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## **Healthnet: Connecticut Consumer Health Information Network**

by Alberta Richetelle, MPH, MSLS, Program Director, Healthnet

Authoritative, current information that is easily accessible plays an important role in helping individuals make informed decisions about their health. The University of Connecticut Health Center Library, recognizing the value of this kind of information, created Healthnet: the Connecticut Consumer Health Information Network, in 1985. Healthnet's primary goal is to make consumer health information accessible to the citizens of Connecticut through their local public libraries. Resource sharing is also encouraged among University of Connecticut's Health Center Library, Connecticut's public libraries, health agencies and associations, and self-help groups, enabling greater access to a wide range of consumer health information resources.

The philosophy underlying Healthnet's mission is that informed persons make more responsible and knowledgeable decisions about their health and medical care. An integral part of the program is to assist in making public libraries key access points for the community's consumer health information needs. Services Healthnet provides, such as recommending standard consumer health resources, and providing training to non-medical librarians on handling medical information requests, help public librarians respond effectively to questions from patrons who want information related to a personal health concern. The local public library serves as a neutral setting where a person can obtain information on a wide range of health topics, and be assisted by a professional librarian who objectively identifies relevant resources.

Since the program's inception, Healthnet staff have trained over 400 librarians in basic techniques for answering consumer health questions from library patrons. The training workshops discuss guidelines for providing medical information to consumers. Examples include ethical approaches to handling requests for medical advice and opinion, how to answer questions related to prescription medications, and what to do when a patron asks for assistance in making a diagnosis. The training also covers key features of titles on a core list of consumer health reference books, and which titles to consult to answer specific kinds of questions.

Another important service Healthnet provides is to assist public librarians in answering consumer health questions. If the public librarian exhausts the resources of the local library and is still unable to provide the information requested by the patron, the librarian can call Healthnet for assistance. Healthnet uses a variety of library resources to answer these questions. MEDLINE and PSYCINFO, two computer databases on the University of Connecticut Health Center's network, are used frequently. Another valuable source of information is Health Reference Center, a CD-ROM database of consumer health articles from journals and books. Other resources consulted include the Health Topics File, which is a collection of pamphlets, news clippings, and fact sheets on over 300 consumer health topics, and information sources on the Internet. (For more information on Health Reference Center and the Health Topics File, read page 3).

Recent questions referred to Healthnet have included: What are the physical effects of inhaling dust from carbide tipped sharpening tools? How is metatarsalgia diagnosed and treated and what are the long term effects of this condition? How effective is surgery for thoracic outlet syndrome and what is the length of recovery? What are the current drug treatments for epilepsy and what are the side effects of those drugs?

(continued page 3)

## ***Selected New Books***

by Lorna Wright, MLS

**Learning How the Heart Beats : The Making of a Pediatrician/** McCarthy, Claire, MD.  
New York, N.Y., U.S.A. : Viking, 1995.  
Book Stacks—upstairs **WZ 100 M124 1995**

**Making Monsters : False Memories, Psychotherapy, and Sexual Hysteria/** Ofshe, Richard.  
New York : Charles Scribner's, 1994.  
Book Stacks—upstairs **WM 193.5 .R4 O33m 1994**

**On Doctoring : Stories, Poems, Essays/** New York : Simon & Schuster, 1991.  
Book Stacks—upstairs **WZ 330 O53 1991**

**Silicon Snake Oil : Second Thoughts on the Information Highway/** Stoll, Clifford.  
New York : Doubleday, 1995.  
Book Stacks—upstairs **TK 5105.5 S875s 1995**

**Surgeons, Smallpox, and the Poor : A History of Medicine and Social Conditions in Nova Scotia, 1749-1799/**  
Marble, Allan Everett.  
Montreal ; Buffalo : McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993.  
Book Stacks—upstairs **WZ 70 DC2 M312 s 1993**

