

NCLIS Press Release

**U. S. National Commission on
Libraries and Information Science**

1110 Vermont Avenue NW Suite 820
Washington DC 20005-3552
Web: www.nclis.gov

For Immediate Release

CONTACT:
Information Officer
1-202 606 9200
info@nclis.gov

NCLIS to Recognize Libraries That Promote Healthy Lifestyle National Commission Announces Blue Ribbon Awards

Washington, DC USA, July 16, 2004 – The U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) announced today that the Commission will provide awards to libraries that do the most to promote a healthy lifestyle. Each state library agency has been invited to submit nominees for the award, which will be given to the individual library by the state library agency. NCLIS is providing overall direction for the award, and a special task force of NCLIS members has volunteered to organize the process and judge the entries.

To be known as the NCLIS Blue Ribbon Consumer Health Information Recognition Award for Libraries, the designation will honor those library programs that do the best job of offering health information to their users. The Commission hopes to be able to make the awards on an annual basis.

“These days, there are few issues that are more urgent for Americans than knowing how to live a healthy lifestyle,” said NCLIS Chair Beth Fitzsimmons, of Ann Arbor, MI. “The purpose of the awards is to help increase awareness of healthy lifestyles and to honor libraries which, as natural providers of trusted information, have in place programs designed to help their users access the health information they need to have.”

For each of the winning libraries, the award will be made on the basis of the program’s potential impact, innovativeness, and replicability. At the same time, as libraries submit their entries, they are bringing to the Commission a collection of best practices, all of which should be shared with the larger library and information science community.

“The Commission is trying to do a couple of things with these awards,” said Fitzsimmons. “Obviously we want to recognize those libraries that are doing good work in distributing consumer health information. And we want to collect best practices and be in a position to share those to the larger library management community. At the same time, though, we have to be true to our statutory responsibility, which is to address the information and learning needs of the American people.

(next)

“One of the ways the Commissioners have chosen to do this is to select, as one of our strategic goals, strengthening the relevance of libraries and information services in the lives of the American people. What better way to do this than to honor those libraries that provide consumers with information about a healthy lifestyle. What could be more relevant?”

The Commission’s Health Information Libraries Task Force has taken on the responsibility for encouraging state library agencies to recommend libraries for the award, and by the closing date for entries, some 34 states had submitted entries.

“This is an amazing response,” said Commissioner Mary (Mitzi) Perdue, the Task Force Leader. “We know that libraries throughout America are doing wonderful things to distribute health information, but I don’t think any of us realized just how good some of these programs are. Certainly the best practices we’ll be able to compile will be a wonderful resource for all libraries. And, at the same time, NCLIS is able to honor those libraries that are doing such a good job. I’m just sorry we can’t give every competing library this honor. They’re all so good.”

Commissioner Perdue’s colleagues on the Health Information Libraries Task Force agree. Commissioner Carol Diehl, of Neenah, WI spoke enthusiastically about the awards.

“I know libraries are doing a fine job with health information programs,” Commissioner Diehl said. “Now, with these awards from NCLIS, they can be recognized for what they do and we can become advocates and champions for these libraries which are contributing so much to their communities.”

Commissioner Colleen Huebner, of Seattle, WA, was also enthusiastic about honoring the libraries. Additionally, she commented about how the compilation of best practices in this area will provide the Commission with an innovative approach to knowledge development and knowledge sharing.

“The Blue Ribbon Award helps increase NCLIS’s relevancy in important ways,” Huebner said. “First, the award introduces NCLIS to some of the best, most innovative community programs across the country. Second, NCLIS can disseminate these best practices, nationwide, through a web-based clearinghouse. Recognizing the contribution of libraries to the day-to-day health of citizens is just one way NCLIS can expand public and policy-makers’ thinking about the place of libraries in the 21st century. This is the primary role of NCLIS, that of ‘think-tank’ to advise the President and Congress on policy to meet the library and information needs of the Nation.”

About NCLIS

The U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) is a permanent, independent agency of the Federal government charged by Public Law 91-345 to advise the President and Congress on national and international library and information policies, to appraise and assess the adequacies and deficiencies of library and information resources and services, and to develop overall plans for meeting national library and information needs. Broadly speaking, NCLIS is responsible for addressing the information and learning needs of the American people.

###