

Helping Pacific Northwest Hospital Librarians Plan to Serve Patrons in Emergencies

Bob Pringle, Gail Kouame, Dolores Judkins, Laurel Egan, Marcia Francis, and Kathy Murray, with special thanks to Susan Barnes

SETTING THE STAGE

The events of September 11, 2001, served as a grim reminder of the fact that things can change in a heartbeat when disaster strikes. In response to the 9/11 attacks, library communities began to formalize their approach to disaster preparation and response. The now-defunct National Commission on Libraries and Information Science produced a DVD in 2002 about libraries' roles in times of disaster: "Trust and Terror: New Demands for Crisis Information Dissemination and Management."¹ The video highlighted a proposal to expand the role of U.S. libraries in crisis information dissemination and management. Medical libraries, in particular the National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NN/LM), informally joined in disaster preparation and response discussions in fall 2004. These efforts paved the way for a Request for Proposals (RFP) from the National Library of Medicine (NLM) for the 2006-2011 contract period, asking Regional Medical Libraries to address Emergency Preparedness and Response for the first time. NLM later initiated a national Emergency Preparedness and Response plan² to guide efforts at all eight of the NN/LM Regional Medical Libraries.

Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast in August 2005, followed by Hurricane Rita - other stark reminders of the need for preparedness and the ability to respond appropriately. Libraries throughout the Gulf Coast region quickly established a cooperative network providing services for the patrons of their displaced colleagues. The South Central Region of the NN/LM facilitated communications among affected medical libraries by establishing an electronic discussion list. On the list, contributors could check on the status of colleagues and offer services to those impacted. Of the publications resulting from library activities following the hurricanes, two of particular interest to medical librarians are:

- "Rain or Shine, Ochsner Library is Here" *Medical Library Newsletter*, 3(1), Sept. 2005-Jan. 2006.³ (An internal newsletter article by Ethel Madden about post-Katrina library services)
- "Health Sciences Librarians' Reference Services During a Disaster: More than Collection Protection." *Medical Reference Services Quarterly*, 25(3),1-12, Fall 2006.⁴ (An article by Michelynn McKnight about post-Katrina reference and information services)

The South Central Region hosted an emergency preparedness symposium in October 2006, as they had become "unfortunate experts" in emergency response for medical libraries due to the events in the Gulf Coast region, part of their assigned territory. The discussions at this symposium provided some direction and helped to shape the objectives for the national NN/LM

Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan, implemented in 2007. The National Library of Medicine contracted with Dan Wilson at the University of Virginia to serve as a coordinator for Emergency Preparedness and Response for the Regional Medical Libraries and to provide train-the-trainer sessions in order to equip regional personnel to implement the plan.

The purpose of the NN/LM Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan is

To help mitigate the impact of disasters on healthcare providers and their patients, the National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NN/LM) has developed and oversees the following emergency preparedness and response plan to help Network members maintain their information services in the event of a disaster.²

At a meeting in Philadelphia in 2007, the RML directors adopted these goals:

1. Ensure continuity of access to knowledge-based and emergency-related health information to support health care before, during, and after local, regional and/or national emergencies.
2. Facilitate communication among Regional Medical Libraries, Network members, and the National Library of Medicine in the event of a local, regional and/or national emergency.
3. Encourage sharing of knowledge, experience, and training and planning materials to enhance the development of regional and local emergency preparedness plans and expertise throughout the National Network of Libraries of Medicine.⁵

Each of these goals included suggested strategies to be executed at each of the NN/LM regions. The following discussion describes the efforts in the Pacific Northwest Region.

METHODS IN REGION 6

During spring and summer 2008, Cathy Burroughs and Gail Kouame at the Regional Medical Library recruited a state coordinator from each of the five states in the Pacific Northwest Region for a three-year project.

