

The Impact of the Bringing Health Information to the Community Blog

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In an effort to increase access to health information by members of community and faith based organizations, the NN/LM MCR developed a blog that focused on information relevant and useful to communities. The “Bringing Health Information to the Community” blog was launched in March 2004. NN/LM MCR staff networked with staff at CBOs and faith based groups, asking them to help share information with their clients and members through postings they would receive as blog readers. This report describes the uses readers made of the blog and their reports of its value in their workplace.

History of the BHIC Blog

In the five years since the first posting was made, the readership of the blog has continued to grow with 272 readers included in the email distribution list and 160 more subscribed to the blog alert. Feedback from readers through email and stories told at meetings has provided the NN/LM MCR with anecdotal evidence that the daily blog posts are a useful resource. In 2006, the Evaluation Liaison, Betsy Kelly, assisted the Community Outreach Liaison and BHIC blog writer, Siobhan Champ-Blackwell, in evaluating feedback received from September 2004 through December 2005. The results of that evaluation were presented at the MidContinental Chapter of the Medical Library Association annual meeting and the Medical Library Association annual meeting in 2006 in a paper entitled “Blogging to Empower”. The conclusion of that paper states

“The BHIC blog has had an impact on its readers and their organizations. The postings are used to increase knowledge on health issues for communities, especially underserved, to locate funding opportunities, provide recognition for the organization by sharing information with colleagues, create programs and more.”

Evaluation for 2009

In reviewing BHIC blog goals for the 2009-2010 contract year, it was decided that another evaluation of the uses the readers made of the blog was necessary and the evaluation was written into the logic model:

RML Goal: *Develop collaborations among Network members and other organizations to improve access to and sharing of biomedical information resources throughout the nation.*

Goal: Pursue and maintain collaborations with Network Members and other organizations including community-based organizations representing minority and other underserved populations to achieve the goals of outreach to health professionals and the public.

Outcome: More CBOs in the region recognize the NN/LM-MCR as a network of providers of health information.

Planned Activity: Assist in the development of working relationships between network members and grass roots, regional and national CBOs that include health information as a part of their mission or priority.

Indicator: 10% of BHIC blog direct subscribers indicate they use the materials posted in their work.

Methodology

In June of 2009, Ms. Kelly and Ms. Champ-Blackwell worked together to determine the best way to measure the indicator. First, they had to determine the number of direct subscribers; these are the BHIC blog readers who are members of a listserv created and managed by Ms. Champ-Blackwell, plus those who have subscribed to an alert system that is managed by the blog service. Other “non-direct subscribers” have access to the blog through RSS feeds and other listservs that forward on the digest email (NativeHealth on Yahoo, for example). Ms. Champ-Blackwell was able to determine that there were 432 direct subscribers to the blog; to meet the indicator, 43 readers would have to state that they used postings from the blog in their work. (It is impossible to know or track how many readers access the blog through RSS feeds or daily visits, so for this evaluation, only direct subscribers were assessed)

The two liaisons next developed questions that could be sent to the direct subscribers to determine if they used the blog postings and how. They also made use of open-ended questions to determine specific ways the blog postings were being used and what other kinds of information readers wanted to see on the blog. Survey Monkey was used to post the following three questions to direct subscribers:

- 1. Have you used information from a BHIC blog posting in your work?**

- 2. If so, how have you used the postings? (Check as many boxes as apply)**
 - Shared with colleagues
 - Forwarded to a listserv
 - Posted on a blog
 - Applied for funding
 - Applied for a scholarship
 - Applied for a workshop
 - Developed a project using resources posted
 - Supplemented an existing project or event with resources from post
 - Attended a conference I saw in a post
 - Attended a training session I saw in a post
 - Submitted an abstract to a conference
 - Provided patients/clients with financial resources related to health care
 - Other ways you've used posts

3. Please share any thoughts or information about the BHIC blog.

The questions were tested with four blog readers on June 10, and feedback from them indicated the study was “short and to the point”. On June 15, 2009, the Community Outreach Liaison sent the link to the questionnaire to the listserv and the email addresses of those subscribed to the blog (as stated above, there are 432 direct subscribers). The study was open through June 26 and was designed to not capture any identifying data about the responders.

