Health Research Associate Program:
Dana Library Outreach for Health Information Access in Vermont and the Champlain Valley

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Background

How do health care providers find answers to questions important to patient care without a library or librarian?

Facts: Majority of Vermont primary care providers in 1 or 2 clinician practice; no affiliation or access with academic medical center resources (UVM or Dartmouth)
How do state health agencies keep up with trends and issues in public health and wellness?

Fact: Vermont Dept. of Health and other agencies need evidence from research but have few journal subscriptions and little training in literature searching.
How can small hospitals that can’t afford a librarian provide information services for their employees?

**Fact:** Only 6 out of 16 Vermont hospitals have a library with paid staff; 8 have 25 beds or less
Dana Libraries’ Health Research Associate (HRA) Program helps fill the gap.

– Can’t substitute for a Library though
What is HRA?

• Outreach program to provide needed information to the health care communities of Vermont
• Conducted on a cost-recovery basis or UVM income expense account
• Dana Library program since 1991
• Similar to UVM Extension - provides services to the community
What Services Do We Offer?

Services include:

- journal article delivery
- interlibrary loan
- reference desk services
- literature searches
- information literacy classes
- book borrowing

Journal Article Delivery – *most requested service*

983 articles requested in FY 2013

- 80% (781/983) from Dana/UVM Libraries
- 20% (192/983) were interlibrary loans
Detailed Literature Searches

- Conducted by medical librarians
- 31 requested in 2013
- Majority from hospital clinicians
- Related directly to patient care or health issues

Examples of topics:

- Management of weight after treatment for hypertension
- Association of exposure to heavy metals with learning disabilities
- How to taper cardioactive IV medications in the ICU

Literature searches take Dana librarians 1.5 (avg.) hours to complete.
Education Sessions

- Presented by the HRA Education Representative
- 15 sessions in 2013 - all corners of VT

Topic: HOW TO

- Identify health information from PubMed and Internet sources
- Request journal articles and books from Dana
How do HRA’s Ask ?s

By phone, email and the online form.

The online form to request articles for HRA’s greatly speeds up service.

- Requesters give their name and the HRA organization they are associated with
- Dana supplies the article
- The activity is recorded
- Organization receives bill for all services charged to them that month
Who are HRA Members?

There are 30 members in the program. The health care related organizations are the core of the membership.

Vermont Area Health Education Centers

- CVAHEC – St. Albans
- NEVAHEC – St. Johnsbury
- SVAHEC – Brattleboro

- Founded by federal grants from the Health Resources and Services Administration
- Independent non-profit agencies (originally administered through the UVM AHEC)
- Focus on health workforce development
- Fund continuing education for primary health care providers
- Help pay back student loans for providers who stay in VT
Hospitals

The 4 hospitals include:

- Northwestern Medical Center, St. Albans
- Porter Hospital, Middlebury
- Gifford Hospital, Randolph
- Champlain Valley Physician’s Hospital, Plattsburgh (CVPH)
Vermont State Agencies or Organizations

- Vermont Department of Health (VDH)
- Vermont Department of Mental Health
- Vermont Board of Nursing
- Vermont Medical Society – Education & Research Foundation

VDH requested the most services last year - 313 transactions.
Northwestern Medical Center - 129

VDH and Dana Library
- Partnering with a National funded initiative with Departments of Health throughout the U.S.
- Grant provides subscriptions to electronic journals databases and textbooks relevant to public health
- The VDH website has a link to Dana’s HRA requests for services webpage
Other Customers

- Albany College of Pharmacy, Colchester
- Private practice clinicians – dentists, doctors
- Corporations – PKC and Food Science Corp.
- Law firms

Firms and businesses pay a higher membership fee.
Website and Research Guide for HRA and Unaffiliated Users

http://library.uvm.edu/dana/services/unaffiliated.php

http://danaguides.uvm.edu/freeresources
Why Do All This?

*It’s part of our mission as a public land grant institution and it’s important because*

Access to the best patient-oriented research evidence and its application to patient care with patient values –

- changes decisions,
- avoids medical errors,
- reduces costs,
- and sometimes,
- saves lives.

Reference: To err is human: building a safer health system / Linda T. Kohn, Janet M. Corrigan, and Molla S. Donaldson, editors; Committee on Quality Health Care in America, Institute of Medicine. QZ 42 T627 2000
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Questions?