**Understanding AIDS : A Guide for Mental Health Professionals/** Kalichman, Seth C.  
Washington, D.C. : American Psychological Association, 1995.  
Book Stacks—upstairs **WD 308 K14u 1995**

## ***Selected Audiovisual Titles***

by Nancy Carter-Menendez, MLS

**Mind Your Bedside Manners!** <videorecording>  
Secaucus, N.J. : Network for Continuing Medical Education, 1992  
1 videocassette (41 min.) : sd., col. ; 1/2 in.  
**W 62 M663 1992 VHS**

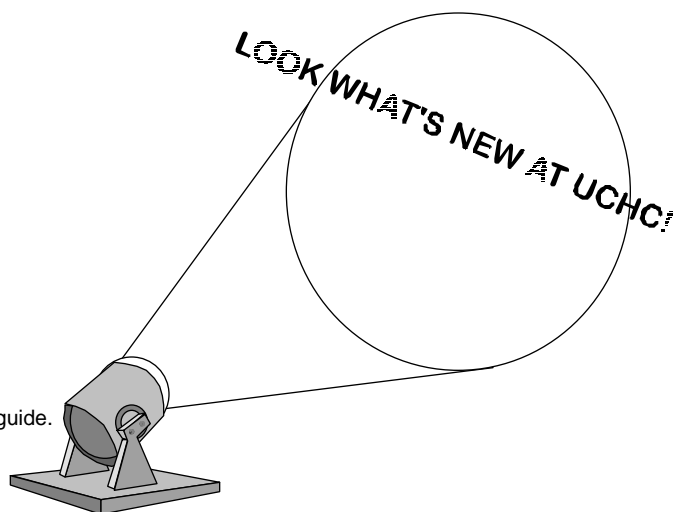
**Improving Communication with Patients** <videorecording>  
Chicago : The Association, 1987  
1 videocassette (VHS) (ca. 55 min.) : sd., col. ; 1/2 in. + 1 study guide.  
**W 62 I34c 1987 VHS**

**Managed Care and Medical Practice: Contamination or Opportunity?** <videorecording>  
Secaucus, N.J. : Network for Continuing Medical Education, 1994  
1 videocassette (45 min.) : sd., col. ; 1/2 in.  
**W 84 AA1 M266a 1994 VHS**

**The Physician Does Make a Difference: Recognizing the Faces of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse. Interviewing and Screening Techniques for Physicians** <videorecording>  
New York : Lovett Productions, Inc., 1991  
2 videocassettes (41 min.) : sd., col. ; 1/2 in. + 1 booklet.  
**WM 270 P578d 1991 VHS**

**A Shared Understanding : Bridging Racial and Socioeconomic Differences in Doctor-Patient Communications.** <videorecording>  
Chicago : University of Illinois at Chicago, Office of Media Services ; Chapel Hill, N.C. : Health Sciences Consortium, 1990  
1 videocassette (41 min.) : sd., col. ; 1/2 in. + 1 manual.  
**W 62 S531 1990 VHS**

Audiovisuals are available in a variety of formats, including audiocassettes, laser disks, slides and videocassettes. They may be borrowed from the library for up to two weeks, or you may view them in one of the library's carrels or group rooms. We welcome your requests and suggestions for future acquisitions; please contact Nancy Carter-Menendez at -4052 or [menendez@nso.uchc.edu](mailto:menendez@nso.uchc.edu).