Summary of Responses

The response to the study exceeded the expectations of the liaisons, with 76 responses. Of those 76, 75 indicated that they used the postings in their work. This response confirmed the anecdotal experience of the Community Outreach Liaison and confirmed the value of continuing to maintain the BHIC blog. The results of the open-ended questions are attached, as well as the statistics on which boxes were selected from the list of how the postings were used.

In summary, the number one way in which the postings are used is to share information with colleagues (89%; 67 respondents), followed by readers applying for funding for grant announcements posted (41%; 31). Readers also made use of postings to supplement existing projects (33%; 25) or to develop new projects (29%; 22) All of the items on the list were reported as having been used by four or more respondents.. Examples of ways people used the posts include:

“Supplement my delicious bookmarks for future use in LibGuides.”

“I use the information in a weekly newsletter I send out to about 400 colleagues”

“In writing proposals, I've cited reports that I learned about from BHIC”

For Ms. Champ-Blackwell, the most affirming responses came from the open-ended third question. There were 48 responses to the question, all positive and encouraging.

“Wow, where to begin. It really is one of the most useful resources at my disposal.”

“WONDERFUL, WONDERFUL, WONDERFUL!”

It really helps me stay up-to-date with everything going on in preventive health care. I really appreciate it. Thanks!”

“This is a great service and prompted me to start an internal weekly e-bulletin that compiles interesting research, resources, and training opportunities for our large non-profit's staff. Many of my announcements are credited to your blog. Thanks!!!”

The responses to the questions told Ms. Champ-Blackwell that the kind of information she is posting is of use to readers, and that she is accessing useful sources (listservs, websites, eAlert notifications, etc) to locate information to post on the blog. These

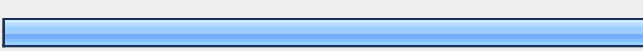

responses also reaffirmed for her that the time and energy she spends each week on the blog are worthwhile and are valued by BHIC blog readers. In addition, BHIC blog readers send her items to post, making this an interactive blog that continues to grow through energy devoted by readers and writer alike.

Future investigations for the BHIC blog include measuring the use of the blog by all the readers, not just the direct subscribers. In addition, many people refer to forwarding on postings to others, putting items in newsletters, etc. It is difficult to assess the full impact of the BHIC blog since it is not possible to know how these postings are used once disseminated outside the blog. While this is the nature of information in the digital age, it would be interesting to see how far reaching the dissemination is.

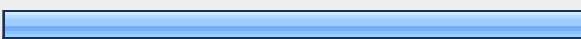
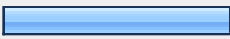
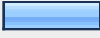
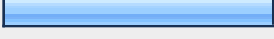

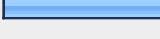
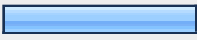
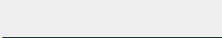
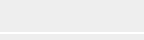
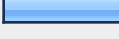


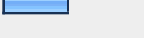
Conclusion

The BHIC blog was launched in order to provide members of community and faith based organizations with access to relevant and useful health information resources. As the blog has evolved, the NN/LM MCR has continued to make efforts to ensure that it remains a valuable tool. The data from this questionnaire confirm that a significant number of direct subscribers use the blog in their work, sharing with colleagues; using posted resources to develop and/or maintain new projects; locating and applying for funding; and more. The Bringing Health Information to the Community Blog is having an impact on reader's who are able to use the postings in their daily work.

BHIC Blog Use

1. Have you used information from a BHIC blog posting in your work?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		98.7%	75
No		2.6%	2
		<i>answered question</i>	76
		<i>skipped question</i>	0

BHIC Blog Use

1. If so, how have you used the postings? (Check as many boxes as apply)			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Shared with colleagues		89.3%	67
Forwarded to a listserv		34.7%	26
Posted on a blog		14.7%	11
Applied for funding		41.3%	31
Applied for a scholarship		5.3%	4
Applied for a workshop		24.0%	18
Developed a project using resources posted		29.3%	22
Supplemented an existing project or event with resources from post		33.3%	25
Attended a conference I saw in a post		21.3%	16
Attended a training session I saw in a post		17.3%	13
Submitted an abstract to a conference		9.3%	7
Provided patients/clients with financial resources related to health care		16.0%	12
Other ways you've used posts:		21.3%	16
		answered question	75
		skipped question	1

