

The Chester County Library System: Helping People Live Healthier Lives



Americans are increasingly concerned about their health and wellness, and with good cause. While medical and scientific advances have dramatically extended our life spans, new diseases and threats have emerged and our society as a whole is aging. Baby Boomers began turning 60 in 2006, and with that comes a surge in the need for information both about staying well and battling disease. The United States National Institutes of Health website recommends people seek health information at their local public library, where basic medical reference sources, medical and health directories, and current studies are easy to find.

The **Chester County Library System** plays a critical role in providing both access to information and information expertise to health-conscious consumers looking for accurate and often hard-to-locate information about health decisions.

Having accurate information is a key factor in a person's ability to achieve and maintain good health. In fact, numerous studies note that informed patients have better outcomes, require less care and ultimately reduce the cost of health care in our communities. The Pew Foundation's Internet & American Life Project reports that more and more people are turning to the Internet for health information – more than 75 million are seeking health information online each year.

Only 25 percent, however, are using good research techniques to ensure that the information they find is accurate, timely and trustworthy. In addition, many search engines cannot gain access to web pages and online databases that contain vital information – but much of this information can be accessed through services the **Chester County Library System** subscribes to on behalf of its customers. Trained staff is available to help customers with their research needs and free computer classes can help them become more skilled in using the Internet effectively to find what they need to live healthier lives.

The **Chester County Library System** supports people seeking health information by ensuring that they are connected with timely information through the Internet and other health information resources that help facilitate better health outcomes for members of our community.

JUST THE FACTS

- **Consumers do not currently feel that they are a primary decision maker in their health care decisions. However, with the right information, they can help influence medical decision-making and better manage their health care.**

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

- **Many search engines cannot gain access to certain web pages and online databases that contain vital information – much of which can be accessed through library subscription services.**

Pew Internet and American Life Project

- **A comprehensive method for determining quality and effectiveness of health care treatments indicates that people fail to receive treatment nearly 50 percent of the time.**

Rand Health/The Communications Institute

- **The Healthy People 2010 plan includes access to web-based health resources as one strategy for reaching its goals.**

Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion



Chester County Library System
Value to the County

Individuals • Community • Economy