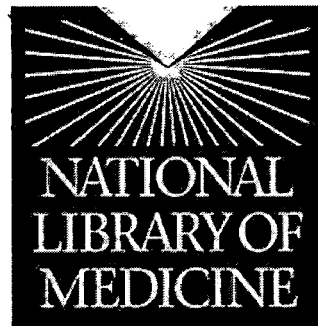


The National Library of Medicine's Strategic Plan

An Overview of the Proposed Revisions and Their
Potential Impact on Illinois Health Sciences and
Medical Libraries



Eric Edwards, Illinois State Library

Abstract (Condensed Version)

The National Library of Medicine is undertaking the first major revision of its strategic plan in more than a decade. Under the guidance of new NLM Director Dr. Patricia Flatley Brennan, the organization has identified four major themes to address: advancing data science, promoting biomedical discovery, supporting public health, and building collections to reflect current needs. The Planning Committee will also address a number of minor themes—including partnerships, user engagement and educational outreach, and health disparities.

This poster session will give an overview of the current NLM strategic plan and the main areas of focus for revisions, including the impact these changes might have on libraries in Illinois and elsewhere. The session fits the Health Science Librarians of Illinois 2017 Annual Conference's theme of "The Times Are Changing" by focusing on how the NLM is adapting its strategic plan to reflect and accommodate the momentous changes and challenges facing the profession.

Background to Strategic Planning Process

Since its establishment in 1956, the National Library of Medicine (NLM) has been entrusted with advancing public health and the medical sciences through the creation and sharing of scientific knowledge. These efforts are intended to improve the quality of life for not just residents of the U.S., but also people around the world. A strategic plan, updated regularly, aids the NLM in using its resources most effectively to fulfill this mission.

Why is 2017 an especially opportune time to craft and implement a new strategic plan? The NLM is under the leadership of a new Director, Dr. Patricia Flatley Brennan. In addition, the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the parent organization of the NLM, has undertaken a number of new projects related to data science. An updated strategic plan that incorporates the latest knowledge and tools in this area will assist the NLM and the NIH in continuing to serve the public as effectively as possible.

Overview of Current Strategic Plan (2006-2016)

The strategic plan that the NLM followed from 2006 to 2016, titled *Charting the Course for the 21st Century*, focused on creating new knowledge and making the results of scientific research easily accessible to the public. The plan had four main goals.

- I. Promoting Broad and Reliable Access to the Latest Medical and Health Information--ensuring that the NLM has access to sufficient space and appropriate formats for storing and sharing biomedical information, in the U.S. and globally
- II. Using Information Services to Increase Health Literacy and Decrease Disparities Around the Globe--developing outreach programs and improving digital services in public institutions, both in the U.S. and worldwide, to increase the public's knowledge of the latest medical treatments and preventive measures
- III. Integrating Biomedical, Clinical, and Public-Health Information Systems to Promote Discovery and Innovation--linking databases covering various areas of the health sciences, while also improving electronic health records, to connect the latest research to patient needs and, ultimately, develop the most effective treatments
- IV. Building a Diverse and Versatile Workforce That Can Effectively Conduct Research and Serve the Public--increasing relevant educational opportunities for K-12 and college students, while also supporting continued professional development for medical librarians and information professionals

Main Planning Themes

The main themes that the Planning Committee is analyzing are below.

- I. Role of NLM in Advancing the Growth of Data and Knowledge in the Biomedical Sciences--the NLM will take the lead in promoting the research, training, and workforce development in health sciences librarianship and related areas necessary for facilitating open scientific research
- II. Role of NLM in Making Knowledge Accessible Across a Wide Range of Databases--the NLM will link a number of databases, including ClinicalTrials.gov, along with using nontraditional formats, such as electronic health records, to make scientific studies as widely available as possible to both researchers and the public, in order to fuel research and discovery
- III. Role of NLM in Promoting Public Health, at Both the Health System and Personal Levels--the NLM will use the latest technology and strategies to improve standards for drug safety and other areas at the medical institutional level, while also promoting personal health by educating the public about healthful lifestyles and disease prevention
- IV. Role of NLM in Facilitating the Growth of Published Research to Enhance Health Worldwide--the NLM will continue to expand its collection of published biomedical literature, which is already the world's largest and contains many items unavailable anywhere else, and make research available in as many formats as possible (including databases, images, and video and sound recordings), so that information is as accessible as possible to anyone worldwide who wishes to use that knowledge to improve public or personal health

Additional Themes

In addition to the four main themes, the Planning Committee is also considering a number of minor themes related to the major ones.

Standards--developing data standards that promote the compatibility of information systems and research findings

Partnerships and Research Funding--collaborating with government agencies, professional organizations (including other libraries), educational institutions, and community organizations to aid the NLM in reaching its overarching goals, while also ensuring that the funding to sustain the NLM's activities is available

User Communities and Health Disparities--closing the "digital divide" by ensuring data access for all user groups, regardless of age, education level, socioeconomic status, or geographic location

User Engagement, Educational Outreach, and Workforce Development--developing information that is as relevant as possible to the needs of specific user communities, while engaging and training users, and the librarians serving them, on accessing such knowledge

International Engagement--looking beyond the NLM's primary user groups in the U.S. and forming international partnerships to disseminate medical knowledge to a global audience

Infrastructure Improvement--ensuring that the NLM's expanding digital collections have the necessary computing resources and that the NLM's old and small physical plant is updated and expanded

Conclusions

Based on the old strategic plan and the directions outlined for the new plan, one can draw the following conclusions about the short- and long-term goals of NLM and their potential impact on Illinois libraries.

- There will be a continued emphasis on fostering professional development, integrating information resources, and addressing the digital divide. These are all key components of the NLM's mission.
- The new plan will have an added focus on knowledge creation, collaboration among different libraries and other institutions, and the development of information standards. These priorities reflect current challenges facing medical librarianship and the wider profession.
- Illinois libraries would benefit the most from probably the added emphasis on collaboration (because of ongoing budget and funding challenges) and the ongoing focus on closing the digital divide (due to the urban-rural disparities that affect many areas of the state).
- More specifically, Parts 1, 2, and 4 would probably be particularly relevant to academic and special libraries, while Part 3 would apply more to non-academic libraries, especially those in rural areas.

Sources

“NLM Strategic Planning” (part of the National Library of Medicine’s website)

https://www.nlm.nih.gov/pubs/plan/strategic_planning.html

Charting the Course for the 21st Century: NLM’s Long Range Plan 2006-2016

(linked to from the “NLM Strategic Planning” page)

<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/pubs/plan/lrpdocs.html>

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