

**STATEMENT OF  
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ON BEHALF OF THE  
MEDICAL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION  
AND THE  
ASSOCIATION OF ACADEMIC HEALTH SCIENCES LIBRARIES**

**REGARDING THE  
FISCAL YEAR 2006 APPROPRIATION FOR THE  
NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MEDICINE  
SUBMITTED TO THE  
HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
LABOR, HHS, EDUCATION AND RELATED AGENCIES**

**APRIL 15, 2005**

**SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FY06**

- 1) A 6% INCREASE FOR THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MEDICINE AT THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH AND SUPPORT FOR NLM'S URGENT FACILITY CONSTRUCTION NEEDS.**
- 2) CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR THE MEDICAL LIBRARY COMMUNITY'S ROLE IN NLM'S OUTREACH, TELEMEDICINE AND HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVES.**
- 3) CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR AND PERIODIC RE-EVALUATION OF THE NIH OPEN ACCESS TO PUBLISHING POLICY.**

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of the Medical Library Association (MLA) and the Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries (AAHSL) regarding the fiscal year 2006 budget for the National Library of Medicine. I am Jacqueline Donaldson Doyle, Director of Learning Resources and Patient Relations at the Banner Estrella Medical Center Library in Phoenix, Arizona.

MLA, a nonprofit educational organization established in 1898, is comprised of health sciences information professionals with more than 4,500 members worldwide. Through its programs and services, MLA provides lifelong educational opportunities, supports a knowledgebase of health information research, and works with a global network of partners to promote the importance of quality information for improved health to the health care community and the public.

AAHSL is comprised of the directors of libraries of 142 accredited U.S. and Canadian medical schools belonging to the Association of American Medical Colleges. Together, MLA and AAHSL address health information issues and legislative matters of importance to the medical community through a joint task force.

Mr. Chairman, the National Library of Medicine, on the campus of the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland, is the world's largest medical library. The Library collects materials in all areas of biomedicine and health care, as well as works on biomedical aspects of technology, the humanities, and the physical, life, and social sciences. The collections stand at 7.9 million items—books, journals, technical reports, manuscripts, microfilms, photographs and images. Housed within the library is one of the world's finest medical history collections of old and rare medical works. The Library's collection may be accessed in the reading room or requested on interlibrary loan. NLM is a national resource for all U.S. health science libraries through a National Network of Libraries of Medicine. Increasingly, it is becoming an international resource for world-wide research collaboration.

With respect to the Library's budget for the coming fiscal year, I would like to touch briefly on five issues; 1) the growing demand for NLM's basic services; 2) NLM's outreach and education services; 3) NLM's telemedicine and informatics activities; 4) NLM's facility needs; and 5) NIH's Open Access to Publishing policy.

### **1) THE GROWING DEMAND FOR NLM'S BASIC SERVICES**

Mr. Chairman, it is a tribute to NLM that the demand for its services continues to steadily increase each year. For more than 10 years, MEDLINE has afforded anyone with access to the information superhighway the opportunity to tap into the vast resources of the National Library of Medicine. Over 670 million Internet searches are performed annually on NLM's MEDLINE database, which provides access to the world's most up-to-date health care information, with approximately 30% of the searches being conducted

by the general public. MEDLINEplus, NLM's extensive electronic information resource for the general public, has had over 720 million pages viewed in the last year. This activity dwarfs previous usage of NLM's bibliographic services, whether electronic or print. Moreover, researchers, scholars, librarians, physicians, healthcare providers from around the world, and the general public rely heavily on NLM and its National Network of Libraries of Medicine to deliver health care information everyday that is necessary to improve the quality of our nation's healthcare system.

NLM also plays a critical role in maintaining the integrity of the world's largest collection of medical books and journals. Increasingly, this current and historical information is in digital form. This has fundamentally changed how the library operates—how and what it collects, how it preserves information, and how it disseminates biomedical knowledge. NLM's "Partners in Information Access" program is designed to improve the access of local public health officials to health information. The establishment of additional programs across the country would go a long way toward ensuring that every health care worker in America is familiar with NLM and the National Network of Libraries of Medicine. NLM, as a national library responsible for preserving the scholarly record of biomedicine, is developing a strategy for selecting, organizing, and ensuring permanent access to digital information. Regardless of the format in which the materials are received, ensuring their availability for future generations remains the highest priority of the Library.

Mr. Chairman, simply stated, NLM is a national treasure. I can tell you that without NLM our nation's medical libraries would be unable to provide the quality information services that our nation's healthcare providers, educators, researchers and patients have come to expect.

*Recognizing the invaluable role that NLM plays in our health care delivery system, the Medical Library Association and the Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries join with the Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research Funding in recommending a 6% increase for NLM and NIH overall in FY2006.*

## **2) OUTREACH AND EDUCATION**

NLM's outreach programs are of particular interest to both MLA and AAHSL. These activities, designed to educate medical librarians, health care professionals and the general public about NLM's services, are an essential part of the Library's mission.

The Library has taken a leadership role in promoting educational outreach aimed at public libraries, secondary schools, senior centers and other consumer-based settings. NLM's emphasis on outreach to underserved populations assists the effort to reduce health disparities among large sections of the American public.

*We were pleased that the Committee again last year recognized the need for NLM to coordinate its outreach activities with the medical library community.*

## **PubMed Central**

The medical library community also applauds NLM for its leadership in establishing PubMed Central, an online repository for life science articles. Introduced in 2000, PubMed Central was created by NLM's National Center for Biotechnology Information and evolved from an electronic archiving concept proposed by former NIH Director Dr. Harold Varmus. The site houses articles from some 170 journals including the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* and *Molecular Biology of the Cell*.

