



Getting the Most Out of the Health Information for Public Librarians Symposium

The Health Information for Public Librarians Symposium (AKA the Symposium) is an organized series of learning experiences with specific learning outcomes. This document will help you meet these outcomes and help you:

- elevate your enthusiasm about providing health information to the public;
- plan your personal development as a provider of consumer health information; and
- plan how your institution can improve consumer health literacy in your community.

Networking

Every event in the Symposium—from the Welcome Breakfast, through the Silver and Gold Dinner, to the Wednesday Keynotes—offer formal and informal opportunities to make connections that will help you implement your plans when you return to your library.

Tips for effective networking

- Prepare a 20 second introduction/elevator speech, e.g., “My name is _____ and I am a [job title]_____ at [institution]_____ with primary responsibility for _____. I am here to _____.” This will come in very handy during the speed networking part of breakfast!
- Don’t be shy! Everyone at the Symposium and MLA ‘18 is there to learn and make connections.
- Sit next to strangers. Introduce yourself.
- Talk to presenters.
- Talk to people in halls.
- Bring your business cards. Hand them out to everyone you want to connect with.

- Have a system for keeping track of the cards you receive. Don't arrive home with cards and no recollection of the people who gave them to you! You can write a note on the back of each card or use an app to scan cards and record notes.

Before you arrive

- Get the lay of the land. Read [the Symposium description on MLANET](#). Understand the broad goals of the Symposium and what each session offers.
- Plan *your* Symposium. Some events are for all attendees. Some require you to make choices.
 - Login to the [Online Program & Itinerary Planner](#) to view the Public Librarians Symposium schedule and choose the sessions you want.
 - Download the *MLA '18* meeting app to have the program on your phone or tablet. Use the app to plan your schedule, take notes, and access materials associated with Symposium sessions.

Follow these instructions:

- Download the free **eventScribe App** from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store (search for "eventscribe" to find)
 - Install, then open the app.
 - "Search for an Event" with "MLA 2018"
 - Use your MLA/MLANET username and password (passwords are case-sensitive) to log in and create your personal experience.
 - For help contact websupport@mail.mlahq.org.
- Think about the connections you want to make that will help you achieve your Symposium goals. Will connecting with fellow public librarians help? What about connecting with medical librarians and other health information professionals?
- Write down the questions you want the Symposium to answer for you.
- Read these articles about the value of training in providing health information services:
 - C. Brandi Borman & Pamela J. McKenzie. "Trying to Help without Getting in Their Faces: Public Library Staff Descriptions of Providing Consumer Health Information" *Reference & User Services Quarterly*. Vol. 45, No. 2 (Winter 2005), pp. 133-136, 140-146. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20864479>
 - Kenneth Lee, Kreshnik Hoti, Jeffery D. Hughes, & Lynne M. Emmerton "Interventions to Assist Health Consumers to Find Reliable Online Health Information: A Comprehensive Review." *PLOS One*. April 7, 2014. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0094186>

- Ellen L. Rubenstein, "“I Want to Provide Patrons with Good Information”: Public Library Staff as Health Information Facilitators," *The Library Quarterly* 88, no. 2 (April 2018): 125-141. <https://doi.org/10.1086/696579> [Abstract only]
- Nancy D. Zionts, Jan Apter, Julianna Kuchta, & Pamela K. Greenhouse, "Promoting Consumer Health Literacy Creation of a Health Information Librarian Fellowship" *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, 2010, vol. 49, no. 4, pp. 350–359. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5860/rusq.49n4.350>

During the Symposium

- Actively participate. Ask questions. Share your knowledge and experience.
- Share your thoughts, questions, and learning on Twitter at *#PubLibsImpact*.
- Use the *Health Information for Public Librarians: Notes and Plans* form to take notes on each session--What are the main takeaways for you? How can you use what you learned to make your plans? What new questions arose that you want answers to? The *Notes and Plans* form will be in your registration packet available at breakfast and online. You may also download it from the MLA '18 App and from the [Online Program & Itinerary Planner](#).

Having notes will help you get the most out of the final session on Tuesday, *Health Literacy Heroes - Strategies for your library, your staff, and yourself*, in which you'll draft your action plan to use the information and connections you've gained to move forward.

When you return home

- Within a week of returning home, email connections you made to let them know you enjoyed meeting them. Request a virtual, phone, or face-to-face meeting with those you want to build a relationship with. Connect via social media.
- Increase the impact of the Symposium by sharing what you learned with your colleagues, coworkers, and boss. Share some of your learning at a staff meeting. Tell your boss about interesting contacts and ideas for your library. Blog. Tweet.
- Now that you've begun to develop your skills and knowledge in delivering consumer health information, plan to get your MLA-sponsored [Consumer Health Information Specialization](#).

Start by claiming credit for your Symposium participation! Just [click here](#) after 5/23, enter your MLANET credentials, attest to your participation in the Symposium and claim two MLA CE credits in the CHIS Competency 3: Know the Subject Matter and Resources.