



Purpose

Mission – The Library’s mission is to encourage health literacy and support the health information needs of the Grossmont Healthcare District community by providing authoritative, reliable, and current health and wellness information.

Who we serve – The Library is operated by the Grossmont Healthcare District (GHD), a public agency that encompasses over 750 square miles of the East San Diego region.

The Library is a public library, open to everyone. Its primary patron base includes the residents of the Grossmont Healthcare District as well as employees, students, and patients associated with businesses, schools, and healthcare facilities based within the GHD boundaries. Borrowing privileges are restricted to GHD residents, and those who work, go to school, or receive healthcare within the boundaries of the District.

Goals – The goal of the Library is to help fulfill the Grossmont Healthcare District’s mission to maintain and improve the physical and behavioral health of its constituents, primarily through making authoritative, reliable, and current health and wellness information readily available. The Library continually builds its physical and electronic collection to include new materials and information and regularly updates its website to include links to reliable sources of health information.

Scope

Focus of collection – Consumer health information is the primary focus, written at a level understandable to the layperson in a variety of formats, covering a broad range of diseases, conditions, and health topics. Materials with in-depth technical content may be selectively collected.

Geographical area – Materials are primarily acquired for a U.S. audience, although some international items may be selectively chosen. Materials of local interest, such as those related to public health in the East San Diego region, will be acquired more comprehensively, while other areas, such as tropical medicine, are collected at a minimal level.

Languages – Materials are obtained primarily in English. Materials in Spanish and Arabic are also collected as priority, if available. Other languages are obtained according to need and availability.

Availability – To inform the public of the Library’s available materials, the Library provides an automated system and online public access catalog (OPAC), using authoritative indexing. Original and copy cataloging are performed by Library staff. The National Library of Medicine (NLM) Classification System is used for shelving materials.

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Types of Materials

Formats – Major considerations include the form of the item (print, audiovisual, electronic), its sturdiness, durability, technical quality, graphics, illustrations, appropriateness of the medium, and availability of different forms. Current technology is considered in providing up-to-date resources, including electronic resources and e-books made available through the Library's website.

Consumer Health Titles – The Library's circulating collection mainly comprises consumer health titles (written or produced in everyday language, intended for a general audience) covering all major medical conditions and diseases. Careful attention is paid to the authors and publishers, with a preference for authoritative works written by and/or published by reputable experts and specialists in their field. Self-published materials are rarely purchased and must meet the same criteria for consideration. Patron suggestions are welcome but must meet the same collection criteria and are also evaluated individually to determine appropriateness, relevancy, currency and community need.

Popular Works/Memoirs – Books written by celebrities or health professionals about their experience with a health or medical issue are selectively purchased. Memoirs by laypeople are also purchased on occasion. Their purpose, similar to that of "Hollywood" Movies (see page 3), is to attract patrons and encourage return visits to the Library, and to provide information on lived experiences.

Reference Collection – As a consumer health library open to the public, the majority of materials may be checked out. A small number of materials, such as dictionaries, directories, encyclopedias, handbooks, career development resources, and other reference materials may only be used in the Library.

Categories of Materials

Electronic Resources – The Library website is an important source of consumer health information and is updated frequently for content, ease of use, and current web standards and protocol. Electronic books (e-books) may be purchased and made available on the Library's website using the same evaluation criteria as for books in print. The Library subscribes to current and reliable consumer health databases to provide access to articles, encyclopedias, images, videos, and research materials. New databases may be selected based on their potential value to patrons and the availability of funds.

Books – Books are purchased to develop a broad and comprehensive consumer health collection. Purchases include books about health conditions, diseases, wellness topics, and medical history. Books that are purchased promote awareness of current health concerns, issues, and trends, and are of relative importance in comparison with other materials on the subject.

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Children’s Books – Books about health conditions and diseases written at appropriate levels for children, from babies to middle school age, are purchased to develop a broad collection. The selection criteria for content, currency, and authority follow the general guidelines in this policy. Books for young adults are collected and integrated in the general collection.

Magazines & Newsletters – Periodicals are an important source of current information and serve an essential need of a consumer health library. Subscriptions to print or digital consumer health magazines will be maintained. Consumer health newsletters published by reliable sources are included in this collection.

Medical Videos – Videos covering medical conditions and diseases are purchased in DVD and streaming video format. While they are educational, they are intended for a general audience. The authority of their source is carefully considered.

Documentaries – Documentary videos covering medical conditions and diseases are purchased in DVD and streaming video format. This genre typically tells the story of a person or several people with a specific health condition and sometimes includes overviews or information from medical professionals. Documentaries are intended to be educational, but they are intended for a general audience and have more entertainment value than medical videos. The authority of their source is carefully considered.