The medical library community believes that health sciences librarians should continue to play a key role in further development of PubMed Central and we are pleased that medical librarians are members of the NLM PubMed Central Advisory Committee. Because of the high level of expertise health information specialists have in the organization, collection and dissemination of medical literature, we believe our community can assist NLM with issues related to copyright, fair use, and information classification on the PubMed Central site. We look forward to continuing our collaboration with the Library as this exciting project continues to evolve this year.

## **MEDLINEplus**

MEDLINEplus [<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/>], a source of authoritative, full-text health information resources from the NIH institutes and a variety of non-Federal sources, has grown tremendously in its coverage of health and its usage by the public. In March 2005, six million unique users searched more than 700 "health topics" that contain detailed consumer-focused information on various diseases and health conditions. Recent additions to MEDLINEplus include illustrated interactive patient tutorials, a daily news feed from the public media on health-related topics, and the NIH Senior Health site [<http://nihseniorhealth.gov/>], a collaborative project between NLM and the National Institute on Aging.

## **Clinical Trials**

Mr. Chairman, I also want to comment on another heavily used service offered by NLM—its clinical trials database [<http://www.clinicaltrials.gov>]. This listing of more than 12,500 federal and privately funded trials for serious or life-threatening diseases was launched in February of 2000 and currently logs more than 4 million page hits per month. The clinical trials database is a free and invaluable resource to patients and families interested in participating in cutting edge treatments for serious illnesses. The medical library community congratulates NLM for its leadership in creating ClinicalTrials.gov and looks forward to assisting the Library in advancing this important initiative.

*Mr. Chairman, we applaud the success of NLM's outreach initiatives and look forward to continuing our work with the Library again in FY2006 on these important programs.*

## **3) TELEMEDICINE AND HEALTH INFORMATICS**

Mr. Chairman, telemedicine continues to hold great promise for dramatically increasing the delivery of health care to underserved communities across the country and throughout the world. NLM has sponsored over 50 innovative telemedicine related projects in recent years, including 21 multi-year projects in various rural and urban medically underserved communities. These sites serve as models for:

- Evaluating the impact of telemedicine on cost, quality, and access to health care;
- Assessing various approaches to ensuring the confidentiality of health data transmitted via electronic networks; and
- Testing emerging health data standards.

It is clear that telemedicine and medical informatics program such as the Visible Human Project [[http://www.nlm.nih.gov/research/visible/visible\\_human.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/research/visible/visible_human.html)]*—male and female data sets consisting of MRI, CT, and photographic cryosection images totaling 50 gigabytes and licenses to scientists at more than 2,000 institutions around the world—will play a major role in the delivery of health care and research in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.* NLM's telemedicine projects improve the ability of those in underserved and remote locations who need medical information to have access to it. Telemedicine networks make it possible for a small-town doctor, for example, to send detailed visual images and symptom information to specialists in major medical centers, improving diagnosis and treatment

*We are pleased that NLM has begun a new program to support informatics research that addresses information management problems relevant to disaster management. Medical librarians and health information specialists have an important role to play in supporting these cutting edge technologies, and we encourage Congress and NLM to continue their strong support of telemedicine and other medical informatics initiatives. MLA and AAHSL also support Health Information Technology initiatives in the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONCHIT) and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) that build upon initiatives housed at NLM.*

#### **4) NLM's FACILITY NEEDS**

Mr. Chairman, over the past two decades NLM has assumed several new responsibilities, particularly in the areas of biotechnology, health services research, high performance computing, and consumer health. As a result, the Library has had tremendous growth in its basic functions related to the acquisition, organization, and preservation of an ever-expanding collection of biomedical literature.

This increase in the volume of biomedical information as well as expansion of personnel (NLM currently houses over 1,100 people in a facility built to accommodate 650) has resulted in a serious shortage of space at the Library. In addition, NLM's National Center for Biotechnology Information [<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>] builds sophisticated

data management tools for processing and analyzing enormous amounts of genetic information critical to advancing the Human Genome Project.

In order for NLM to continue its mission as the world's premier biomedical library, a new facility is urgently needed. The NLM Board of Regents has assigned the highest priority to supporting the acquisition of a new facility. The medical library community is pleased that Congress appropriated the necessary architectural and engineering funds for the design of the facility expansion at NLM in 2003.

*We encourage the subcommittee to continue to provide the resources necessary to construct a new facility and to support the Library's health information programs.*

## **5) PUBLIC ACCESS TO NIH FUNDED PUBLICATIONS**

On February 3, 2005, NIH Director, Elias Zerhouni, M.D., announced the release of the agency's final policy on public access. The policy will become effective on May 2, 2005, and allows authors themselves to specify when their manuscripts should be made publicly available (up to 12 months) after publication. Under the original proposal, all author manuscripts were to be posted six months after publication.

MLA and AAHSL applaud NIH Director, Dr. Elias Zerhouni, for his leadership in establishing the "Policy on Enhancing Public Access to Archived Publications Resulting from NIH-Funded Research." By building on the existing information technology infrastructure housed at the National Library of Medicine (NLM), the NIH Public Access Policy can be an exceptionally cost-effective means to accomplish its goals of archiving, facilitating program management and enhancing accessibility to health care information. The estimated annual cost of the public access initiative is \$2-\$4 million. This amount reflects the anticipated costs to create and maintain a website for submitting authors' final manuscripts and for converting the manuscripts into PubMed Central's archival format.

*We recommend that the NIH re-evaluate the policy in the future and gravitate towards a required six-month release. We request Congress to encourage periodic evaluation of the plan as it is implemented in the coming months and years.*

Mr. Chairman, thank you again for the opportunity to present the views of the medical library community.