



September 11, 2012

The Honorable Denny Rehberg  
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education  
& Related Agencies  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-307, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education  
& Related Agencies  
U.S. House of Representatives  
214 Rayburn Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member DeLauro:

We are writing to express our concern over the effects that sequestration of funds due to take effect in January 2013 will have on the programs and services provided by the National Library of Medicine (NLM). The Congressional Budget Office estimates that sequestration would cut non-defense discretionary spending by 7.8% to 10%. A 7.8% cut to NLM's funding would reduce the Library's budget by approximately \$26.3 million. Cuts of this magnitude would have a significant effect on NLM programs and services that health professionals, researchers, medical librarians, and the public rely on every day, and which are supported through taxpayer dollars.

As the world's largest biomedical library and the producer of internationally trusted electronic information services, NLM develops, supports, and maintains more than 200 databases and online services that are freely available to libraries and anyone with Internet access. More than 750,000 people access trusted consumer health information from NLM's MedlinePlus website every day. More than 500,000 researchers, entrepreneurs, educators, students, and members of the general public download more than 1 million scientific journal articles per day from NLM's PubMed Central repository daily. Information available in NLM's suite of biomedical electronic resources contributes daily to the delivery of health care, and it also is used to accelerate scientific discovery and its translation into new therapies; improve the quality and lower the costs of health care; and promote wellness and disease prevention.

More than 80% of NLM's budget supports the development and maintenance of programs and services that these user groups rely on, and which ultimately facilitates improved health and health care.

NLM also funds outreach projects, working with community organizations, libraries, and the 6,000-member National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NN/LM) to connect health practitioners and the general public with the health literature. NLM reaches underserved populations with reliable health information, and gives health care providers the resources and skills they need to practice evidence based medicine. NLM's outreach projects place special emphasis on the needs of minority and other underserved populations and their health care providers. Health professionals in urban and rural areas rely on NLM to provide resources and training to promote the practice of evidence-based medicine, some of which are described in the attached list of examples.

For 40 years, NLM has supported seminal research on electronic patient records, clinical decision support, and health information exchange, including concepts and methods now reflected in EHR products and personal health records tools such as Microsoft Health Vault. As the HHS coordinating body for clinical terminology standards, NLM works closely with the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology to facilitate adoption and "meaningful use" of EHRs. NLM supports, develops, and disseminates several key data standards now required for U.S. health information exchange. While actively engaged in research on Next Generation EHRs, NLM also produces tools, frequently used subsets of large terminologies, and mappings to help HER developers and users

implement health data standards right now. For example, NLM's MedlinePlus Connect is used in multiple EHR products to provide high quality health information relevant to a patient's specific health conditions, medications, and tests, as present in his or her EHR.

Reductions in NLM's budget of the magnitude mandated by the sequestration would force cutbacks in these important programs at a time when the public, health practitioners, and the research community have become most dependent on them. The Medical Library Association and Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries urge Congress to work together to achieve a solution that avoids sequestration and the devastating impact of across-the-board cuts.

Sincerely,



Jane Blumenthal, AHIP, President  
Medical Library Association



Gary Freiburger, AHIP, President  
Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries

cc: The Honorable Tom Harkin, Chairman, Labor-HHS Appropriations Subcommittee  
and Committee on HELP  
The Honorable Richard C. Shelby, Ranking Member, Labor-HHS Appropriations Subcommittee  
The Honorable Paul Ryan, Chairman, Committee on Budget  
The Honorable Chris Van Hollen, Ranking Member, Committee on Budget  
The Honorable Kent Conrad, Chairman, Budget Committee  
The Honorable Jeff Sessions, Ranking Member, Budget Committee  
The Honorable John Kline, Chairman, Education and the Workforce Committee  
The Honorable George Miller, Ranking Member, Education and the Workforce Committee  
The Honorable Michael Enzi, Ranking Member, Committee on HELP

## **Organizational Bios**

**The Medical Library Association (MLA)** is a nonprofit, educational organization with approximately 4,000 health sciences information professional members worldwide. Founded in 1898, MLA provides lifelong educational opportunities, supports a knowledgebase of health information research, and works with a global network of partners to promote the importance of quality information for improved health to the health care community and the public.

**The Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries (AAHSL)** is composed of the libraries serving accredited U.S. and Canadian medical schools belonging to or affiliated with the Association of American Medical Colleges. It also includes other related libraries and organization that lead in resolving information and knowledge management problems in the healthcare environment. AAHSL supports academic health sciences libraries and directors in advancing the patient care, research, education and community service missions of academic health centers through visionary executive leadership and expertise in health information, scholarly communication, and knowledge management.