## Consumer Health Resources at the University of Connecticut Health Center Library

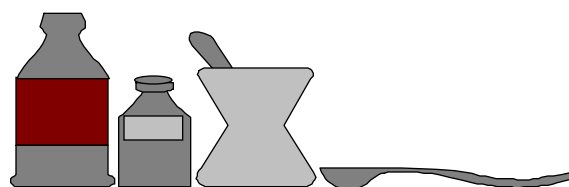
by Melissa A. Wisner, MLS

Health Reference Center and the Health Topics File are two important sources of consumer health information available in the University of Connecticut Health Center Library. Health Topics File is a collection of brochures, newspaper articles, catalogs and pamphlets maintained by the librarians of the Healthnet program. It is located near the elevator in the Reference area of the library. Topics include mammograms, multiple sclerosis, eating disorders, AIDS, contact lenses, dental care, the kidneys and more. Approximately 300 topics from the health/medical field are represented. Anyone should find this a valuable resource for sometimes hard to find information. The files are updated regularly, with an emphasis on current trends and health concerns. Information in the files spans the current 5 years. The Health Topics File is sometimes the first and best place to begin your search for consumer health information.

Health Reference Center is a health and medical CD-ROM database aimed at the consumer. Our first year medical and dental problem-based-learning students also find it very rewarding. What makes Health Reference Center so unique is the variety of information it contains. Information is collected from medical journals, such as the **New England Journal of Medicine**, health periodicals such as **Women's Health Magazine**, newsletters, pamphlets from medical organizations, reference sources, newspapers such as the **Washington Post** and the **New York Times**, and medical textbooks. Quite frequently, the references are available on Health Reference Center in full text. All of this information is easily printed free of charge too.

Health Reference Center is very intuitive database to use. All of the keys and commands you need to search are always noted on the monitor's screen. If you are familiar with searching other databases through Infotrac, you will be confident searching their Health Reference Center. After entering a term, you will be shown a corresponding heading with subheadings. For example if you

entered the term Lung Cancer, the database would take you to that topic under which you would find subheadings such as causes, diagnosis, treatment, case studies, drug therapy, statistics and more. Health Reference Center is a great resource for an overview or introduction to a health or medical topic. It can be an ideal place to start your research if you have never been to this library before, or need to explore a topic easily online. Health Reference Center is currently available on one stand-alone CD-ROM workstation. It remains one of our most popular and heavily used resources in the library.



### (Healthnet continued from page 1)

Other services Healthnet provides to public libraries include the following: identification and evaluation of consumer health books, pamphlets, online and CD-ROM databases, and Internet resources; preparation of subject bibliographies on consumer health topics; consultation on collection development related to consumer health information; publication of a newsletter to keep librarians informed of new consumer health information issues and resources; development of publicity programs and materials to promote public libraries as sources of consumer health information; and special projects to help public libraries develop consumer health information collections and services.

Twenty years ago, authoritative medical information written specifically for the consumer was difficult to locate. Now, it is easy to become overwhelmed with too much information. Healthnet provides a needed service to communities in Connecticut, by helping public libraries sort through the wealth of information available and identifying the best sources to use for consumer health information needs. The consumer benefits by having authoritative health information easily accessible in order to make important personal health decisions.

