

## **National Network of Libraries of Medicine: An Overview**

Elaine Martin  
Director, NN/LM,NER

### **The National Library of Medicine**

- Acquirer, organizer and disseminator of health information
- Database producer and vendor
- The RML network has an important role to play

## History of the RML Network

- Phase 1—resource building
- Phase 2—focus on health professionals
- Phase 3—added focus on consumer health information

## The RML Model of Information Access

- 8 Regional Libraries
- A network of member libraries
- Defined mission and goals
- A clear set of services and products
- Funding opportunities for members
- Program reassessment and redesign every five years

## Mission

- Provide all U.S. health professionals with equal access to biomedical information
- Improve the public's access to information to enable them to make informed decisions about their health

## Specific Goals

- To develop collaborations with network libraries to improve access to and sharing of biomedical information resources throughout the U.S.
- To promote awareness of and access to biomedical information resources for health professionals and the public and

## Specific Goals (continued)

- To develop, promote and improve access to electronic health information resources by network member libraries, health professionals and organizations providing information to the public

## What is the RML?

- The RML network is a government sponsored program administered by the National Library of Medicine and carried out through a nationwide network of health sciences libraries and information centers

## Network Structure

- Full Members—Regional Medical Libraries, Resources Libraries and PALS
- Affiliate Members—Resource Center Libraries, Public Libraries, Community College Libraries, etc.

## Responsibility of Membership

- Designated local contact
- Listing in national network membership database
- Have a collection to share

## Membership Summary

- Established in 1967
- Field force of the NLM
- 5000 Participating institutions
- Making quality health information available to health professionals and the public

## Specific Services

- Health Information Services
- Librarian and Health Education Services
- Special Projects

## Health Information Services

- MEDLINE
- MEDLINEplus

## Librarian and Health Education

- Instructional services
- Exhibits and demonstrations

## Special Projects

- Outreach to health professionals
- Outreach to consumers
- Electronic Document Delivery projects
- Technology Awareness conferences

## Reassessment of the Program

- Re-competition for RML status every five years



## Conclusions

- The RML network is a partnership between the NLM and the 5000 member institutions
- Emphasis on resource sharing not resource building
- Increased emphasis on outreach/facilitator of equal access to health information to health professionals and consumers (new audience)

## Conclusions (continued)

- Continued emphasis on serving the underserved and minority populations
- Expanded partnerships with community based groups and public libraries
- Continued emphasis on marketing NLM's services and products
- Continued emphasis on training all audiences

## Final Conclusion

- The NN/LM (RML) offers one effective model of information access to government information, specifically health information.