

Title of Project: Public Health Nurses and the Internet

Type of Award: Outreach Project Award

Institution: Oregon Health & Science University Library

Location: Portland, Oregon

Person submitting report:

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Summary/Introduction:

The main goal of this project was to design and develop a web site that would have links to web resources for public health nurses in Oregon. There were three parts to the project, the planning section, which included focus groups, the development of the web site, and the introduction and training section.

The planning section was accomplished by holding two focus groups of public health nurses, one in Portland and one in Pendleton, a small town in eastern Oregon. At both of these sessions the nurses were shown a variety of web sites that had public health information, and were asked to evaluate them, both for content and design. The nurses were then asked to list the kind of information they would like to have on a web site, and the basic design features they would like to see.

The development of the web site was the next step. The OHSU web manager and the project manager and other librarians considered the information received from the focus groups. A librarian began to search for the web resources requested by the focus group participants, and the web manager designed a web site, using information gained in the focus groups. The plan was to have a very clean and basic site where it was easy to find the information needed. It was initially decided to have the following 10 sections, with resources grouped under each section

- Professional research
- Basic health information
- Statistics and demographics
- Drug information and toxicology
- Public health nursing links
- Hot links/other useful sites
- Health departments
- Legislation/Regulations/Policies
- Program planning
- How to find health information on the web

After the first training session with the nurses, an additional section was added, Education and training.

The final step was the introduction of the web site to the nurses and training for various groups. The sessions were from one to three hours, depending on the time allotted to the trainers. There were four sessions in different parts of the state. Each session introduced the group to the web site and then asked for input. The general reception was very positive. The web site also has a link so that those using the site can send comments and suggestions. A number of suggestions were made for links to resources, and suggestions continue to come in.

Geographic region/number of counties:

The project covers the entire state of Oregon, which includes 36 counties. Presentations were given in four counties.

Collaborations/Partnerships:

We worked most closely with the Oregon Department of Human Services, Office of Family Health to set up the initial focus groups and the distribution of information when announcing the web site.

Training:

This project included two focus groups and four training sessions. The focus groups were used to discuss the needs of the public health nurses and the design of the web site and the training sessions included an overview of the web site and some training in PubMed and MedlinePlus.

Focus Groups:

1. State Office Building, Portland, Oregon – 6 participants
2. Public Library, Pendleton, Oregon – 12 participants

Training:

1. Oregon Public Health Nurses, State Office Building meeting room, Portland, Oregon – 9 participants
2. Umatilla County Health Department, Public Library meeting room, Pendleton, Oregon – 25 participants
3. Association of Oregon Public Health Nurse Supervisors, Marion County Health Department meeting room, Salem, Oregon – 21 participants
4. Coos County Public Health, Meeting room, North Bend, Oregon – 4 participants

There were no sessions in which half or more of the participants were from minority populations.

Total number of participants: 77

Resource materials:

The resource is the web site at <http://www.ohsu.edu/library/publichealth/> We also purchased pens with the URL on them to hand out to public health nurses. They were very well received.

Web sites:

The web site is <http://www.ohsu.edu/library/publichealth/>

Document delivery and reference services:

N/A

Approaches and interventions used:

Sessions were identified in a number of ways: area of the state, ability to make contact with someone from that area, and ability to schedule sessions within the time parameters. The first priority was to try to schedule the focus group sessions, one in Portland, the major metropolitan area in the state, and one in a rural area. Pendleton, Oregon was selected because the contact in Oregon suggested that it would be the best place. For the training sessions, we wanted different areas of Oregon. We were able to schedule only four training sessions, either because we were unable to contact someone in the region, or time conflicts prohibited a session. There were two sessions in metropolitan areas and two in rural areas.

Marketing was done through email and through phone calls. Once we had a contact in an area, we asked them to send out the message to their cohorts. At the training sessions we handed out the pens with the URL, asking the participants to then hand them out to others in their units.

There were some staffing difficulties at OHSU, because in the middle of the grant process OHSU had large budget cuts. For a period it was somewhat unclear who would be available for the training sessions. As a result, the training began much later than had been planned.

The web developer was unable to attend the initial focus group sessions, so was dependent on the notes that came from those sessions to develop the web site. However, she was able to attend the initial training session, and came away with ideas to improve the web site.

Evaluation:

The project was evaluated by getting responses from the public health nurses on their satisfaction with the web site and looking at usage statistics of the web site. Even though the web site is relatively new, it is being used consistently. There is a feedback form on the page, and the feedback received has consistently been favorable. The nurses are also able to suggest other links they would like to have on the site. The objective of the project was to develop a web site that would have the resources that public health nurses in Oregon use, and design an interface that would be easy to use. From comments received from the feedback form and at the training session, it appears that the objective has been met.

Following are quotes from the feedback form:

- It covers a broad scope and will be useful in a number of ways

- So much information!! And all in one place. Many of the links are already bookmarked on my computer, but I have found many others that will be useful. Thank you!
- I like it being all in one place.
- I have looked over the site, and absolutely love it! I really like the resources and especially am happy to see statistics.
- That is my number 1 reference site now!
- Can you believe it? A web page just for us!
- I have had the chance to look at and use some of the links on the web site for Public Health Nurses. It is absolutely tremendous!!
- What a great resource!! I'm enjoying looking at all the resources that are available for public health nurses. Great job!

Problems or barriers encountered:

There were two main problems encountered during this project. The first was the budget cuts in the Library which ended up taking the project off track for a period of time. The second was scheduling. Once the web site was up, trying to schedule training sessions was very difficult. Many people contacted either did not have a venue where the training would work, or were scheduled so far in advance, that they could not find a time for the training during the project cycle. It was also difficult contacting people, as many times either repeated calls were necessary, or the contact was never made at all.

Continuation plans:

The OHSU Library plan to continue to keep the web site up to date, and continue to request feedback from the nurses. There have been some training sessions after the project end date, and we will continue to provide training when it is feasible. The librarians in the Research & Reference Department will provide the training. Funding for travel will be either through the OHSU Library or through funding from the Regional Medical Library.

Impact:

The actual impact of the project on the library is that the librarians have become aware of the needs of the public health nurses in Oregon, and have become familiar with new web sites with information pertinent to public health nurses. Also, the nurses have discovered new resources at OHSU that are available to them.

Recommendations for improvement:

The major improvement would be that scheduling the training sessions should have begun much earlier, in order to get on to the agendas of many of the agencies contacted.

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

1. Were your original project goals and objectives met? If not, why not?

The original project goals, which were to design and develop a web site for public health nurses and to have training sessions, were met. However, there were fewer training sessions than originally had been planned.

2. What significant lessons were learned which would be of interest or use to others conducting outreach projects? Which strategies were the most effective in implementing the project?

The focus groups were a major piece of this project. By listening to what the nurses needed and wanted, we were able to design a page that was easy to use and they gave us many ideas of the kinds of resources they needed and wanted. If I were to design a web page for a specific group of people again, I would make sure that the focus groups were again the first step in the process.

3. If you were to start all over again, what, if anything, would you change about your goals, project plans, etc.?

I think that the project goals and plans were very realistic, and I doubt I would change much.

4. What advice or recommendations would you give to anyone considering a similar outreach effort?

I would highly recommend that others work with groups in the manner we did in this project. We were able to make contact with a group of health practitioners which whom we had not had much contact, and both we and they learned quite a lot about what was needed and what was available. They were a wonderful group to work with.