# Capitalizing on Our Strengths to Improve the Public's Understanding of Health Information through the Radio

Lara Handler, MSLS, School of Medicine Liaison, Ihandler@email.unc.edu 

 Barbara Rochen Renner, PhD, Library Services Evaluation Specialist & Liaison, Allied Health Sciences, brrenner@email.unc.edu
 Christie Silbajoris, MSLS, Director, NC Health Info, silbc@email.unc.edu
 Jean Blackwell, MLS, Liaison to UNC Health Care, jean\_blackwell@unc.edu
 Karen Crowell, MLIS, Clinical Information Specialist, kcrowell@email.unc.edu
 Robert Ladd, MA, Instructional and Media Design Specialist, rjadd@email.unc.edu
 Health Sciences Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, NC

# Background

Health Sciences librarians at UNC Chapel Hill partner with producers of the YOUR HEALTH blog and radio show hosted by clinicians in the UNC Family Medicine Department.

We helped develop the show's interactive blog and continue to work with the show's hosts and producer to improve website usability. Currently, HSL librarians are also improving and adding to consumer health information on the show's blog.

## Methodology

Supplementing weekly show topics, librarians provide consumer health links to reputable websites, supplying additional information and health education to readers of the radio show's blog.

Librarians provide hosts with resources about communicating health information at a literacy level appropriate for the public.

Challenges included communication about topics, division of labor, determining show segments to support, and appropriate number of links per topic.

## **Results/Outcomes**

We are acknowledged on-air each week during the main "Conversation" interview segment:

"YOUR HEALTH is supported by UNC's Health Sciences Library and NC Health Info, working together to connect people everywhere with knowledge to improve health. Visit nchealthInfo.org for answers you can trust."

- The Health Sciences Library and NC Health Info are listed as sponsors on the show's website
- Hosts mention librarian assistance when directing listeners to the website for more information.
- The library sponsorship link on the sidebar is among the most frequently visited links from the show's site
- Over 10,000 blog views in slightly over a year

#### Top websites HSL librarians use to find answers:

MedlinePlus: http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/

NC Health Info: http://nchealthinfo.org/

FamilyDoctor.org: http://familydoctor.org/online/famdocen/home.html



YOUR HEALTH™Radio blog http://yourhealthradio.org/

#### House Calls - Sample Questions

- Should a pregnant woman be taking fish oil?
- I suffer from cluster headaches. How often should I get an MRI?
- My doctor prescribed Ambien for sleeplessness, but my pharmacist warned me of potentially serious side effects. Should I take it?
- My cousin was in the hospital and was told she had a saddle embolus. What is that and is it more serious than a blood clot?

From an email exchange with the show's hosts:

"Thank you so much for the work with the blog. That was a heartfelt shout out on the air and I'm glad to hear that it made you guys feel appreciated! You certainly are!"

- Cristy Page, MD, MPH, Residency Director, UNC Family Medicine

This ongoing partnership increases radio show listeners' access to quality health information on the Internet, and facilitates increased interactivity via the blog. Feedback from the show's producer and hosts has been very favorable. The show is in the process of syndicating and expanding across the state.

### **Discussion/Conclusion**

This is a unique partnership allowing a health sciences library to collaborate with a radio show to reach the public. The librarians have made valuable contributions in areas including social media, design, knowledge and provision of consumer health resources, and health information literacy.