

**Medical Library Association and Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries  
Statement for the Record on FY14 Appropriations for the National Library of Medicine  
Submitted to the House Subcommittee on L-HHS, Education & Related Agencies  
March 15, 2013**

**Summary of FY14 Recommendations**

Support funding for the National Library of Medicine (NLM) at the highest possible level, and support the medical library community's role in NLM's outreach, telemedicine, disaster preparedness, health information technology initiatives, and health care reform implementation.

**Introduction**

The Medical Library Association (MLA) and Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries (AAHSL) thank the Subcommittee for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding FY14 appropriations for the National Library of Medicine (NLM), an agency of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Working in partnership with the NIH and other Federal agencies, NLM is the key link in the chain that translates biomedical research into practice, making the results of research readily available to all who need it.

**NLM Leverages NIH Investments in Biomedical Research**—In today's challenging budget environment, we recognize the difficult decisions Congress faces as it seeks to improve our nation's fiscal stability. We thank the Subcommittee for its long-standing commitment to strengthening NLM's budget. In FY14 and beyond, it is critical to continue augmenting NLM's baseline budget to support expansion of its information resources, services, and programs which collect, organize, and make readily accessible rapidly expanding biomedical knowledge resources and data. NLM maximizes the return on the investment in research conducted by the NIH and other organizations. The Library makes the results of biomedical information more accessible to researchers, clinicians, business innovators, and the public, enabling such data and

information to be used more efficiently and effectively to drive innovation and improve health. NLM plays a critical role in accelerating nationwide deployment of health information technology, including electronic health records (EHRs) by leading the development, maintenance and dissemination of key standards for health data interchange that are now required of certified EHRs. NLM also contributes to Congressional priorities related to drug safety through its efforts to expand its clinical trial registry and results database in response to legislative requirements, and to the nation's ability to prepare for and respond to disasters.

**Growing Demand for NLM's Basic Services**—Everyday, medical librarians across the nation use NLM services to assist clinicians, students, researchers, and the public in accessing information they need to save lives and improve health. NLM delivers more than a trillion bytes of data to millions of users daily that helps researchers advance scientific discovery and accelerate its translation into new therapies; provides health practitioners with information that improves medical care and lowers its costs; and gives the public access to resources and tools that promote wellness and disease prevention. Without NLM, our nation's medical libraries would be unable to provide the quality information services that our nation's health professionals, educators, researchers and patients increasingly need.

NLM's data repositories and online integrated services such as GenBank, PubMed, and PubMed Central are revolutionizing medicine and ushering in an era of personalized medicine in which care is based on an individual's unique genetic profile. GenBank is the definitive source of gene sequence information. PubMed, with more than 22 million citations to the biomedical literature, is the world's most heavily used source of bibliographic information. Approximately 760,000 new citations were added in FY12, and it was searched more than 2.2 billion times. PubMed Central is NLM's freely accessible digital repository of full-text biomedical journal

articles. On a typical weekday more than 700,000 users download 1.4 million full-text articles, including those submitted in compliance with the NIH Public Access Policy.

As the world's largest and most comprehensive medical library, NLM's traditional print and electronic collections continue to steadily increase each year, standing at more than 11.4 million items—books, journals, technical reports, manuscripts, microfilms, photographs and images. By selecting, organizing and ensuring permanent access to health sciences information in all formats, NLM ensures the availability of this information for future generations, making it accessible to all Americans, irrespective of geography or ability to pay, and guaranteeing that citizens can make the best, most informed decisions about their healthcare.

**Encourage NLM Partnerships**—NLM's outreach programs are essential to MLA and AAHSL membership and to the profession. Through the National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NNLM), with over 6,000 members in communities nationwide, these activities educate medical librarians, health professionals and the general public about NLM's services and train them in the most effective use of these services. The NNLM promotes educational outreach for public libraries, secondary schools, senior centers and other consumer-based settings, and its emphasis on outreach to underserved populations helps reduce health disparities among large sections of the American public. NLM's "Partners in Information Access" program improves access by local public health officials to information which prevents, identifies and responds to public health threats and ensures every public worker has electronic health information services that protect the public's health.

NLM's MedlinePlus provides consumers with trusted, reliable health information on more than 900 topics in English and Spanish. It has become a top destination for those seeking information on the Internet, attracting nearly 850,000 visitors daily. Other products and services

that benefit public health and wellness include NIH *MedlinePlus Magazine* and NIH *MedlinePlus Salud*, available in doctors' offices nationwide, and NLM's MedlinePlus Connect—a utility which enables clinical care organizations to implement specific links from their electronic health records systems to patient education materials in MedlinePlus.

MLA and AAHSL applaud the success of NLM's outreach initiatives, and we look forward to continuing to work with NLM on these programs.

**Emergency Preparedness and Response**—Through its Disaster Information Management Research Center, NLM collects and organizes disaster-related health information, ensures effective use of libraries and librarians in disaster planning and response, and develops information services to assist responders. NLM responds to specific disasters worldwide with specialized information resources appropriate to the need, including information on bioterrorism, chemical emergencies, fires and wildfires, earthquakes, tornadoes, and pandemic disease outbreaks. MLA and NLM continue to develop the Disaster Information Specialization (DIS) program to build the capacity of librarians and other interested professionals to provide disaster-related health information outreach. Working with libraries and U.S. publishers, NLM's Emergency Access Initiative makes available free full-text articles from hundreds of biomedical journals and reference books for use by medical teams responding to disasters. MLA and AAHSL ask the Subcommittee to support NLM's role in this crucial area which ensures continuous access to health information and use of libraries and librarians when disasters occur.

**Health Information Technology and Bioinformatics**—For more than 40 years, NLM has supported informatics research, training and the application of advanced computing and informatics to biomedical research and healthcare delivery including telemedicine projects. Many of today's informatics leaders are graduates of NLM-funded informatics research

programs at universities nationwide. A number of the country's exemplary electronic and personal health record systems benefit from findings developed with NLM grant support.

The importance of NLM's work in health information technology continues to grow as the nation moves toward more interoperable health information technology systems. A leader in supporting the development, maintenance, and dissemination of standard clinical terminologies for free nationwide use (e.g., SNOWMED), NLM works closely with the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology to promote the adoption of interoperable electronic records, and has developed tools to make it easier for EHR developers and users to implement accepted health data standards in their systems.

MLA is a nonprofit, educational organization with 4,000 health sciences information individual and institutional members. Founded in 1898, MLA provides lifelong educational opportunities, supports a knowledge base of health information research, and works with a network of partners to promote the importance of quality information for improved health to the health care community and the public. The Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries (AAHSL) supports academic health sciences libraries and directors in advancing the patient care, research, education and community service missions of academic health centers through visionary executive leadership and expertise in health information, scholarly communication, and knowledge management.

Thank you again for the opportunity to present our views. We look forward to continuing this dialogue and supporting the Subcommittee's efforts to secure the highest possible funding level for NLM in FY14 and the years beyond to support the Library's mission and growing responsibilities. Information about NLM and its programs can be found at <http://www.nlm.nih.gov>.