



## HSIS Newsletter - Behind the Scenes



This past year, the HSIS newsletter readership has grown beyond our wildest dreams. Initially, issues were sent to our clients, health promotion staff (via their listserv), UAA's librarians, and health science librarians in the Pacific Northwest (via their listserv). In February, the University of Alaska (UA) promoted the newsletter to faculty and staff statewide following our

issue on bird flu; United Academics commended it to their members following the exercise and cancer topic in July, and Alaska's Comprehensive Cancer Control Listserv snaffled both that issue and the one on colon cancer screening for its members. Much to our surprise, the newsletter is distributed to 1540 addresses each month!

Guessing that some new readers may not know who we are, we'll use this issue to introduce HSIS and to share some of the feedback you've sent us. As you'll see, we do value this ongoing dialog with you and read your comments with interest.

#### What is HSIS?

The Health Sciences Information Service (HSIS) at University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) is *Alaska's Medical Library*. We have been providing medical information to health care practitioners, administrators, educators, researchers, and students across Alaska for almost 40 years. The Alaska Health Sciences Library, as it was first known, was established at the Alaska Native Hospital in 1967 when Alaska's first medical librarian was hired. When the service outgrew its space, we moved and became part of the State Library. After UAA was designated the University of Alaska health sciences campus in 1977, the collection and staff moved to the Consortium Library. During the 80s when funds disappeared we became fee-based, needing to find outside funds for half our budget. HSIS now supports the nursing, WWAMI medical students, and allied health programs as well as its original clientele. We use part of our budget to purchase access to electronic resources (databases and e-books) for remote healthcare providers to use across Alaska. Basically, HSIS helps you to help yourself, or you can use our expertise for a reasonable cost.

#### Why a newsletter?

The first issue, in Jan. 2001, went out by mail, e-mail, or fax and others followed every two months. Our audience was Alaska healthcare professionals. Our goal was to raise awareness of our services - actually our existence - since we seldom see our clients and there is a high turnover of healthcare providers in rural Alaska. Now it appears monthly and often includes themed issues on hot health topics of the day. These offer a current overview of the topic with hyperlinks to our pick of relevant research, web documents, websites, and reports (many in full text). The newsletter is provided free-of-charge on our website at <http://www.lib.uaa.alaska.edu/hsis/about/newsletter.php>.

**Please note: Some issues will focus on products HSIS has licensed just for Alaska's healthcare providers.**

#### What you've told us

##### Kudos

Re: Bad Blood (Jan. 2006). An AK state health coordinator writes: Great issue on diabetes. I am wondering how you choose your topics. I would be happy to work with you ... on topics on cancer or lifestyle factors and cancer. [We did - both in March and July.]

Re: Finding Foreign Language Health Materials (Oct. 2005). A UAA library technician writes: I am on a mailing list with Stone Soup Group and wanted to let you know your hard work is making it far and wide as this list reaches educators and parents.

Re: Public Health (Dec. 2005). A UAA researcher & affiliate faculty writes: I am going to put this on Blackboard for my HS 220 class. What a great summary of what public health does!

Re: Health Literacy (Apr. 2004) An Alaska Public Health Association officer writes: We are looking at incorporating this information into the [Alaska] Health Summit this winter. [Health literacy's] gaining increasing attention - and with good reason.

Re: Palliative Care (Nov. 2004). A tribal health clinic executive assistant writes: I really appreciate your sharing your [newsletters] with us and allowing us to copy them.

Re: Children with Complex Medical Conditions (Oct. 2003). A Juneau physician writes: This was most helpful. I will share it with our pediatricians in the area. Thanks for the information!

##### Corrections

Re: Prostate Problems (June 2006). A physician writes: I would ... insert after your statement "this is a health issue for all men" the additional phrase "in the industrialized world." I don't think this is much of a problem in pre-industrial societies. It is probably the Western diet, particularly cow's milk, and hormone-mimicking chemicals that are the major contributors to prostate hyperplasia and cancer. [This would be an intriguing topic for the future.]

Re: Thumbs up for red wine & chocolate (April 2006). A therapist writes: 1. To my knowledge, no amount of alcohol has been established as safe in pregnancy (FASD is a persisting, PREVENTABLE developmental disorder) 2. For people with predispositions to (or history of) alcoholism or addictions, the risks of drinking 1 - 2 glasses red wine would almost certainly outweigh the benefits. 3. For people with compulsive overeating or certain eating disorders, [I have the] same objection re chocolate. In sum, there are no easy "one size fits all" recommendations; I would expect the HSIS newsletter to draw attention to some of these caveats. [She makes a valid point.]

##### Suggestions

Re: Exercise and cancer (July 2006). A UAF professor writes: [Research shows] another great way to get in shape is Tai Chi. Check out the Taoist Tai Chi Society here in Fairbanks at <http://alaska.usa.taoist.org/> a charitable, non-profit organization.

Re: Bird Flu (Feb. 2006) A public health nurse writes: The section on staying healthy was great ... those simple things can make a difference. [How about] preparedness for the home, e.g. having sufficient food/water for 2 weeks or so. This may end up being very important ... [especially] in villages [in Bush Alaska]. The World Health Organization has several excellent articles [on this topic] on their website <http://www.who.int/csr/en/>