The coordinators, left to right below:

Washington: Bob Pringle, Washington State University, Riverpoint Campus Library, Spokane

Alaska: Kathy Murray, University of Alaska Anchorage, Consortium Library, Anchorage

Idaho: Marcia Francis, Idaho State University, Idaho Health Sciences Library, Pocatello

Oregon: Dolores Judkins, Oregon Health and Science University Library, Portland

Montana: Laurel Egan, St. James Healthcare Library, Butte



The RML awarded each of the recruits a sub-contract of \$7,000 for travel, resources, training, and promotion of emergency preparedness for hospital libraries in our region. Each coordinator's institution signed a Memorandum of Understanding (**Appendix 1**) regarding the work expected. We started our planning via conference call. Dan Wilson, the national coordinator, came to Seattle in February 2009 to train us as trainers on hospital library Service Continuity Planning. We discussed what we needed to accomplish and outlined ideas on how we could achieve our goals. We continued to rely heavily on Dan Wilson and the work at the NLM for guidance and support.

One of the things we saw right away was that our new involvement in the national Emergency Preparedness and Response community gave us access to classes and announcements that could be useful to the hospital librarians in our region. We used the HLIB-NW listserv to let regional librarians know about this information. Since the focus of the NLM's interest was on preparing hospital libraries to continue to provide their users with information, that became the coordinators' focus.

The NN/LM's Emergency Preparedness & Response Toolkit⁶ is the major resource we used to prepare ourselves and to provide information for the hospital librarians we were trying to assist. We used and modified slides from the NN/LM's site at <http://nmlm.gov/pnr/services/nnlm-10-step-ep-and-sc-plan-blank.doc> to prepare ten short web sessions. Each of the coordinators presented one or two of the sessions using the NLM's Adobe Connect software, facilitated by the

Pacific Northwest RML staff; Mary Beth Simiele of Virginia Mason Medical Center in Seattle presented a capstone session from the viewpoint of a hospital librarian. Of the 101 hospital librarians in our contact group (see **Appendix 2** for numbers in each state), 15 to 20 participated in each session; the average was 18. Starting with Dan Wilson's slide set, each presenter made their own modifications to the material to suit their style and content. Bob Pringle, who presented the last two sessions, noted that he was able to build on content from the earlier sessions. The sessions ran from June 2009 to April 2010; the RML posted the recordings at http://nmlm.gov/pnr/services/emergency_preparedness.html#A1

To generate publicity for the web sessions and the project generally, the coordinators had fun as they selected mailing a monthly postcard as a way of alerting hospital librarians to the emergency planning process. The postcards highlighted each of the ten steps in the planning process (image at **Appendix 3**). Next, we elected to create and provide personal emergency kits for each hospital librarian, as a reminder that preparedness helps. Each coordinator built their own kit (see **Appendix 3** for examples; Dolores Judkins in Portland found a commercial kit on sale which we could customize). We also had fun attempting to be creative with the mailings which went with the kits (**Appendix 3**).

The coordinators provided some direct education; at the 2009 PNC/MLA meeting, One of the librarians asked for a demonstration of how to use the flint & steel firestarter which came with the kit. [Bob Pringle] took the opportunity to highlight what we had done, very briefly, to encourage preparation for emergencies in the hospital library, and to show how to use the kit and some dryer lint to start a fire. The demonstration was successful.⁷

We displayed a poster on the project at the same meeting (**Appendix 3**).

In a follow-up survey after the sessions, librarians who responded that they had not watched the web sessions indicated that inconvenient timing and higher local priorities were two of the major reasons why they did not. We launched that feedback survey in summer 2010, using the PNC/MLA Chapter's subscription to SurveyMonkey (see questions in **Appendix 4**).

Fourteen librarians responded to our survey: two each from Idaho and Montana, four from Oregon, and six Washingtonians.

Comments on usefulness of our various attention getters varied.

Postcards were useless.

The webcasts were great.

Prep kit was a nice surprise.

They were all helpful -- a complete package!