# THE FUTURE AS WE DON'T KNOW IT

by Elizabeth Connor, MLS, AHIP

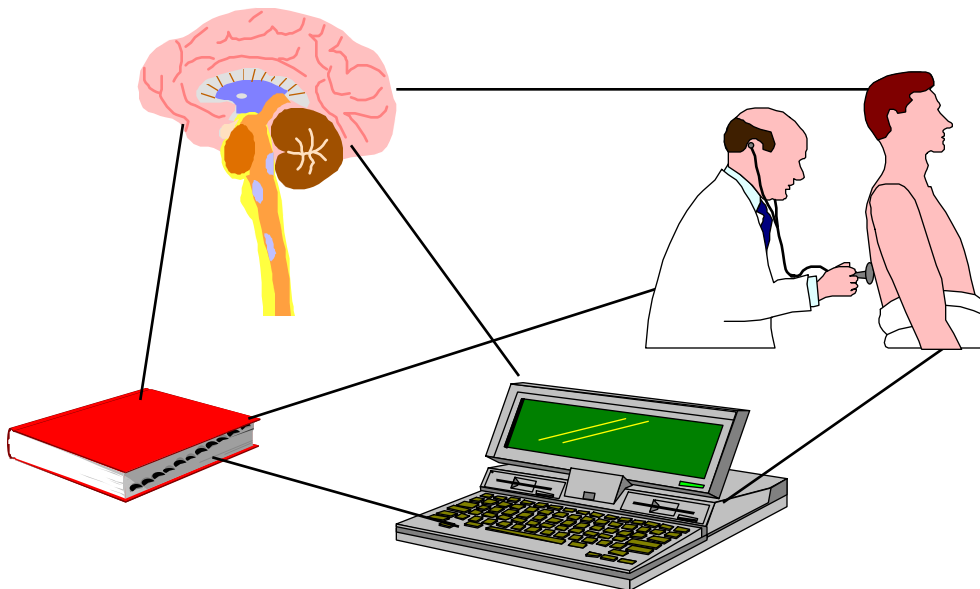
Over the last several years, library renovation and construction projects have included additional network connections installed along the baseboards or integrated into study furniture, accommodating nomadic faculty, staff and students who carry their laptops from place to place. Some universities install network drops for every pillow (!), and require incoming students to purchase specific hardware configurations as a condition of matriculation, for use during their academic careers.

In addition to equipping or upgrading dozens of scholarly workstations within a library facility, recent trends include increasing the variety of networked resources, improving overall campus connectivity and extending technology and resources outside the physical boundaries of the library.

Planning library services to support our new problem-based learning (PBL) curriculum allowed me to mentally design classrooms that encourage discussion, critical thinking and student resourcefulness. Technologically sophisticated classrooms would permit context-based library instruction, and would extend bibliographic and full-text resources throughout the organization.

The ideal PBL classroom would benefit from continued strategic planning related to systems, hardware and software, but my mind's eye envisions high-tech cubbies located throughout the health center. Yes, an improved web presence will include resources similar to the Interactive Medical Student Lounge (<http://falcon.cc.ukans.edu/~nsween/>), and distribute correlative medical problem solving cases throughout the campus.

Corporate sponsors are needed to fund design projects to retrofit each PBL classroom to include ergonomic chairs, amoeba-shaped laminate discussion tables, state-of-the-art projection systems, electronic white boards, high-tech anatomic models and several network connections. The rooms should resemble the first class lounges of major airlines, with comfortable coordinated furnishings, adjustable task lighting, good acoustics, and telecommunications lines.



## EDITOR'S TOP 10 CONSUMER HEALTH URL'S



URL's are uniform resource locators. They are addresses for specific Web documents and home pages. They are Case Sensitive, so remember to enter them *exactly* as they appear below in the box labeled *Netsite/Location*. If there is already an URL entered in the box, just use your mouse to highlight over that URL entirely then begin typing in the new URL. If you are using Mosaic, pull down the File Menu and select the *Open URL* command. Then type in the desired URL in the box that appears.

**<http://192.231.162.210/tfi/hotlists/health.html>**

-links to resources on nutrition, fitness, cancer, diabetes, drugs/alcohol and more.

**[http://www.med.harvard.edu/publications/Health\\_Publications/](http://www.med.harvard.edu/publications/Health_Publications/)**

-online versions of the Harvard Public Health Letter, the Harvard Heart Letter and more. Timely, reliable health news and education for both the consumer and health professionals.

**<http://www1a.inter.net/hospice>**

-The Connecticut Hospice, Inc. home page with information on hospice care, volunteers, upcoming events and seminars and medicare coverage for hospice care.

**<http://ificinfo.health.org/info-par.htm>**

-health information for parents and parents to be. Links to resources on child nutrition, healthy eating during pregnancy, ADHD, keeping physically fit and more.

**<http://204.156.151.115/publcons.html>**

-briefly annotated and contact information on a variety of healthcare publications available for consumers.

**<http://vm.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/cos-toc.html>**

-information from the FDA on cosmetic safety, cosmetic products frequently inquired about from consumers including animal grooming aids, eye products, sunscreens, and weight loss products. Also includes information on labeling, FDA requirements and cosmetic help for cancer patients.

