

BOOK REVIEW / CRITIQUE DE LIVRE

Joseph, CB. **The Medical Library Association Guide to Developing Consumer Health Collections.**

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Changes in health care delivery and the increasing availability of consumer health information in recent decades have made it more challenging for patients to navigate their health care experiences. Patients have a more active role in their health care, which means they need to be sufficiently informed in order to engage in decision making with their health care providers. Additionally, patients have access to a plethora of consumer health information online and from the media, which they may not have the skills to effectively search or assess for reliability. These changes have made it a priority for libraries to develop consumer health collections and services in order to meet the health information needs of patients. In my own hospital library, these needs are apparent when patients seek out the library without knowing the resources or services we offer.

The *Medical Library Association Guide to Developing Consumer Health Collections* provides an overview of developing, maintaining and marketing consumer health collections and services in academic, health sciences and public libraries. The author, Claire B. Joseph, director of the Medical Library for the South Nassau Communities Hospital in New York State, draws from her nearly 3 decades of work experience in health sciences libraries for this book. She shares some of her own experience with outreach activities in the final chapter 'Consumer Health Information Outreach for Every Library.'

It is comprised of 11 chapters and includes figures, tables and sample forms (e.g. New York Public Library Privacy Policy). It starts off with a chapter on the 'main ingredients' for building a consumer health collection, which the author identifies as conducting a needs assessment, establishing relationships with

community stakeholders, writing a strategic plan, space planning and budgeting. The following chapters cover topics such as customer service, privacy and confidentiality, health literacy, multicultural/inclusive resources and outreach.

Joseph writes primarily for the novice, as she covers all of the basics of building a consumer health collection. She also includes resources such as policies, frameworks, sources for consumer health materials, and examples of outreach programs from different libraries, which will be useful to those already working in this area.

The target audience for the book is staff working in academic, health sciences and public libraries who have an interest in consumer health resources and services. Joseph does a good job of writing for and providing examples from all three types of libraries. These types of libraries are quite different from each other, but as consumer health libraries vary significantly themselves, the differences in setting are less important. Joseph quotes Jean Shipman and Erica Lake who observe, "if you've seen one consumer health library, you have seen one consumer health library."

The writing style is to the point and the quality of writing is good. I noted just a couple of typographical errors that were missed during the editing process. Some of the sample forms are quite long and I found their inclusion in the middle of some chapters disruptive. I would have preferred that shorter excerpts be included in the chapters and that the sample forms themselves be placed at the end of the chapters. I found that these disruptions to the flow of reading made it hard to connect with the book.

I recommend this book to those interested in beginning work on or improving on consumer health information resources and services in their library. I took note of some of the outreach program ideas and sources for consumer health resources to make improvements in my own library.

Statement of Competing Interests

No competing interests declared.

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