I noticed them all and participated in some of the webcasts

All ten of the librarians who commented found the web sessions useful, especially because they were brief and dealt with specific points.

Regarding attendance, which averaged 18 at any one session, a comment from one of the eight responding was:

“The majority of the webcasts ended up conflicting with a meeting that I was required to attend.”

Four didn’t have time, and for two, the scheduled time was bad.

Regarding whether they had a plan, three libraries do, four were working on one, and six did not. On progress toward creating a library-specific plan, comments included:

“I recognize that we’ll be in a completely different place during a major disaster - I can’t help but think that it will be basic life-saving skills we’ll be focusing on at that time, not printed knowledge.

Ours is still in an early work draft.

If we truly have a catastrophic disaster, my role may be passing out blankets and water, not lit searches.

Now I feel we are on our way to a much better one [plan].

A small library-librarians section is listed in the hospital-wide disaster plan. Our roles as the hospital sees fit is listed in there.

Most recently, the group presented information on the program, and evaluation results, at the 2010 annual meeting of our MLA chapter in Portland, OR. We asked attendees for ideas on what to do next, and began planning for the next phase of the project - getting more plans on paper.

CONCLUSION

Our conclusion is a fairly obvious one: since many of the hospitals in our region have one-person libraries, this recognizably important area of concern is lower on most priority lists. The short web session format of continuing education is both popular in the participants’ view, and relatively easy to accomplish, especially with many hands sharing the work. The NN/LM resources are quite useful, and we believe we have not only “raised awareness”, but also helped our colleagues begin planning for an uncertain future. And some are moving forward with concrete plans.

References

¹ National Commission on Libraries and Information Science. *Trust and Terror: New Demands for Crisis Information Dissemination and Management* (DVD). Washington, DC: National Commission on Libraries and Information Science; 2002.

² National Network of Libraries of Medicine. *Emergency preparedness & response plan for network members*. <http://nnlm.gov/webreports/ep/uploads/2009/10/NNLM-National-Emergency-Preparedness-Plan-Final-smaller-font1.pdf>. Published 2008. Accessed October 6, 2010.

³ Madden E. Rain or shine, Ochsner Library is here. *Medical Library Newsletter*. 2006; 3(1).

⁴ McKnight M. Health sciences librarians' reference services during a disaster: More than collection protection. *Medical Reference Services Quarterly*. 2006; 25(3): 1-12.

⁵ Regional Medical Library Directors. (2007, May 18). Summary notes on National Emergency Preparedness Project Meeting, Philadelphia, PA.

⁶ National Network of Libraries of Medicine. *Emergency preparedness & response toolkit*. <http://nnlm.gov/ep/> Published 2010. Accessed August 25, 2010

⁷ Pringle, R. (2009). *Exhibit Report, NN/LM Emergency Preparedness and Response Support*. Submitted to the Pacific Northwest Regional Library following the 2009 annual meeting.

Appendix 1

Memorandum of Understanding

State Coordinator Role

NN/LM Emergency Preparedness and Response, Pacific NW Region

May 1, 2008-April 30, 2011

Purpose:

State Coordinators for NN/LM Emergency Preparedness and Response Support in the Pacific Northwest Region are appointed by the RML Office.

State Coordinators are requested to work with state and/or regional library groups to increase emergency preparedness by health libraries in their state and in the PNR.

In the event of an emergency or disaster, when necessary, the State Coordinator is part of a team to ensure continuation of services to the affected Network member. Team members could include the State Coordinator, the RML Office, the Regional Medical Library (i.e. the UW HSL), the affected Network member, backup library of the affected Network member, and regional participating resource libraries.

Following a disaster, State Coordinators are responsible for follow-up and reporting to the RML Office, including a description of the incident, the response, follow-up activities, and any lessons learned.

