

The Learning Resource Center (LRC) Toolkit is intended to serve as a resource for AIHA partner institutions and other health care institutions worldwide who are seeking to enhance their capacity to harness information and communications technologies (ICTs) to improve the quality of health care they provide.

In 1995, the American International Health Alliance (AIHA) established its first group of Learning Resource Centers (LRCs) at health institutions in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and the New Independent States (NIS) that were participating in the USAID-funded health care partnerships program. The central goal of the LRC project is to promote improved healthcare practices and behaviors by increasing access to health information. For health professionals to diagnose, treat, and prevent disease effectively, access to the most current research and information is critical; in isolation from the ever-changing body of clinical research, practices become outdated and healthcare quality declines. Similarly, policy-makers, educators, and public health professionals can significantly improve their work by learning from the methodologies and practices of others. By taking advantage of the capabilities of the Internet, healthcare institutions can now access more information—and more importantly, *current* information—than was previously available to them and at a fraction of the cost of maintaining journal subscriptions.

AIHA has now established over 130 LRCs at a wide range of health organizations—including hospitals, clinics, medical universities, public health departments, health ministries, and training centers. Each of these has adapted the LRC model to fit its own mission and functions, whether related to clinical practice, education, community health promotion, research, or healthcare policy-making.

The Toolkit provides a collection of tools and resources related to the various components of the LRC model—including project workplans, job descriptions, brochures and other documents developed by LRCs, and practical examples of implementation strategies that different institutions have developed. For those who are new to the LRC project, the Project Overview and *LRC Best Practices and Lessons Learned* report provides a useful introduction and more detailed background.

The Toolkit also includes training and reference materials and downloadable software related to the core set of skills which AIHA traditionally covers during its LRC workshops. This includes modules on evidence-based practice, Internet search methodologies, Web site design, grant proposal writing, information systems planning, and a number of other ICT-related topics.

The Toolkit will be updated periodically with new materials and resources as they become available. To request an updated copy on CD-ROM, please contact:

Mark Storey
Program Officer
American International Health Alliance
mstorey@igc.org
+1-202-789-1277 fax