

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. Access: <http://www.ahrq.gov/>.

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) Web site is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' family of agency sites and has taken the lofty mission "to improve the quality, safety, efficiency, and effectiveness of health care for all Americans." The site is certainly comprehensive but may overwhelm the casual user.

The homepage clearly identifies seven broad categories that lead to more detailed information: "Clinical Information," "Funding Opportunities," "Research Findings," "Specific Populations," "Consumers & Patients," "Data & Surveys," "Quality & Patient Safety." Navigation is also aided by a sidebar, an A–Z quick menu, a browseable list of topics, a search bar, static links at the top of the page that allow for easy return to the homepage, and a sitemap. The variety of navigation options may appear excessive and can become confusing as each option provides varying results. A minor inconvenience is the fact that there may be occasional discrepancy in topics or the order of resource listings between the homepage and category page.

A vast amount of information is supplied by the agency, mostly free of charge. Health information on a variety of topics is provided through print and electronic publications, databases, and portals. AHRQ also offers a wealth of data and statistics in a variety of formats, such as databases, online query systems, and PDFs. Some data, such as HIV data, appears to be slightly dated.

While researchers will find a substantial

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amount of practical health information on this site, there is also valuable information for patients/consumers. Researchers will find considerable information to aid them with decisions on improving the quality of health care, including research, funding opportunities, and accepted practices. Consumers will discover information to help make informed health care decisions.

Notable features of this site include the ability to change the language to Spanish, citation information on most pages, bookmarking and sharing shortcuts, and the availability of podcasts and videos in the "Consumers & Patients" section.

Despite minor discrepancies in navigation, the site provides extensive information, particularly for those in the health profession or studying in the health sciences, which will help accomplish the site's tagline of "advancing excellence in health care."—*Krista Godfrey, McMaster University, godfrey@mcmaster.ca*



National Institute for Literacy. Access: <http://www.nifl.gov>.

Established by the National Literacy Act in 1991 and reauthorized in 1998 by the Workforce Investment Act, the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) serves as a national resource on current comprehensive literacy research, practice, and policy. NIFL is "authorized under the No Child Left Behind law to help children, youth, and adults learn to read by supporting and disseminating evidence-based reading research."

The site is well organized, with tabs devoted to four distinct areas of literacy, including "Adult," "Adolescence," "Childhood," and "Birth to Early Childhood." "Adult" provides links to an overview of NIFL services, key literacy issues, assessment strategies, and reading profiles with surveys and tools for

educators, definitions of reading components and teaching approaches, resources, publications, and research. Each section has useful links to related information and publications and “Childhood” and “Birth to Early Childhood” have an additional link to resources for parents.

The NIFL Web site also provides links to research in progress through the Literacy Research Initiative (LRI). LRI provides information about federally funded research from such agencies as the Department of Labor, National Science Foundation, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and other agencies, and describes the findings of research studies, reports, and journal articles.

Through awarded grants, LRI supports the Adult Literacy Research Consortium, which is charged to design, develop, implement, and study the effectiveness of adult literacy interventions for low literate adults. All of the consortium’s research is published on the NIFL Web site. NIFL also provides a useful synthesis and links to the major research in childhood and adolescent literacy.

NIFL offers a comprehensive database to assist users in finding literacy programs across the United States. This helpful resource, America’s Literacy Directory, allows users to choose programs for adults, children, employers, and volunteers with a ZIP code or city and state. The advanced search provides an extensive list of specific types of programs, services, and volunteer activities to choose from.

Along with serving the community, this site has many offerings for practitioners and scholars. With useful tools to help educators design literacy instruction and links to rigorous scientific research and datasets, NIFL provides a very good service.—*Lea Hill Currie, University of Kansas Libraries, lcurrie@ku.edu*

New Routes to Community Health. Access: <http://newroutes.org>.

New Routes to Community Health funds projects with the goal of “. . . improving the health of immigrants through immigrant-cre-

ated media.” Currently, New Routes is funding eight projects across the United States, which are “10 Steps to Better Healthcare: A Guide for Chinese-American Seniors;” “Abriendo las Cajas (Opening Boxes),” which seeks to reduce incidences of domestic violence among Latin American women in California; “Domestic Worker Safety & Dignity Project;” “Egal Shidad: Stories of Somali Health for Radio, TV and Classroom Use;” “HEARMe (Health Education via Airwaves for Refugees);” “Our Stories, Our Health” (using self-made media to improve the health of Laotians and Vietnamese immigrants); “Salud: Healing through the Arts,” which seeks to engage a predominantly Latino immigrant youth population; and finally, “Twa Zanmi (Three Friends),” Haitian community members creating a soap opera to address mental health issues.

The navigation for the Web site is clearly labeled, and an innovative feature is the Explore menu on the left-hand side, which uses tagging to emphasize topics covered on the Web site. There is an RSS option on the homepage and users can also subscribe to an e-digest newsletter from the site. Under “Resource Center” users can search for content on building communities, developing partnerships and producing good media, for example “Tweets & Blogs: Social Media as a Voice for the Voiceless.”

This site would appeal to public health students, as well as those interested in immigration studies, or social and cultural studies. The site is predominately informational in nature, though it does offer opportunities for interested parties to participate in the community and could be a useful tool for teachers/librarians to show students examples of the kind of projects one could take on in the fields of public health and/or social studies.

New Routes to Community Health is a fantastic resource for discovering a variety of projects that you might otherwise never know about, and it is very heartening to see that there are media and health partnerships being formed to reach out to underserved populations.—*Allison Bell, University of Toronto, allison.bell@utoronto.ca* 