Method of Support:

For a 3-year period, the Director of XXX Library agrees to serve on the NN/LM PNR Emergency Preparedness Committee and carry out the following activities as State Coordinator for NN/LM Emergency Preparedness and Response in the Pacific Northwest Region.

I. Promotion and Training

During the 3-year period, the XXX Library agrees to offer promotion and training activities (a. and b.) to provide information and updates about the NN/LM Emergency Preparedness and Response project via meetings or other communication venues that reach medical librarians in the state:

- a. Provide full support for exhibits, program presentations, or course offerings (including scheduling, fees, shipping, logistics, equipment and publications) at conferences attended by medical librarians in the state. The course offering, program presentation and/or exhibit should include content that promotes the NN/LM EPP toolkit, disaster planning resources, and the importance of continuity of service planning and backup agreements with partner libraries. NN/LM and other state or local resources related to emergency preparedness and response should be promoted. In the case that a proposal for a program presentation is submitted but not accepted, the library may satisfy this requirement by distributing materials tailored to meeting attendees at the exhibit booth.
- b. Provide presentations (via Adobe Connect as coordinated with the RML) for medical librarians in the state to provide detailed information and updates about the NN/LM EPP toolkit, relevant disaster planning resources, and the eight steps in continuity of service planning. Presentations

should emphasize NN/LM resources, though inclusion of state or local resources is also encouraged.

With this agreement the XXX Library will receive \$7,000, payable in two increments of \$3,500: the 1st payment upon acceptance of the agreement, and the 2nd payment upon delivery of the 2nd annual report summarizing promotion and training activities. Other reporting requirements include: completed Outreach Activity Report Forms (OARFs) or exhibit report forms for training or exhibit activities performed, and a follow-up report to the RML office about status of an affected library in the state (in the event of an emergency or disaster).

DELIVERABLES

Within 30 days of promotion or training activities: Submit the NN/LM Outreach Activity Reporting Form for classes, demonstrations, or presentations. An Exhibit Reporting Form should be completed for any exhibits promoting the project. These forms are linked from the outreach toolkit at <http://nnlm.gov/pnr/funding/toolkit.html>.

Follow-up report: As needed, to report on follow-up status of a health sciences library (within the state) that has been affected by an emergency or disaster.

Content: A narrative description of the incident, the response, follow-up activities, and any lessons learned.

Format: The report shall be submitted both electronically and as a hard copy document.

Annual report: An annual progress report is also required.

Content: A narrative description of major activities during the year.

Format: The report shall be submitted both electronically and as a hard copy document. The electronic copy shall be submitted as a Word document in Arial 12-point font, via email attachment. The hard copy document shall consist of one to three single-spaced pages (in addition to attachments) with a cover sheet which includes the title of the report, period covered, resource library name, and date submitted.

Attachments: Any print or web-based materials developed or modified for program sessions or classes, including any pre- and post-training surveys, should accompany the final report in an appendix.

Delivery Dates: This report must be submitted 60 days following the end of the annual reporting period; i.e. by June 30, 2009; June 30, 2010; and June 30, 2011.

Appendix 2

Hospital Libraries in each state contacted by Emergency Coordinators, and responding to the feedback survey

State	Hospital Librarians		Percent Responding
	Contacted	Responding	
Alaska	4	0	0
Idaho	13	2	15
Montana	13	2	15
Oregon	31	4	13
Washington	40	6	15
Totals	101	14	14

Appendix 3

One of the postcards:



The postcard features a close-up of a computer keyboard on the left, with a prominent red key labeled 'PANIC'. To the right, the words 'DON'T PANIC!' are written in large, bold, blue capital letters against a light blue background.

