

**ALA Annual Meeting (Virtual), June 2021**  
**National Library of Medicine (NLM) Combined Update**  
CORE Technical Services Directors of Large Research Libraries  
CORE Chief Collection Development Officers of Large Research Libraries

### **COVID-19**

As reported last year, effective Monday, March 16, 2020, all telework-eligible employees across the NIH began teleworking full-time due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Most NLM employees remain in maximum telework as of the issuance of this report. Technical Services Division staff made a seamless transition to remote work, concentrating on activities that could be maintained and completed with only ad hoc access to campus. Initially, staff pulled material from the stacks for cataloging while new material was not being received or processed. This reduced the foreign language monograph backlog to almost zero. Staff converted the monographic order workflow from paper to electronic-based. Later in the pandemic, staff developed a new monographic receiving workflow for incoming materials. Serials check-in was already accomplished largely by staff during telework and was one area where little workflow modification was needed. Many staff attended virtual conferences and training courses.

### **UNITE Initiative**

On March 1, 2021, NIH launched an effort to [end structural racism in biomedical research](#). This new initiative is called [UNITE](#) and provides the framework for this important effort. UNITE is comprised of five committees with experts across all 27 institutes and centers who are passionate about racial diversity, equity, and inclusion. NLM Director Patti Brennan held an open meeting with NLM staff on March 9 to discuss the UNITE program in more depth and ways in which NLM staff could advance the effort.

### **Data Science**

In 2019, a Data Science (DS) @NLM Training Program was established in support of the NLM Strategic Plan. NLM launched this workforce transformation to help staff understand the value of data science and identify opportunities to strengthen the Library's proficiencies in data curation and use of analytic tools. Despite the changes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the DS@NLM Training Program stayed on track with virtual events celebrating the data science training achievements of NLM staff. Read about [what we've learned](#) on this journey.

The Dataset Metadata Modeling (DATMM) Group completed the initial version of its data model and metadata application profile specifications for describing biomedical datasets in a dataset catalog. Development of a DATMM Data Catalog Prototype is currently underway.

### **Library Systems**

The Alma Library Services Platform went live on June 8, 2021, replacing NLM's Voyager Integrated Library System for library management operations. The WebVoyage-based library catalog known as LocatorPlus was replaced with Primo VE, also on June 8. The migration to these systems began in March 2020 and was expected to take 12-15 months. Over 3 million bibliographic records were updated to prepare for the migration; some records were updated more than once. About 30 staff from Library Operations and the Office of Computer and Communications Systems participated on the core migration team and/or one of the subgroups. For more information on the changes see the Technical Bulletin article, [New Library Services Platform and Public Catalog Coming Soon](#), published on May 10.

Digitized U-matic videos are being made available to the public every month via NLM Digital Collections. The videos are part of an at-risk collection of 800 U-matic tapes that are being digitally preserved. The first sets of titles include: [The eye in Hansen's disease](#), [Well baby visit](#), [Clinical syndrome of ALS \(amyotrophic lateral sclerosis\)](#), [When we fall](#), and [Quality of life](#). The digitized videos had been preserved in the digital repository but not made available to the public because of copyright concerns and lack of transcripts and captions. Programmers at NLM developed automated captioning functionality on top of [AWS Transcribe cloud service](#) and reprocessed the videos identified as being in the public domain. The automated captioning was found to be about 90% accurate though medical terminology does present a challenge for the program. The videos have a disclaimer that the transcripts are machine generated. If remediation or a manually generated transcript is needed users can contact NLM. Overall, the service has allowed us to make these videos available much more quickly to the public and we intend to extend the use of AWS transcription service to all incoming films and videos.

### **Cataloging and Metadata Management**

The Winter 2021 Edition of the NLM Classification was released in February. This edition incorporates selected 2021 MeSH terms into the Index and Schedules along with some additional minor updates. More information about the [scope of the 2021 Winter Edition](#) is available. The NLM Classification editor is now running on a new platform and the public pages have a new look and feel, as well as a new URL: <https://classification.nlm.nih.gov/>. The [Fundamentals of the NLM Classification Course](#) was revised and published to reflect the changes made with the 2020 release of the NLM Classification.

NLM completed participation in The Linked Data for Production: Pathways to Implementation (LD4P2) project, to implement cataloging using the Library of Congress' linked data format, BIBFRAME. The project officially ended on June 30, 2020 and was considered successful in moving the community forward toward adopting linked data technologies for library data.

Nancy Fallgren is now serving a two-year term on the LD4 Steering Group. It will discuss ways of empowering the community to achieve the [LD4 Vision, Mission and Principles](#), mainly "to explore, learn and collaborate to raise awareness and know-how, encourage adoption, and foster an ecosystem of interoperable standards, tools and services in order to move linked open data and other techniques from theory into practice, at scale."

Staff began participating in the Program for Cooperative Cataloging (PCC) Wikidata Pilot to further advance the movement toward identity management. NLM's proposed project consists of creating entities in Wikidata for a selection of people and corporate bodies associated with postcards from the nursing postcard collection.

