

Dear Hospital Administrator:

Congratulations! October is medical libraries month and your hospital has a library, which is a member of the national network of libraries sponsored by the National Library of Medicine as part of the National Institutes of Health. This network of medical librarians is engaged in sharing articles and resources, resulting in increased access to information for your patients and health professionals. Maintaining a physical library and employing a medical librarian ensures cost savings for your institution, as well as contributes to quality patient care.

Without a medical library, your health care professionals would not have convenient and cost-effective access to health information. Medical librarians work collaboratively via consortia licensing plans to set up relatively inexpensive access to print and electronic information.

- Quality health information costs money. Very few peer-reviewed health journals make their articles freely available on the Internet. Journal subscriptions, books, as well as clinical databases can cost thousands of dollars per year. An on site library ensures information is available to all staff members. This is much more cost effective than paying for individual or departmental subscriptions. According to a study by the Department of the Navy, “the return on investment for the use of the library for this function is approximately 200%.”<sup>i</sup>
- Many hospital administrators have told their health professionals that they will have access to health information without a library on site. This is simply not the case. In **insert state**, for example, unaffiliated health professionals must physically come to **insert your state resource library** in order access an article. Charges are incurred to retrieve articles not available at the library. An on site librarian may obtain the article for a greatly reduced cost.
- The following research article reinforces the need for residents to be aware of the institutional library and to go to the librarian for research questions. The American Journal of Medicine states, “Over 70% of (physicians) questions remain unanswered due to lack of time, forgetting the question and a perception that an answer would/could not be found.”<sup>ii</sup>

Medical librarians search more efficiently than non-librarians.

- Difficult MEDLINE searches require the skills of librarians trained in evidence based methods. . .Cooperative searching of MEDLINE, using the physician’s knowledge of clinical practice and the librarian’s knowledge of the database and search engine, produces the best search results and will serve to enhance your own [the physician’s] skills.<sup>iii</sup>
- A 1994 Library Quarterly study indicates a ROI of over 300% when library staff performs research and finds data, as opposed to when scientists and engineers acquire it themselves.<sup>iv</sup>

The National Network of Libraries of Medicine would like to congratulate you on continuing to support your librarian and library. I hope the above statistics and studies have helped to clarify the return on investment that your library provides.

Sincerely,

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<sup>i</sup> The Department of the Navy Chief Information Officer. "Information Cost and Value". "Information Literacy Toolkit" Department of the Navy. (<http://www.doncio.navy.mil/iltoolkit/default.htm>) (click on "tutorial", then "information cost and value")

ii Green ML, Ciampi MA, Ellis PJ. "Residents' medical information needs in clinic: Are they being met?" *Am J Med* 2000; 109(3): 218-223.

iii Gallagher PE. "How to Find Evidence When You Need It, part 3: A Clinician's Guide to MEDLINE: Tricks and Special Skills." *Annals of Emergency Medicine*; 39(5): 547-551.

iv Cooper, M.D., and G.F. McGregor. Using Article Photocopy Data in Bibliographic Models for Journal Collection Management. *Library Quarterly*, 1994; 64: 386-413.