NN/LM Emergency Preparedness & Response Plan:

A 10-Step Service Continuity Plan for Libraries and Information Centers

STEP 10:

Know How to Get Outside Help

http://nmlm.gov/pss/services/emergency_preparedness.html | 1.800.238.7657 (1.800.DEV.ROKS)

Washington Kit:

RML insulated lunch bag, intended to contain the whole kit

water bottle, BPA free (bonus: aluminum foil square, pack of tea bags, bouillon, sugar, salt, pepper)

Flashlight & batteries

Carabiner

5 in 1 whistle (with Compass, Fire Starter Flint, Signal Mirror, Shrill Signal Whistle, Waterproof Match container, Duct tape [small roll])

Multi-tool w/ knife blade, pliers, can opener, etc.

Liquid bio-degradable camping soap

Tiny first-aid kit - (band-aids, antiseptic pad, etc.) & Eddie Bauer Survival Guide containing useful reminders for wilderness and other situations

Notepad & mechanical pencil, Personal emergency info card

Survival blanket



This kit began with the RML lunch bag, supplemented with an Eddie Bauer water bottle holding the emergency kit containing most of the items listed, supplemented by liquid soap, notepad, and mechanical pencil from various sources.

Montana:
same basic kit, with different reminders

Examples of comments used on letters:

"It is better to be prepared for an emergency than not have one, than to have an emergency and not be prepared." – Somebody famous probably said this at one time...

"It wasn't raining when Noah built the ark." – Howard Ruff

... let's hope the saying "water, water everywhere, but not a drop to drink." will never apply to your library - Laurel Egan

Sample letters:



August 20, 2009

Greetings,

Enclosed is a handy-dandy multi-tool plier as the second item for your NN/LM Emergency Preparedness & Response Plan red bag. We are on Step 4: *Remote Access to Core Services*. Please answer the question and add it to your emergency preparedness response plan that hopefully you are developing. As a suggestion you could write your answer directly on the card and put it in your red bag along with the items. At the end of the program clip the cards together and voila... you have a plan. If you need any of the previous cards just let me know and I'll be happy to send them.

Take care,

Laurel Egan
Montana Coordinator for the NN/LM Emergency Preparedness Project
St. James Healthcare
400 S. Clark St.
Butte, Mt 59701

Some quotes and images used in Montana:

Emergency preparedness is a team sport. – *Eric Whitaker*

Luck in the long run is given only to the efficient – *Helmut von Molke*



Are you ready



Or are you **Ready**®



Washington letter:

Washington State Hospital Librarians:

The end of your kit! As a reminder and incentive to use our web seminars and the [10 Steps to Service Continuity Template](#) (and other tools) to prepare your own library's Emergency Preparedness & Response Plan, the RML has asked each state coordinator to equip you with a personal emergency kit. We've sent it over the ten months of the web seminars (see <http://nmlm.gov/pnr/dragonfly/2009/06/01/emerpseries/> for the schedule) so you build your personal kit at the same time as you write your library's plan. (Watch all ten seminars, tell Gail Kouame you did, & get MLA CE credit. Late viewing counts! And there's an eleventh coming Tuesday, April 13th, from Mary Beth Simiele at Seattle's Virginia Mason!)

Each state coordinator has done something different. You received June-December from me in one package to save postage, followed by items once a month.

Here's your kit (June-February already mailed):

June - RML bag, intended to contain the whole kit (and other items you add yourself)

July - water bottle, BPA free (bonus: aluminum foil square, pack of tea bags, bouillon, sugar, salt, pepper)

August - Flashlight & batteries "to light your way to preparedness"

September - Carabiner (to hang your bottle on your belt, or for your flashlight, or ...)

October - 5 in 1 whistle (with Compass, Fire Starter Flint, Signal Mirror, Shriill Signal Whistle, Waterproof Match container [no matches - cannot mail; dip kitchen matches in candle wax & cut to fit], Duct tape [small roll; the universal tool])

November - Multi-tool w/ knife blade, pliers, can opener, etc. (any knife is better than no knife)

December - Liquid soap (could add waterless hand cleaner from some company promotions, too)

January - Tiny first-aid kit - (just a bare minimum, but useful) & Eddie Bauer Survival Guide (useful reminders for wilderness and other situations)

February - Notepad & mechanical pencil (always useful), Personal emergency info card

March - Survival blanket - The last item - wrap up your emergency prep!

