

NEWS from the Office of Information  
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DALLAS--A communications network linking medical libraries in five states has begun operations in Dallas to speed information into the hands of doctors, scientists and health professionals in the region.

The network connects 11 participating libraries with a central "switchpoint" at the new South Central Regional Library Program headquarters at The University of Texas (Southwestern) Medical School at Dallas. The regional system is one component of a federally-funded nationwide biomedical communications network centering around the National Library of Medicine in Bethesda, Md.

Coordinator of the Dallas-based regional library program is Dr. Donald Hendricks, former director of libraries at Sam Houston State University, Huntsville.

The system serves medical libraries in Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. Through rapid teletype transmission, researchers can forward requests for needed technical data to the Dallas nerve-center, which will conduct a search and relay the request to the proper source library, Dr. Hendricks explained.

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"The program aims to coordinate efforts in existing institutions," Dr. Hendricks said. "It is designed to expand and improve medical library services and facilities for the health sciences."

Temporary administrative headquarters for the medical library network have been opened at 2600 Stemmons, manned by Dr. Hendricks and a staff of five. The offices will be moved this summer into a new fourth-floor addition to the Cary Basic Sciences Hall on the medical school's Harry Hines Blvd. campus.

Dr. Hendricks said libraries forming the regional consortium have on file a total of 974,400 volumes, plus issues of 21,842 journals, which are available for exchange through the regional program. The regional office also will provide medical researchers with teletype access to the National Library of Medicine's Medical Literature Analysis and Retrieval System (MEDLARS), through which computerized searches are made of the references stored there.

The national library contains some 1,300,000 biomedical books, theses, journals, pamphlets and microfilms.

Material provided through the regional library hookup will be either photocopies or the original item, with the library which provides the material deciding which is appropriate, Dr. Hendricks said. Photocopies will be provided free of charge and may be kept by the recipient.

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"These services will be available to public and private institutions with programs of health professional education, service or research, and to individuals engaged in these or related fields," Dr. Hendricks explained.

Services offered initially through Dr. Hendricks' office include an interlibrary loan program, to improve access to biomedical literature through better coordinated and more liberal lending among the region's libraries and by the national library; a computer-produced master of medical and scientific journal holdings of all member libraries; and a central card-file of recent and current catalogued books as they are acquired by member libraries.

The regional library also will initiate a continuing education program of workshops and seminars assisting local medical librarians in developing their collections.

Dr. Hendricks envisions a future operation that relies entirely on computers to provide instantaneous retrieval and transmission of material by televised facsimile reproduction.

The regional arrangement will encourage coordinated purchase of expensive resource material, to avoid costly duplication among participating libraries, he said.

Member libraries of the Region 9 consortium, in addition to the UTSMS library in Dallas, are:

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University of Arkansas Medical Center, Little Rock; Louisiana State University Medical Center, New Orleans; LSU Medical Center, Shreveport; Tulane University, New Orleans; University of New Mexico School of Medicine, Albuquerque; University of Oklahoma Medical Center, Oklahoma City.

Also the Texas Medical Center, Houston; Texas Medical Association, Austin; University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston, and the University of Texas Medical School at San Antonio.

The regional system also has access to the collection of the Los Alamos Scientific Library of the University of California, Los Alamos, N.M.

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Dr. Donald Hendricks, coordinator of the South Central Regional Library Program, has been a librarian, teacher and administrator for 15 years.

A native of Flint, Mich., he holds bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Michigan, and a Ph.D. from the University of Illinois.

Dr. Hendricks had been director of libraries at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville for three years. He previously had headed libraries at Millikin University, Decatur, Ill., and at Owosso, Mich.

He is author of numerous articles and monographs on library procedures, and has taught courses in cataloguing and the history of the book.

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