NLM reminds subscribers that it began distributing cataloging records in MARCXML format in addition to NLMXML. NLM strongly encourages users of our cataloging data to look at and experiment with MARCXML format, which is one that is widely used throughout the cataloging community. NLM is moving in the direction of storing and distributing its data in more commonly used formats and standards where possible. Files for CatfilePlus and Serfile can be downloaded in MARCXML from the [Download Catalog Record Data page](#). The naming convention for these files gives the name of the database and the posting date with a suffix of ".marcxml.xml," e.g., catplus.20200501.marcxml.xml.

### **Collections, Collection Development, and Acquisitions**

The NIH Preprint Pilot launched in June 2020 with preprint records focused on improving the discoverability of preprints relating to the ongoing public health emergency and accelerating

dissemination of NIH-supported research on the SARS-CoV-2 virus and COVID-19. This narrowly scoped first phase has allowed the NLM to streamline curation and ingest workflows for NIH-supported preprints and refine the details of implementation with a set of articles for which there has been high demand for accelerated access and discovery. Ten months into the [NIH Preprint Pilot](#), more than 2,100 preprints reporting NIH-supported research on COVID-19 are now discoverable in PubMed Central (PMC) and PubMed. Through early April 2021, these records have been viewed more than 1 million times in each of these databases (1.4 million in PMC; 1 million in PubMed). Of the preprints included in the pilot, ~60% are currently discoverable only as a preprint version, having not yet been linked to a published article. All articles are clearly identified as preprints.

A [new MEDLINE website](#) was launched in February 2021 to provide a consolidated location for information regarding MEDLINE policies, history, statistics, and MEDLINE journal application and the Literature Selection and Technical Review Committee review processes. A Technical Bulletin article [announcing the website](#) is available.

The NLM Web Collecting and Archiving Working Group began documenting the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak as part of NLM's Global Health Events web archive collection. The [collection](#) is focused on the spread of the coronavirus, health and safety information, health policy, health disparities, prevention and control/risk management, psychological preparedness and response, development of treatments and vaccines/biomedical research, health facilities, personal narratives of health care providers, patient experience, and more. The group is also participating as an institutional contributor to a broader International Internet Preservation Consortium (IIPC) Novel Coronavirus outbreak web archive collection. For more information see the article, "[The National Library of Medicine Global Health Events web archive, coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) pandemic collection](#)," from Journal of the American Medical Library Association.

Artstor / JSTOR / ITHAKA informed NLM that they are planning to harvest approximately 40,000 public domain images and data from the [Images from the History of Medicine collection](#) within NLM Digital Collections, for inclusion in the [Artstor/ITHAKA public database](#).

Ten new [digitized manuscript collections](#) were ingested into NLM Digital Collections this past year: June Osborn Papers, Florence Nightingale Letters Collection, Joseph Kinyoun Papers, Lawrence Kolb Papers, Lewis Steiner Papers, Alexander Wilder Papers, Merritte Ireland Papers, Noah H. Hart Papers, Maine Marine Hospital Correspondence, and Pope Lawrence Papers.

Selection staff expanded existing international approval arrangements with vendors to include literature from countries formerly covered by a long-standing vendor which closed its European office in the fall of 2019. Staff also worked on the identification of international literature in the history of medicine, a category of material which is very important to the NLM collection, but which sometimes is not well covered by monographic approval plans.

The History of Medicine Division acquired a copy of a work by Santorio Santorio (1561–1636) entitled *Ars de statica medicina aphorismorum sectionibus septem comprehensa*, published in Venice in 1614. This is the first edition, of exceptional rarity, of a foundational work that introduced quantitative experimentation into biological science. It was a work considered at the time of equal importance to William Harvey's *De motu cordis* (1628). Santorio, Galileo's friend and colleague of many years, both collaborated with him on instrument development and applied Galileo's methods to the study of

physiology. The NLM History of Medicine Division shares periodic updates on new acquisitions via its blog [Circulating Now](#); the tagged collection of posts is [here](#).

### Exhibitions

NLM launched the following new exhibitions and received the noted attention from the Washington Post:

- [Outside/Inside: Immigration, Migration, and Health Care in the United States](#), primarily featuring items from the NLM historical collections and explores the history of ideas about immigrant health and immigrants' and migrants' experiences with U.S. health care since the late 1800s. The [digital gallery](#) showcases a photo album from the 1930s created by and depicting visiting nurses from the Henry Street Settlement social service agency, at work caring for an immigrant community in the Bronx. This selection of images is also available in its entirety in [NLM Digital Collections](#). [Read](#) the associated Washington Post story.
- [Fifty Years Ago: The Darkening Day](#), recognizing the 50th anniversary of *The Darkening Day*, an NLM exhibition on the health aspects of environmental pollution, which opened at the library in 1970. The exhibition complements the history explored in [Darkening Day: Air Pollution Films and Environmental Awareness, 1960-1972](#), a critical examination of six public health films from NLM's historical audiovisuals collection. [Read](#) the associated Washington Post story.
- [Making a World of Difference: Stories About Global Health](#), exploring the efforts of people who are working on a wide range of issues—from community health to conflict, disease to discrimination—to improve health in their areas and beyond. [Read](#) the associated Washington Post story.