“Hollywood” Movies – Popular movies with either a major or minor health theme are purchased in DVD format. Their purpose is for entertainment only, and they are included in the collection to attract patrons and encourage return visits to the Library. R-rated movies are considered for purchase based on reviews recommending quality of content, and their cases are appropriately labeled.

Charts & Models – Anatomical charts and models are included in the non-circulating collection. These colorful graphical images and three-dimensional forms provide additional ways of visualizing and understanding anatomy, medical conditions, and diseases.

Pamphlets and brochures – Pamphlets and brochures explaining health and medical issues are obtained from government agencies, health information vendors, and medical organizations. They are displayed throughout the Library and are made available to all Library visitors at no charge.

Evaluation Criteria

Quality – Major considerations include the degree of excellence of the work; the authority and qualification of the author, publisher, or producer; the accuracy, objectivity, style, effectiveness of presentation; and evidence-based content where appropriate.

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Relevancy – Major considerations include health topic, availability of other materials, significance of the subject matter, and pertinence to the information needs of Library users.

Currency – Timeliness, date of publication, and coverage of recent research are key criteria. Every attempt is made to keep the collection up-to-date (published within the last 5 years), especially in the fields of medicine that change frequently. Some older materials are retained or added if they are considered “classics” in their field, if currency is less important for the topic, or if more current materials are not available.

Expected Utilization – Materials should have an observable or predictable use. However, materials which are deemed valuable to the collection are not ruled out solely on the basis of expected low use.

Role Within the Collection – Materials are acquired which complement the collection, update previous editions, fill in gaps in subject areas, provide new areas of interest, and add value to the collection.

Review Process

Selection is a complex process drawing on the professional judgment, education, experience, and expertise of the Library staff. It is based on an understanding of the information needs of Library users.

Basic guidelines for selection of new materials include:

- Does the work have a consumer health orientation?
- Does the author have appropriate credentials? What is the author’s reputation?
- Is the author affiliated with a reputable institution, agency or association?
- Is the topic thoroughly researched?
- Is the publisher reputable?
- Does the work fit within the scope of the collection?
- Does it cover an aspect of health care not currently well represented in the collection?
- Does it provide in-depth coverage, a unique perspective, or balanced presentation of the topic?
- Does it provide insight and guidance or promote problem-solving behavior?
- Is it accurate as can best be determined from reliable sources?
- Is it clearly written and/or illustrated?
- Is the technical quality good?
- Is its cost justified by its intended use?
- Is the work less than 5 years old, or does it update older materials in the collection?

The following reputable selection aids may be consulted:

- Medical Library Association (MLA) journal and bulletin book reviews
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- MLA CAPHIS (Consumer & Patient Health Information Section) listserv & bulletin recommendations
- MLGSCA (Medical Library Group of So. Calif. & Arizona) listserv and bulletin recommendations
- *Library Journal*, Booklist, and Publishers Weekly book reviews
- Medical book vendor reviews (Matthews)
- Medical book publisher promotional materials and catalogs
- Special releases from U.S. government agencies
- Persons with expertise within the medical community
- Holdings by other consumer health libraries
- Holdings by the National Library of Medicine
- Suggestions from patrons with special knowledge of a condition or disease

Subject & Collection Levels

The primary subject focus of the collection is consumer health. Major topics include:

- *Medicine*: all body systems; chronic and acute illnesses and diseases; mental health; specific disabilities; medication/drugs; therapies, procedures, diagnostic techniques and treatments; genetics
- *Psychosocial*: role of religion and spiritual aspects of sickness, healing, coping; death and dying; grief and the grieving process; stress management; support for caregivers
- *Wellness*: health promotion and maintenance; exercise and fitness; nutrition; prevention

Areas of special interest to the communities of East San Diego County may be given particular attention, including Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, heart disease and stroke, complementary and integrative therapies, fitness and nutrition, and mental health issues. The collection reflects needs identified in regional community health needs assessments and current trends, and addresses ongoing interest in cancer, aging, caregiving, fall prevention, parenting and children's health, and healthcare issues for special groups.

Included in the collection to a minimal degree will be works that reflect the historical, cultural, social, public policy, ethical, and philosophical aspects of medicine.

The Library maintains an historical medical book collection dating back to the mid-1800s. No further donations accepted.

The Library maintains a small California History collection of books, DVDs, and VHS tapes that primarily reflect the history of the East County region of San Diego and its citizens.

The Library maintains a small collection of books and reference materials related to ethnobotany and the role of plants in health and medicine for the Kumeyaay and other Native American communities. This collection was initially developed in conjunction with the Barona Cultural Center and Museum, and new materials are added selectively.

