NLM 4 Caregivers

Outreach to the Ronald McDonald House: Health Information Needs

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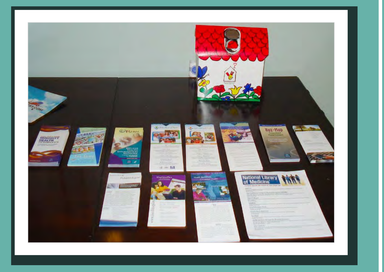
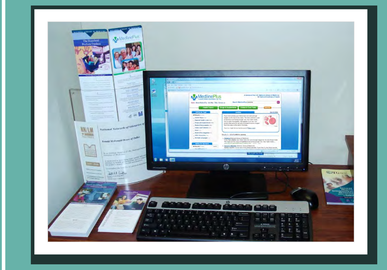
Objectives

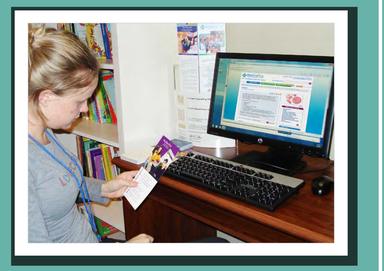
- Identify the types of **health information needed** by families residing at a Ronald McDonald House.





- Uncover **common barriers** to accessing online health information among parents and relatives of ill children.

- Determine how **medical libraries** can support access to health information at Ronald McDonald Houses.



Methods

Observation of the Ronald McDonald House-Dallas (RMHD) culture for one week:

- Experienced house routines.
- Informally interviewed residents, employees and volunteers.
- Offered NLM's health information resources each night from exhibit/information table.

Trial collaborations:

- The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center Library staff trained RMHD staff on NLM resources.
- Author helped RMHD staff apply for a monetary award to upgrade the technology in their in-house library.

Conclusions

Health Information Needs

Information seeking largely determined by the child's illness trajectory:

- Child in crisis = little information seeking
- Child stable = information seeking increases to:
  - understand child's illness and prognosis
  - make decisions about treatment options

Resources needed beyond MedlinePlus:

- PubMed
- ClinicalTrials.gov
- Drug Information Portal

Common Barriers

- Low literacy and health literacy levels
- Lack of family support
- Lack of awareness of quality health resources

Support of Medical Libraries

- Encourage Ronald McDonald Houses to become affiliate members of the National Network of Libraries of Medicine (nnlm.gov) which allows:
  - Access to funding opportunities
  - Free NLM publications on many health topics
  - Participation in training events
- Arrange for librarians from medical or hospital libraries to volunteer at their local Ronald McDonald Houses.