### Other Programs, Initiatives, and Partnerships

The National Library of Medicine [awarded five-year cooperative agreements](#) to seven institutions selected to serve as Regional Medical Libraries (RMLs) and four institutions selected as National Coordinating Offices in the Network of the National Library of Medicine (NNLM). The agreements began May 1, 2021. The NNLM is NLM's "field force" of trusted ambassadors that leverages more than 8,000 organizational members representing resource libraries (primarily at medical schools), health science libraries (primarily at hospitals), public libraries, and community-based organizations. RMLs coordinate the operation of a network of libraries and other organizations to carry out regional and national programs. RMLs ensure a continuity of quality service for core programs of the NNLM, and cooperatively design, implement, and evaluate innovative approaches to advance the health information needs of health professionals and a diverse public. Each National Coordinating Office performs a unique set of functions, but all serve to support and inform the work of the RMLs.

NLM and the National Endowment for the Humanities have renewed their partnership through 2024. The collaboration, originally established in 2012, aims to develop initiatives that explore the intersection of biomedical and humanities research. This inter-agency partnership will continue to bring together scholars, scientists, librarians, archivists, curators, technical information specialists, healthcare professionals, cultural heritage professionals, and others in the humanities and biomedical communities to share expertise and develop new research agendas.

NLM welcomes applications to its [Michael E. DeBakey Fellowship in the History of Medicine for 2022](#). Individuals of any academic discipline and status may apply to conduct research in the historical collections of the Library. Applications are due September 30, 2021.

## **Building Renovation**

NLM signed a contract to extensively renovate one of its two campus buildings, 38. The renovation is expected to be completed in spring 2023. Over the past year, building 38A was partially renovated and upgrading of the NLM Data Center was started.

## **NLM Budget**

The FY 2022 President's Budget request is \$474.9 million, an increase of \$12.7 million from the FY 2021 Enacted level for NLM, which was \$462.1 million.

## **Staff Transitions**

### *In the Technical Services Division:*

- Deena Acton, Senior Systems Librarian in the Library Technology Services Section, retired on July 31, 2020. She chaired the ILS Team and managed Voyager, LocatorPlus, and served as a technical authority on Voyager analytics.
- Oksana Prokhvacheva was selected as Head, Unit 2, Collection Development and Acquisitions Section, in December 2020. The unit is responsible for managing the acquisition and receiving of materials for the collection.
- Diane Boehr, Head, Cataloging and Metadata Management Section (CaMMS), retired on April 30, 2021, after more than 22 years of service at NLM. Diane started her career at NLM in 1983 as a contractor in the previously named Cataloging Section. In 1998, she was hired as a Unit Head in the Section, and in 2005, she was promoted to Section Head. Barbara Bushman, Assistant Head, CaMMS, began serving as acting head while recruitment for a permanent head is underway.

### *Elsewhere in the Library:*

- Dianne Babski was appointed Associate Director for Library Operations, effective November 2020. Ms. Babski had served as Acting Associate Director for Library Operations since March 2020. She is responsible for overall management of one of NLM's largest divisions with more than 450 staff who provide health information services. She also serves as the Scientific Review Administrator to the federal advisory committee recommending journals for MEDLINE (Literature Selection Technical Review Committee) and represents NLM to the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors and the Association of Research Libraries.
- Valerie Florance, PhD, was named Acting Scientific Director of NLM's Intramural Research Program, January 2021. Dr. Florance oversees a unified program that includes components housed in NLM's Lister Hill National Center for Biomedical Communications and the National Center for Biotechnology Information.
- In February 2021, Milton Corn, M.D., FACP, FACMI, Deputy Director for Research and Education, passed away. Dr. Corn worked at NLM for more than 30 years. He was the principal medical advisor on research and development and medical education priorities for NLM, where he provided direction and advice on the full range of NLM's intramural and extramural research portfolio.
- Teresa Zayas Cabán, PhD, was appointed Assistant Director for Policy Development in February 2021. In this role, Dr. Zayas Cabán leads NLM's policy and legislative activities, which promote access to scientific data and information, as well as more widespread use of health data standards.
- Hua-Chuan Sim, MD, Acting Director of Extramural Programs, retired on April 30, 2021. Richard C. Palmer, DrPH, JD, who joined NLM as Deputy Director for Extramural Programs, assumed the role of Acting Director on May 1.

- On May 17, 2021, Jerry Sheehan, NLM Deputy Director, started a six-month detail at the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP). He was invited to serve as OSTP's Assistant Director for Scientific Integrity and Data Access, assisting the OSTP's Deputy Director for Science and Society to coordinate policies and technical analyses on a wide variety of issues, including equitable access to data, public access to scientific data and information, open science, and scientific integrity.
- NLM selected four fellows to join its 2021-2022 class of Associate Fellows. The Associate Fellowship Program, beginning in September every year, offers an educational and leadership experience, ranging from formal lectures and presentations to projects in operations, research and development, policy and data analysis. Selected fellows are Luke Kudryashov, University of Michigan; Simone Stone, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; Frank Vitale, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee; and Sam Kennefick Wilairat, San Jose State University.

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