



# CHRC News

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## INTRODUCTION

This issue of the *CHRC News* features reports by CHRC Project Manager Julie Whelan about the web's role in a local pediatric practice as well as news from the Center for Information Therapy. Reference Services Librarian Linda Rossman, from the Perkins Braille and Talking Book Library, describes their unique services in our occasional series, *Massachusetts Models*

## In the News

Our thanks to the Editors of *Boston Region BRiefly* for their kind mention of CHRC services in the January, 2002 issue. Please don't hesitate to get in touch with us for assistance. Our complete contact information is on the last page.

## Treadwell Staff Notes Remarks from Julia Whelan

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Some health care providers are integrating the Internet and web based information resources directly into patient care. At the recent *Health on the Internet Conference* (February 2002, Sheraton Boston), for example, we toured the web page of Pediatric Health Care at Newton-Wellesley

P.C., <http://www.pediatrichealthcare.com/>, a pediatric practice firmly committed to using web technology. Patients and their families can use the web site to query a doctor or nurse, request a school/camp form, request a referral, renew a prescription or schedule an appointment. When patients join the practice, they can submit their medical history forms online. Web site utilities allow them to store and access their medical records from the web site. Dr. Eugenia Marcus, a pediatrician in this group practice, listed the many advantages she has discovered in using the Internet as part of her practice:

- It eliminates telephone tag.
- It increases communication. E-mail makes it easier, especially for adolescents, to communicate directly with the doctor on sensitive issues. E-mail is also self-documenting and facilitates education and follow-up.
- The doctor can keep in touch with families, even at a distance, while simultaneously increasing productivity.
- Internet use can decrease the number of office visits: it is estimated that as many as 20% of office visits could be shifted to the Internet.
- Because patients can e-mail or scan in documents such as school evaluations or pictures of a rash, the doctor knows patient questions ahead of time and

her thoughts are more organized; her responses more complete.

Patients have recommended web-based consultations because they may eliminate the following chores: bundling children into the car, driving to the office and searching for a parking space, sitting in a waiting room full of sick children, and missing work. (For this last reason, many employers are interested in supporting web consultations.)

Click on “Education” on the web site home page to see links to selected information resources. Dr. Marcus either refers patients to a particular site or cuts and pastes information into her e-mail responses. Working with clinicians to determine how these information resources are selected and utilized seems a prime opportunity for medical librarians to participate in the process. There are many issues that must be solved before the practice of internet medicine can become more widespread. Currently, health insurance does not reimburse clinicians for these activities. Pediatric Health Care at Newton-Wellesley charges patients a web fee when they join. Future plans include a sliding fee for consulting the doctor via e-mail which would vary depending on the complexity of the question. During office visits, Dr. Marcus takes time to demonstrate how to use the web utilities and clarifies what types of questions are appropriate for this service and which should always be handled by phone. One of the biggest problems is the slowness of the average Internet connection. Questions of access are crucial. Currently, such integration of the Internet into medical

practice could only work in a highly educated, affluent community. The proliferation of cell phone use across all segments of society and increased cell phone access to the Internet may serve to broaden these services to larger segments of the population.

***Center for Information Therapy***  
<http://www.informationtherapy.org>

In a related news story, the Center for Information Therapy was launched in Washington, D.C. The Center plans to lobby Congress to mandate that “information prescriptions” become part of standard medical care. The group also wants reimbursement for these activities from Medicare, Medicaid and HMOs. Patients would receive information before a visit, at the time of care, as part of discharge, and follow-up. Medical librarians have expressed concerns that Healthwise, the commercial founder of the group, is using this effort as a vehicle for self-promotion. Additionally, the process they are lobbying for does not include librarians as either information providers or evaluators.

The integration of consumer health information into medical care, whether via the Internet or more traditional media, is a hot topic and certainly one that librarians everywhere will want to follow and express their opinions.