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The Library maintains a non-circulating reference collection of materials to support vocational guidance for healthcare careers, specifically to support the Health Pathways program of the Grossmont Union High School District. New materials are regularly added to cover all aspects of healthcare career development, including relevant testing and study guides, school and program directories, and healthcare career-specific memoirs.

Materials addressing the needs of the medical community, including medical textbooks for medical and nursing students, are not collected. Sharp Grossmont Hospital operates a Medical Library for the staff with a full-time librarian and online access to professional medical journals and research. Nursing materials are available from the Medical Library and the local colleges and universities that offer nursing programs.

The Library maintains a Little Free Library, located at the edge of the GHD parking lot and Briercrest Park. Materials for the Little Free Library are selected, purchased, and offered to the community for free using the same evaluation criteria and review process as other items in the Library's collections. These materials may be newly purchased general health education resources, pamphlets, and/or withdrawn Library materials (with Library markings removed and/or crossed out) that are still considered relevant and authoritative.

Responsibility for Selection

The primary responsibility for selection of materials, overall quality, and balance of content rests with the Head Librarian. The involvement of Library staff is important and encouraged. The Library staff may be given collection development duties as needed.

Purchasing Library Materials

Books and DVDs – The Library purchases the majority of its books and DVDs from Ingram, and Amazon.com. Other materials are purchased directly from publishers and producers. Both hardbacks and paperbacks are purchased, depending on availability.

Magazines – The Library purchases the majority of its magazines and newsletters through Prenax, a subscription management service. Some magazines are purchased directly from the publishers.

Multiple Copies – Only one copy of each item is purchased.

Cost – While there is no set limit on the price of an individual title, cost is considered in terms of value, demonstrated need, and availability of funds.

Textbooks – As a consumer health library, textbooks are not purchased.

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Gift Policy

Donated books are not encouraged and will only rarely be considered for inclusion in the Library's collection on an individual basis. The Head Librarian will evaluate the donated items using the same Evaluation Criteria used for new purchases as outlined above. See separate Gift and Donation Policy for complete policy.

Inventory

A periodic inventory of the collection is necessary to assess its relevancy and to check against catalog holdings to determine what materials are missing and may need replacement.

Retention and Withdrawal Guidelines

To maintain a collection that is pertinent to the needs of its users, it is essential that the removal of obsolete materials be done on an ongoing basis. Periodic evaluation of the collection, in whole or in part, is considered an integral part of development and maintenance of a quality Library collection. This periodic review assures continued relevance and currency of the materials, identifies subject gaps, and makes room for new additions. Ideally, materials published more than 5 years prior to the review date will be carefully considered for withdrawal. Items may be retained in subject areas that do not change rapidly or for which there are no more current items. Older materials are identified with a label to draw attention to the publication date. The following general criteria are used for withdrawing materials:

- Withdraw items damaged beyond repair
- Withdraw obsolete items containing inaccurate or outdated information
- Withdraw items that have been replaced in another medium
- Withdraw previous editions, except those in anatomy or those considered classics
- Withdraw Hollywood movies, medical DVDs, and documentaries that are older than 5-10 years as appropriate, based on circulation, community need, and space considerations
- At the end of each year, withdraw magazines and newsletters that are older than 2 years
- Retain the most current copy of reference materials (drug handbooks, directories, encyclopedias, style manuals); keep previous editions or those less than 5 years old for circulation
- Retain non-reference items that have been published within the last 5-10 years as appropriate with the exception of any consumer health materials judged to be out of date
- Retain items related to the history of medicine, history of science, other histories, and memoirs and biographies based on relevancy, currency, and community need
- Retain items in the Historical Medical section, the California History section, the Ethnobotany section, and the Career section as deemed appropriate

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All library markings must be crossed out on materials identified for removal. They may be placed in a give-away bin for patrons, donated, or discarded, depending upon the nature of content.

Method of Handling Patron Complaints, Challenges, or Requests for Withdrawal

Anyone may question specific material which has or has not been purchased by the Library. This procedure is for the purpose of considering the opinions of those in the community who are not directly involved in the selection policy. Questions about the selection process or about a particular item can be answered by the Head Librarian. If a request is made for formal review of an item, patrons will be encouraged to complete the Library's Item Review Request. The form is given back to the Head Librarian, who will review the material with the Chief Community Health Officer and CEO of GHD. It will be determined whether the material conforms to the Library's Collection Development Policy based on the resource as a whole, and not by passages or sections taken out of context. After review, the Head Librarian will notify the patron in writing of any decision regarding the item. The patron may appeal the decision to the GHD Board of Directors for their review. Censorship is to be avoided, and materials undergoing review will be evaluated based on their appropriateness in supporting the mission and goals of the Library. The American Library Association provides additional guidance in relationship to item reviews and considerations: <https://www.ala.org/tools/challengesupport>