**<http://oncolink.upenn.edu/>**

-the first multimedia oncology information resource on the Internet. Information for patients, families and healthcare personnel on cancer causes, screening, prevention, clinical trials and financial issues for patients.

**<http://www.nova.edu/Inter-Links/health/consumer.html>**

-a good site with links to a variety of consumer health topics.

**<gopher://gopher.uiuc.edu:70/11/UI/CSF/health/healthinfo/diseases/cold>**

-it was able to stop the martians in War of the Worlds. Check out this site for information on catching and curing the common cold.

**<http://www.amhrt.org/>**

-the American Heart Association's home page. Information for consumers about being heart smart. Rated in the top 5% of all Web sites.

## INFORMATION SERVICES INSTRUCTION

The Information Services Department of the Lyman Maynard Stowe Library has just completed more than a semester's length of instruction on the Internet, the World Wide Web and MEDLINE. We began the registration process back in early July. We have taken the past few weeks to review our progress to date and the evaluation forms completed by participants in the classes. You will notice a few important changes in our educational offerings in the upcoming semester. First of all, the classes have been revised and updated to provide participants with the most for their time. For those folks out there who have only heard about the Internet, but have little to no knowledge of computers, we will be scheduling larger group instruction in the campus auditoria to provide basic overview and information about the Internet/Web. This class is recommended for the first time user, and is called **Internet 1: The Basics**.

The two previously separate classes, Introductions to the Internet and the Web have been combined into one class, **Internet 2: Hands-on**. The new class will cover the significant points from each of the two classes and omit any previous overlap. This class is designed to move at a faster pace, and is designed for the person with some knowledge of the Internet/Web, a Windows environment, and use of a PC and a mouse. Classes will still be an hour long, with hands on time included.

There will also be some intermediate classes available this semester as well. The first is **Internet 3: Search Engines/Effective Searching**. This class will be available in a classroom setting and in markup on the Web. This is aimed at individuals who have experience using the Internet and the Web, and use them to search for information regularly.

We have also designed some tailored Internet instruction for different UConn Health Center Departments. We will be offering special Internet resources classes on Public Health, Nursing, Pediatrics and Statistics. These types of classes will fall under the category **Internet 4: Specialty Instruction**. Future classes are in the works, and we welcome your suggestions. Registrations will be taken one month in advance only, to avoid scheduling conflicts for participants. Those people on waiting lists from last semester will be called first to register for the upcoming months. Any questions or comments please email LIBREF@nso.uchc.edu

## Harvard Health Letter Celebrates 20 Years

In 1975, the first issue of the Harvard Health Letter was published. Timothy Johnson, a Harvard Physician, and Stephen E. Goldfinger faculty dean for continuing education and now editor in chief of the HHL, wanted to produce a newsletter that would take advantage of the resources at Harvard to bring state-of-the-art medical information to the general public. He and his staff wanted to empower people to make better lifestyle and preventive medicine choices.

The Harvard Health Letter has undergone some format changes over the years, but it has always provided accurate, up-to-date medical information for consumers, patients, and health professionals. Articles have covered topics such as prostate cancer, cholesterol studies, mammograms, nutrition and surgical procedures. The Lyman Maynard Stowe Library maintains a subscription to the Harvard Health Letter from March 1994- present. Other Harvard Health publications in our collection include the Harvard Women's Health Watch and the Harvard Mental Health Letter. If you would like more information about the Harvard Health Letter, write to:

Harvard Health Letter  
P.O. Box 420300  
Palm Coast, Florida  
32142-0300

Our warmest thanks and congratulations Harvard Health Letter! Here's to another twenty years!