***Care for the Patient with Cancer***

Martha Stone, Treadwell Library’s Coordinator for Reference Services, presented “Using the Internet to Search for

Cancer Resources” at MGH’s Center for Clinical and Professional Development forum, “Cancer Nursing: Back to Basics” in March. If you would like a copy of the handout, consisting of a two-page annotated list of both general and specialized cancer web sites, please contact us.

**American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS)**

<http://www.abms.org/>

The ABMS now requires registration to use their "Who's Certified" search. The site remains free but requires you to input your e-mail address. A password is instantly generated and sent your e-mail address. However, the ABMS has imposed a limit of five free searches per 24-hour period. Reuse your password at subsequent searches, but if you have forgotten it, click on **Forgot my password** and a new one will be issued immediately.

**Consumer Health Information for California**

<http://nmlm.gov/psr/chic.html#trainingmodules>

Developed by the Pacific Southwest Regional Medical Library (PSRML) in collaboration with other California libraries, the overall goal of the project was to facilitate the ability of public library staff to answer consumer health questions. Three modules are available in PDF. The information presented is straight-forward and well-written. There are some excellent mock health reference interview scenarios using real-life examples, as well as information about the legal/liability aspects of dispensing health information in Module

I. Module II covers use of print materials available in most public library collections to answer consumer health information questions, while Module III describes online resources available to answer consumer health questions, including those made available by the National Library of Medicine.

**Lab Tests Online**

<http://www.labtestsonline.org/>

**Lab Tests Online** is the product of a collaboration among professional societies representing the clinical laboratory community, and organized by the American Association for Clinical Chemistry (AACC). This excellent web site allows you to search by **name of test**, by **condition/diseases**, or by **age group**. For example, choose *AFP Maternal* from the drop-down menu of tests. Synonyms and related tests are listed. There is a brief summary of this blood test, used to assess the risk of carrying a fetus with abnormalities. Click on “Links” for a brief listing of web sites appropriate to the test being carried out. In another example, choose *Peptic Ulcer* from the drop-down menu of **Conditions/Diseases**. There is a brief, understandable description of the condition, pop-up boxes to define terms such as antigen or enzyme, and information about any related tests, which in this case is the *Helicobacter Pylori* Test.

**Massachusetts Models**

By Linda Rossman, M.S., Reference Services Librarian, Perkins Braille and Talking Book Library.

**Background:** The Perkins Braille and Talking Book Library has been providing special library services since 1830. In 1931, it became a founding member of the Library of Congress Program for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. The library is housed at the Perkins School for the Blind, the first school for the blind in the United States, chartered in 1829. We currently provide services to libraries and schools that serve eligible individuals, as well as to 18,000 residents of Massachusetts who are blind, visually impaired, or cannot read standard print due to a physical disability or reading impairment.

The library is a cooperating member of the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS), which is a division of the Library of Congress and is composed of 141 network libraries nationwide. The program is administered by the Perkins School for the Blind with funding from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners.

The audiocassettes recorded by the NLS for the talking book libraries differ from the standard commercial audiotapes that public libraries purchase. These tapes are specially recorded on four tracks rather than the standard two tracks. The four-track system enables compliance with the U.S. copyright law and minimizes the number of tapes needed for each title. The library lends, at no charge, four-track cassette players to play these tapes. All materials are sent to and from the library and its patrons postage-free, as mandated by an act of Congress. Between 1800 and 2000 books on cassette

are sent out per day, to individuals and libraries.

**Reference Service:** The reference department specializes in providing a wide array of information on disabilities in whatever format the patron prefers: large print, braille, e-mail, diskette or over the phone. Blind people who use computers receive an electronic version of the file and then use adaptive technology such as JAWS, screen reading software that allows the computer to “speak” to the user, and ZoomText, software that enlarges the computer image.

The reference department publishes topic bibliographies covering titles in both cassette and braille format. About ten percent of the library’s users prefer braille. Librarians also serve as information clearinghouses to help connect people to the agencies and resources they need. In the future, the library will be initiating an online “Ask A Reference Librarian” service, as well as distributing its newsletter, *Dots & Decibels*, to Massachusetts public libraries.

