

# Towards Requiring a Medical Librarian in Hospitals: What We Learned from the Vital Pathways Medical Education Task Force

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# JMLA Article

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# Vital Pathways: The Hospital Library Project 2006-2008

- Appointed by MLA President M. J. Tooley in 2005
- 2006-2008
- 3 Subcommittees:
  - Task Force on the State of Hospital Librarians – the Survey
  - Task Force on the Health Sciences Librarian in Medical Education
  - Task Force on Vital Pathways for Hospital Librarians – The Report

# Why was Vital Pathways created?

- 2004 – 2005 serious hospital budget crisis nationwide:
  - Hospital closings and mergers ►► library downsizing, budget cuts and closings
    - Librarian positions lost
  - Accrediting organizations changed requirements for access to information

# Vital Pathways Charge

*....to review existing data and trends in the status of hospital librarians, collect data on the links between libraries and quality and financial outcomes, and develop an action plan for MLA to use this information to influence hospital decision-makers and key leaders in the health care field.*

- Partnership with Hospital Library Section

# Vital Pathways 3 task forces:

## 1. Survey Task Force

- Gather data on number of hospitals with professional librarians and services provided
- Identify sources of data on status of professional hospital librarians and services offered
- Review data, identify gaps and trends, determine additional information needs

# Vital Pathways Project Task Forces

## 2. Medical Education Task Force

– Describe roles for librarians in:

- achieving core competencies for residents and health care students
- working with organizations that set educational standards, e.g., ACGME, RRCs, AAMC, LCME, AOA, etc

- Articulate services performed by Hospital Librarians

# Vital Pathways Task Forces

## 3. The Document/Report

- Develop current and future scenarios and roles for hospital librarians
- Suggest collaborations with other librarians, organizations, institutions, and agencies
- Recommend actions that MLA, HLS, and individual librarians can initiate to advocate for hospital librarians and the services provided
- Create a report similar to AAHSL's *Charting the Future* to serve as a resource and guide

# Task Force on the Health Sciences Librarian in Medical Education

- Reviewed ACGME and AOA standards for Graduate Medical Education (*Nursing and Allied Health education, also CME were outside the committee's charge*)
- Literature Search on role of medical librarians in medical education
- “Services Performed” list
- “Standard Statement”

# Task Force on Medical Education

- 2005 ACGME Standards for hospital libraries with residency programs read as follows:
  - *“Provide ready access to a major medical library at the institution where the residents are located or through arrangement with a convenient nearby institution”*
    - It is not clear what this means!!
  - “Library services and resources must include:
    - Current and past periodicals and reference books
    - Electronic retrieval of information from medical databases
    - 24/7 access to an on-site library or to a collection of appropriate texts and journals in each participating institution”
    - NO MENTION OF MEDICAL LIBRARIAN!

# Analysis of Residency Review Committee Requirements – 2005 Green Book

<b>Residency Standards</b>								
Information gathered from:								
<a href="http://www.acgme.org/acWebsite/home/home.asp">http://www.acgme.org/acWebsite/home/home.asp</a>								
Residency Program	Dept. Lib.	Major Medical Library Access	Onsite / Spons Inst Lib.	Nearby Institution	Electronical Databases / References	Night & Weekend Access	Internet	Onsite Ref. Librarian
<b>Allerg &amp; Immunol</b>			X					
Anesthesiology	X	X	X	X - (secondary)	X	X		
<b>Colon &amp; Rectal Surg</b>		X	OR		X	X		
Dermatology		X	OR	OR	X			
<b>Emergency Med</b>			OR		OR			
Family Practice		X	OR	OR	X	X		
<b>Internal Medicine</b>			OR		OR			
Neurological Surg		X	OR		OR	X		
<b>Neurology</b>			OR		OR	X		
Nuclear Medicine		X	OR	OR	X	X	X	
<b>GYN-OB</b>	OR		OR		OR	X		
Ophthalmology		X	OR	OR	X	X	X	
<b>Orthopedic Surgery</b>		X	OR	OR	X	X	X	
Otolaryngology		X	OR	OR	X	X	X	
<b>Pathology</b>		X	OR	OR	X	X		
Pediatrics			OR		OR	X		
<b>Phys Med &amp; Rehab</b>					X	X	X	
Psychiatry		X	OR	OR				
<b>Preventive Medicine</b>			OR	OR	X	X		X
Radiology		X	OR	OR	X			
<b>Surgery</b>		X	OR	OR	X	X		
Urology					X			

\* OR = means one or the other is required

In fall 2006, ACGME drafted updated “common program requirements” ...

- **MLA HQ Letter to ACGME:**

- Ready access to adequate communication resources and technology supported by a health sciences librarian with ***an ALA accredited degree*** (master’s level)
- 24/7 access to authoritative specialty/subspecialty-specific knowledge-based information resources and reference materials at the hospital
- Comprehensive electronic medical literature databases, including Medline, and document services must be available

**Response: “Thanks, but no thanks...!!!!”**

# Vital Pathways Outcomes

- Open Forum at MLA 2008
- Document report
- White Paper – *The Hospital Librarian your Competitive Edge*
- Vital Pathways web page –resources for hospital librarians: <http://www.mlanet.org/resources/vital/> including Myths and Truths, Magnet status, hospital library Change Status form
- JMLA symposium and White Paper “***Vital Pathways for Hospital Librarians: Addressing the Hospital’s Information and Training Needs***” October 2009 -
- Conferences attended by hospital administrators
  - Exhibits being considered

# Advice for the Future from VPP

(by Diane Schwartz)

- Here's Some Free Advice – You Know What It's Worth!
  - Know your users, your supporters, and your funders
    - Understand what is valuable to them?
    - Understand what keeps them awake at night?
  - Remember ▶▶▶ There's no free lunch
    - Don't expect entitlements – they may disappear or be reduced
  - Know how to divest yourself of tasks or services you no longer need to offer ▶▶▶ be prepared to stop doing some things
  - Know the needs of administrators and be prepared to offer new services

# Free advice from the VPP

- Network with everyone, get out of the Library!  
Never stop learning, be curious, be confident, be proud!
- Meet user's needs ▶▶▶▶ be nimble, flexible, and agile.
- Don't get angry ▶▶▶▶ Get even by:
  - **Always Demonstrating the Value of the Library!**

# Free advice – For the future!

- Services for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Library
  - Personalized or user-centered information services
    - Focus on the value of the *Library experience*
  - Be aware of changing demographics and the need of these populations for health information: baby boomers, Gen Xrs, immigrants, multicultural people
  - Insure that Library users have access to information:
    - Consumer and/or patient health
      - Health literacy
    - Lifelong learning for all staff
  - Offer access to new and emerging technologies
    - Wireless and cellular technologies
    - iPods
    - Social networking
  - Electronic health record

# Health Libraries and Education Task Force

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*That's all, Folks!*