Other ways you've used posts:		
1	I have used the archived information when customers come with questions on specific resources that I know I've seen come through. I also checked just in case I may have missed something.	Jun 10, 2009 7:33 PM
2	In writing proposals, I've cited reports that I learned about from BHIC.	Jun 10, 2009 9:24 PM
3	Asked Siohban to post job openings on the list serves	Jun 15, 2009 3:37 PM

Other ways you've used posts:		
4	sent information to several American Indian tribes in Wisconsin	Jun 15, 2009 3:38 PM
5	outreach	Jun 15, 2009 3:43 PM
6	used to network with community healthcare entities	Jun 15, 2009 3:45 PM
7	sent to grade school my daughter attends	Jun 15, 2009 3:50 PM
8	I have found information about resources of potential interest for my instituion. I have received notice of documents, position papers, and other "grey literature" in areas of interest to my institution.	Jun 15, 2009 3:51 PM
9	Please see below for details.	Jun 15, 2009 3:52 PM
10	Supplement my delicious bookmarks for future use in LibGuides.	Jun 15, 2009 4:19 PM
11	In my teaching to pharmacy students on patient care issues.	Jun 15, 2009 4:53 PM
12	I use the information in a weekly newsletter I send out to about 400 colleagues.	Jun 16, 2009 11:53 AM
13	while have not applied for funding,scholarships et al nor attended conferences et al b/c of info here, i have often and regularly shared that type of info with other folks and like being kept up to date about the resources are out there. I read this every day.....	Jun 16, 2009 1:28 PM
14	have accumulated possible funding sources for a project that may develop. thanks for your work.	Jun 16, 2009 4:32 PM
15	get updated information and new resources available	Jun 17, 2009 4:06 AM
16	I am an academic librarian / liaison to the nursing department at our college. A big focus at our school is transcultural health. I have included many of your suggested resouces on handouts, wikis, best weblink page...	Jun 17, 2009 3:40 PM

BHIC Blog Use

1. Please share any thoughts or information about the BHIC blog.		
		Response Count
		48
<i>answered question</i>		48
<i>skipped question</i>		28

Response Text		
1	Wow, where to begin. It really is one of the most useful resources at my disposal. In my opinion it's on target in terms of providing the appropriate health information resources for my targeted audience. I do appreciate not getting "other" stuff that really doesn't have anything to do with health. It's well organized. Thanks!	Jun 10, 2009 7:33 PM
2	WONDERFUL, WONDERFUL, WONDERFUL! Maybe on the "About" page mention some of the sites/resources you keep an eye on to find postings?	Jun 10, 2009 9:24 PM
3	I read it religiously, Siobhan! Thank you!	Jun 15, 2009 3:31 PM
4	On funding, it would be helpful if you listed geographic area--is this for all states or just one area.	Jun 15, 2009 3:32 PM
5	Thank you for this awesome service. It is helpful!	Jun 15, 2009 3:34 PM
6	Keep up the most excellent work. Your blog provides a multitude of assistance! Thanks, Reba	Jun 15, 2009 3:34 PM
7	Very informative. I use items especially dealing with health communication or health literacy.	Jun 15, 2009 3:34 PM
8	Great source of information- review it on a daily basis	Jun 15, 2009 3:37 PM
9	It really helps me stay up-to-date with everything going on in preventive health care. I really appreciate it. Thanks!	Jun 15, 2009 3:37 PM
10	I think the information is very useful -- you cover a wide variety of topics -- you provide excellent resources for minorities	Jun 15, 2009 3:38 PM
11	This is a great resource. I often hear about tools, information, events, and resource here first. Thanks!	Jun 15, 2009 3:40 PM
12	It is one of the most informative and meaningful blogs that I have access to. Information is always current and the format is great for quick digests! Great Work!!!	Jun 15, 2009 3:43 PM
13	I use this as a networking tool. It helps me most when there are HELPFUL RESOURCES like webinars/seminars, and new information resources that I can share with community health entities AS SOON AS they are available (they need to be 'hot'). Also, I use this a way to communicate with nursing faculty in academic settings. Academic topics are extremely appreciated! (Scholarships, webinars, grants for higher ed., news in various areas of nursing scholarship). Thanks! this is very helpful! Keep up the good work!	Jun 15, 2009 3:45 PM
14	I love it!	Jun 15, 2009 3:50 PM
15	I pass along your posts to many others in my insitution. Thanks for allowing us to share the fruits of your labors.	Jun 15, 2009 3:51 PM