Four reader’s advisors are available to provide assistance to all library patrons. The library provides most of its services over the phone, but patrons are also welcome to come in and browse new braille and cassette titles in our drop-in facility, located next door to the library.

**How to register:** Individuals unable to read print books due to a disability are eligible for services. Hospitals, libraries, schools and other institutions that serve people who qualify are also eligible. Libraries can

arrange to have a deposit collection of braille and talking book titles on-site. In the case of blindness, visual impairment or physical limitations, eligibility for service can be certified by any helping professional, including a librarian, therapist, or social worker. However, in the case of a reading disability, a medical doctor needs to sign the form, certifying that the condition is organically based. Call 617-972-7240 for more registration information.

**Customized Service Plans:** Registered users may set up automated preference profiles by subject or authors, and new titles will be automatically mailed on a regular basis in the format the user prefers.

**Catalog:** Keystone Library Automation Systems (KLAS) is the online catalog, available for searching by the general public, although only registered library patrons can actually sign on and request books electronically. The catalog can be searched by title, author, subject, or keyword, and results can be limited by media format. It can be accessed through the Perkins home page, <http://www.perkins.org>, or directly at <http://www.klas.com/talkingbooks/mass>

**Collection:** The Library holds approximately 65,000 book titles for adults and children and subscribes to 100 magazines. Fiction and non-fiction bestsellers, biographies, westerns, mysteries, romances and how-to books are in high demand.

**Children's Services:** The Children's Services Department provides assistance to juvenile patrons, their parents, caregivers,

teachers and librarians. In 1999 a Summer Reading Program was inaugurated.

**Contact information:** If you have any questions about our services or would like to sign up as an individual or institution, please contact us:

General Information and Reader's Advisors:  
617-972-7240; 800-852-3133

Fax : 617-972-7363

Reference: 617-972-7245

E-mail: [rossmanl@perkins.pvt.k12.ma.us](mailto:rossmanl@perkins.pvt.k12.ma.us)  
(after late April, 2002 e-mail address will be:  
[Linda.Rossman@perkins.org](mailto:Linda.Rossman@perkins.org))

**Location:** The Perkins Braille and Talking Book Library is located at 175 North Beacon Street, Watertown, MA, 02472-2790. It is served by MBTA bus line #71 from Harvard Square and #70 from Central Square.

**Hours:** Monday-Friday, 8:30 – 5

**Web site:** <http://www.perkins.org>

### **In Print**

**The guide to living with bladder cancer /** Mark P. Schoenberg and the faculty and staff of the Johns Hopkins Genitourinary Oncology Group / Baltimore : Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000. This book is scientifically grounded, well-written, comprehensive, and includes a glossary. There are only a few illustrations. The author states in the Introduction that "this book contains very little information about [alternative or complementary] approaches."

**Instructions for geriatric patients /** William A. Sodeman / 2nd ed./

Philadelphia : W.B. Saunders, 1999.  
Includes CD-ROM. These are generic,  
large-print, jargon-free instructions on a  
wide variety of topics ranging from  
dementia to insomnia, dry eyes, and edema.  
There are sample diets, when appropriate  
(e.g. lactose controlled, gluten restricted.)  
The CD-ROM can be used to create  
customized instructions.

**Mayo Clinic guide to self-care : answers  
for everyday health problems** / Philip T.  
Hagen, editor-in-chief / 2nd ed. / Rochester,  
Minn. : Mayo Clinic, 1999. Covering 150  
common medical conditions, this book also  
includes sections on workplace health (e.g.,  
coping with stress) and being a wise health  
consumer (e.g., a guide to home medical  
testing kits.) Each entry, from tick bites to  
ankle pain to ear infections, is illustrated by  
a detailed line drawing.

What would you like to see covered in the  
*CHRC News*? Please don't hesitate to tell us!

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**<http://www.mgh.harvard.edu/library/chrcindex.html>**