## World AIDS Day 1995

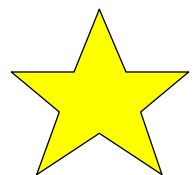
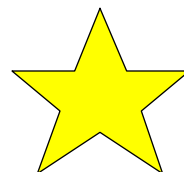
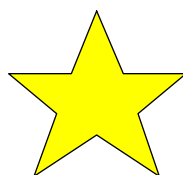
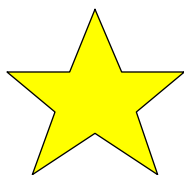
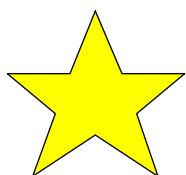
Friday December 1, 1995 was World AIDS Day. The theme for this year's day of education and awareness in the fight against AIDS, was "Shared Rights, Shared Responsibilities." Staff of the Lyman Maynard Stowe Library recognized the day with a special promotion in the library's lobby. **Clara Acosta**, a social worker in the Pediatric AIDS Clinic here at the University of Connecticut Health Center, set up a collage of posters created by the children and families in the clinic, depicting their thoughts and emotions about AIDS. The posters were later on display in a Hartford church for a candle light vigil. **Timothy Roberts**, Outreach Coordinator for the NN/LM New England Region was on hand to demonstrate the three free AIDS databases available through the National Library of Medicine. The library also had a variety of publications, posters and brochures highlighting Internet Resources discussing AIDS/HIV, STD's, safer sex, precautions for health care workers, and selected audiovisual, reference, serial and monographic resources from our library's collection. Some copies of these handouts are available in the Reference Department if you would like to pick up an extra. **Nancy Carter-Menendez**, an Information Services librarian previewed some slides of the AIDS virus and videos from the Network for Continuing Medical Education, on AIDS prevention and treatment. We were pleased to participate in an international day of AIDS awareness and will continue to offer services and access to the latest medical information for all those interested and in need.

## MEET YOUR REPRESENTATIVES...

This year, the Library Advisory Committee (LAC) is composed of the following members:

MEMBER	UCHC DEPARTMENT	REPRESENTING
Dr. Robert L. Jungas, Chair	Physiology	Basic Sciences -Medicine
Dr. Andrea Apter	Medicine	Clinical Medicine
Mr. Dan Cave	Dental Student	Dental Students
Dr. Fran Dimario	Pediatrics	Clinical Medicine
Ms. Alexandra Elliot	Medical Student '96	Medical Students
Mr. Steve Gomez	Medical Student '97	Medical Students
Mr. R. Steve Hall	Dental Student '96	Dental Students
Mr. Tim Kuwada	Medical Student '98	Medical Students
Dr. John Nuetzel	Surgery	Clinical Medicine
Dr. Klaus Nuki	Oral Diagnosis	Clinical Dentistry
Ms. Beng Jit Tan	Medical Student '97	Medical Students
Dr. Dori Taylor-Sullivan	Organization & Staff Development	Hospital
Mr. Walter Trymbulak	Graduate Student	Graduate Students
Dr. Ron Vullo	Pediatric Dentistry	Clinical Dentistry
Dr. William Upholt	Biostruc. & Func.	Basic Sciences -Dentistry
Dr. Scott Wetstone	Community Medicine	Clinical Medicine
Mr. Andy Weimeyer	Dental Student '98	Dental Students
Dr. Ralph D. Arcari	Library Director	Library Staff
Ms. Marion Holena Levine	Library Associate Dir.	Library Staff

LAC members are appointed by the Vice President and Provost for Health Affairs and advise the Library Director and UCHC Administration on library policies, budget and procedures as they relate to library services provided to the UCHC community. If you have any concerns about Library services and programs, or want more information on the deliberations of this committee, please contact your representative, any member of the committee, or Library Administration (x2840).



Update is published four times a year.  
If you have any comments, questions, or submissions for the newsletter please refer them to Melissa A. Wisner, Editor  
wisner@nso.uchc.edu  
Eat fruits and vegetables every day!

**Update** winter 1996

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