Response Text		
16	Thank you for providing this service. It is much appreciated. We are a WebJunction state (Ohio) and we often supplement our WJ Ohio site with info that you provide.	Jun 15, 2009 3:52 PM
17	This is one of the resources I've come to use most often to keep up to date on health care resources of interest to clients/patients! Thanks for a super job!!	Jun 15, 2009 3:53 PM
18	It is great - I know that I would not have the time to sift through all of the information that is available. I really appreciate the blog!	Jun 15, 2009 3:56 PM
19	We are very interested in the new Joint Commission Standards for communications related to patient safety and we first saw their request for comments on the BHIC blog.	Jun 15, 2009 3:57 PM
20	I've found it to be a great resource for grant information, which I share with community partners as appropriate.	Jun 15, 2009 3:59 PM
21	Great service - thank you!	Jun 15, 2009 4:18 PM
22	It has been useful. Thanks for your efforts	Jun 15, 2009 4:19 PM
23	Thank you for all your work. It is greatly appreciated.	Jun 15, 2009 4:23 PM
24	Excellent! Keeping informed in this "over saturated" world is truly difficult! You make it easier.	Jun 15, 2009 4:27 PM
25	I find it quite helpful. Keep sending information.	Jun 15, 2009 4:50 PM
26	Thanks for all your work.	Jun 15, 2009 4:53 PM
27	I really like it! The information is really helpful. Thanks for your efforts and keep it up!	Jun 15, 2009 4:55 PM
28	It is so much needed!	Jun 15, 2009 5:18 PM
29	Keep it up - this is a fantastic resource!!!	Jun 15, 2009 5:28 PM
30	Keep it coming.	Jun 15, 2009 5:47 PM
31	It is a fabulous resource and it comes in a very user friendly format. I can tell right away if there is anything in the posting that is of interest to me or my colleagues and friends.	Jun 15, 2009 5:49 PM
32	I really appreciate receiving these. I try to share the info in my community to those I feel have an interest.	Jun 15, 2009 6:30 PM
33	It's one of the few I read, Siobhan. Thank you!	Jun 15, 2009 7:07 PM
34	BHIC blog is the MOST informative blog I read. The postings are always timely and very relevant. Thank you, Siobhan. I am an awesome information source!!!	Jun 15, 2009 7:13 PM
35	It is a wonderful source of information that I probably would not otherwise find. Thank you for all you do for the community!!!	Jun 15, 2009 8:12 PM
36	It is absolutely wonderful. A tremendous resource that benefits so many people. Keep up the good work!	Jun 15, 2009 8:22 PM
37	Just too many emails to look at this. I thought I had unsubscribed.	Jun 15, 2009 8:33 PM
38	It's very helpful. Thank you.	Jun 15, 2009 8:41 PM
39	Very informative and information I have come to rely on. Thank you for all the work you do!!	Jun 16, 2009 12:33 AM
40	Thank you so much for doing this. It is a great resource.	Jun 16, 2009 1:13 PM
41	In this day and age, probably the greatest two benefits I receive are (1) notices of funding (you seem to pick up ones that I don't) and (2) resources (which I use in writing grants or giving presentations). I forward both to colleagues. Your work provides me one of my best resources!	Jun 16, 2009 1:35 PM
42	Keep up the good work!	Jun 16, 2009 2:58 PM
43	This is a great service and prompted me to start an internal weekly e-bulletin that compiles interesting research, resources, and training opportunities for our large non-profit's staff. Many of my announcements are credited to your blog. Thanks!!!	Jun 16, 2009 4:30 PM
44	Very Useful	Jun 16, 2009 6:16 PM

Response Text		
45	It's useful for me to get updated information on health care	Jun 17, 2009 4:06 AM
46	Your emails are very valuable to me, thank you! My 11 year old son even applied for a grant that we found on you listserve and he received \$500 for our public library - it was a really big deal to him and he is very proud of that! Thanks for all your hard work.	Jun 17, 2009 3:40 PM
47	Especially appreciate being able to see at a glance all the content in the rest of a listserv posting from you. Makes it efficient for scanning. You do a terrific job keeping this up and pulling together info from eclectic sources. I also like the way you frequently incorporate or tie a topic back into NLM resources.	Jun 17, 2009 5:11 PM
48	It is extrememy useful, especially for grant info, I have recommended it to many colleagues. It's the only email newsletter I read every time I get it!	Jun 17, 2009 5:14 PM