Let us know how you're doing!

Bob Pringle, Washington State Coordinator for Health Science Library Emergency Preparedness

Riverpoint Campus Library
600 N. Riverpoint Boulevard
Spokane, WA 99210
Riverpoint: 509-368-6973
Cell: 509-435-6459
FAX: 509-358-7928
rpringle@wsu.edu

Mail to: PO Box 1495, Spokane, WA 99210-1495

The poster:

What's Your Plan?

Emergency Preparedness for Medical Libraries in the Pacific Northwest



As part of a national initiative among all NN/LM regions, the RML is working to develop emergency preparedness and response plans for medical libraries. In the Pacific Northwest, the NN/LM has partnered with representatives in each of our five states to launch a region-specific campaign. Some of the key aspects of NN/LM's recommended preparedness plans include:



- + Have a plan**
Even a simple plan...
Templates available here!
- + Have a back-up library**
Who will provide your essential services in an emergency?
- + Know the number to call**
1-800-DEV-ROKS (1-800-338-7657)
Notify the RML of an emergency
- + Know your state coordinator**
They can assist with the response plan and be your liaison to the RML
- + Know the Emergency Preparedness Toolkit**
<http://nnlm.gov/ep>
Your go-to place for resources!



State Coordinators for Emergency Preparedness
Left to Right: Bob Pringle, Washington; Kathy Murray, Alaska; Marcia Francis, Idaho; Dolores Judkins, Oregon; Laurel Egan, Montana
Inset: Gail Kouame, Emergency Preparedness Regional Coordinator



Appendix 4 FeedBack Survey Questions

Your state coordinators want to know if we've helped you prepare. Did our efforts help at all? Let us know in the following 10 questions, on 4 pages.

Page 1

1. Please identify your institution's state:

- Alaska
- Idaho
- Montana
- Oregon
- Washington

2. Identify yourself if you like (optional)

- Name
- Email

3. Tell us which attention-getters you noticed, and if/how they helped (all that apply):

- Postcards
- Emails
- Personal Emergency Prep Kit
- Webcasts
- Comments

Page 2

1. How did you hear about the webcasts? (check all that apply)

- H-LIB listserv
- Email from my state coordinator
- Postcards
- Personal Emergency Kit
- Did not hear
- Other (please specify)

2. Did you attend or view any of the webcasts? If "Yes", tell us your observation(s).

3. If "No", tell us why did you NOT attend the webcasts (check all that apply)

- Did not know about them
- Not of interest to me
- Not a good time
- Did not have time
- Already have a library-specific plan
- My hospital has a plan
- Other

Page 3

1. Does your library have a library-specific written emergency preparedness/response plan?

- Yes
- No
- In draft
- Comments

2. If you have a written plan, or one in draft, tell us how helpful the webcasts and written materials (e.g., Ten Step Plan) were.

Not at all Somewhat Moderately A great deal N/A

- Webcasts
- NN/LM Emergency Response & Preparedness Toolkit
- Written materials
- Comments

3. If you have not begun or completed your emergency response plan, please share the stumbling blocks you've faced.

- Do not have time
- No interest
- The library is part of the larger organization's plan
- Other

Page 4

1. Please offer any observations/comments about the entire program you may have.

Your state coordinators thank you for your response! Please get in touch with us if you have more questions/comments. And send us a copy of your plan!

Alaska - Kathy Murray (afktm@uaa.alaska.edu)

Idaho - Marcia Francis (franmarc@isu.edu)

Montana - Laurel Egan (laurel.egan@sjh-mt.org)

Oregon - Dolores Judkins (judkinsd@ohsu.edu)

Washington - Bob Pringle (rpringle@wsu.edu)