of nine includes five program coordinators (librarians) who travel throughout the region promoting NLM resources and services; teaching librarians, health professionals, and the public how to access high quality health information through the Internet; staffing exhibits at meetings of librarians and health professionals; and consulting with librarians and health educators who work for network member libraries and information centers. The GMR also funds a variety of outreach and technology projects by issuing RFPs for competitive subawards and subcontracts.

The GMR is in the process of writing a new proposal for the 2011-2016 contract to provide services to meet the needs of the Network for another five years.

To reach the GMR call 800 338-7657 (or 312 996-2464) or visit the office in LHS-Chicago.

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