



**Canadian Health Libraries Association**  
**Association des bibliothèques de la santé du Canada**

## **Request for Proposal**

**Development of a Business Plan for the  
National Network of Libraries for Health/  
Réseau national des bibliothèques pour la santé**

**September 12, 2005**



*National Network of Libraries  
for Health*

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*Réseau national des bibliothèques  
pour la santé*

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## **Introduction**

The purpose of this request for proposal is to invite interested and qualified consultants/firms to submit a proposal for the development of a Business Plan for a National Network of Libraries for Health/Réseau national des bibliothèques pour la santé (NNLH/RNBS). Based on consultations with key stakeholders and potential network users, an examination of existing services and models, and an analysis of the unique national and jurisdictional context in which the Network will operate, the business plan will provide recommendations and specifications for the establishment, development, operation, governance, funding, and evaluation of a National Network of Libraries for Health for Canada.

## **Vision**

The National Network of Libraries for Health will ensure that all health care providers in Canada will have equal access to the best evidence to support patient care and population health. It will be designed to fit the Canadian health care model and address information gaps inherent in a complex health delivery system.

## **Goals**

The NNLH/RNBS will support health care providers in offering the best possible care by:

- Improving decision making through access to best evidence
- Eliminating information disparities
- Providing barrier free access to high quality health information
- Improving skills for information retrieval, evaluation and application
- Developing customized content and user interfaces that reflect and respond to the information needs and contexts of health care providers across the country

The NNLH/RNBS will provide an efficient and cost effective approach that:

- Ensures effective coordination and leveraging of existing resources, services and programs
- Provides a collaborative framework that optimizes resource identification, acquisition and allocation

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## Background

The provision of high quality health care requires that health care providers use the best available evidence to inform their decisions about patient care and education, service provision, program planning, health system management, health promotion, and population health. In recognition of this, countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom have directed resources towards the creation and maintenance of national health information networks that facilitate access to current, evidence-based information resources at the time and place of need. In the United States, the US National Library of Medicine coordinated the development of the US National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NN/LM), a system linking regionally-based health libraries and information services. In the United Kingdom, the National electronic Library For Health (NeLH) was developed as a digital library providing access to information resources to health professionals as well as the public across the UK. An offshoot of this initiative, the UK National Health Service (NHS) National Library for Health, was developed as a means to link NHS libraries and their services.

Canada has yet to develop a similar national network, although provincial health information networks exist in some form in Saskatchewan (SHIRP: Saskatchewan Health Information Resources Partnership), Alberta (the HKN: Health Knowledge Network), Nova Scotia (The Atlantic Health Knowledge Partnership) and Newfoundland & Labrador (Newfoundland and Labrador Health Knowledge Information Network). In the absence of a nationally coordinated network, many health care providers have little or no access to information, whereas others have access to a wide range of information resources and services, in some cases with a significant level of duplication or redundancy.

For the past three years, the NNLHealth/RNBS Taskforce of the Canadian Health Libraries Association/Association des bibliothèques de la santé du Canada (CHLA/ABSC) has done significant groundwork towards a) identifying the key issues and obstacles that Canadian health care providers face in accessing evidence –based information, and b) examining existing national and local models for the coordinated and responsive delivery of health information resources and services. Recent stakeholder meetings with representatives from government, the academic community and professional organizations have unanimously confirmed the need to move ahead in the design and development of a unique Canadian solution to these issues.

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## The Business Plan

The Business Plan for the National Network of Libraries for Health will guide the implementation and development of the Network. It must document and clearly communicate a detailed framework for the development of the NNLH/RNBS. It should include key activities, funding, governance structures, implementation plans, and staffing and operational requirements for network implementation and the first two years of operation. The planning process must be highly consultative, and designed to secure full commitment from all stakeholders.

Specifically the business plan must include:

- A strategic environmental analysis (SWOT)
- Detailed descriptions of the services and resources to be delivered through the NNLH/RNBS
- A description of the staffing and operational requirements
- A description of how the network would link and interact with other established entities
- A plan for outcome assessment and project evaluation
- A description of stakeholder roles, responsibilities and commitments
- A description of the governance structure
- A marketing and communications plan for the NNLH/RNBS
- A financial plan for implementation
- A financial plan for the first 2 full operating years including capital and operating costs, revenue sources, etc.
- A detailed timeline for implementation
- Suggested strategies for providing for the long term sustainability of the network

The business plan must address the significant issues and potential obstacles related to developing and implementing a coordinated health information network that will effectively reach and respond to the needs of health care providers from many disciplinary backgrounds, working in a wide range of settings across the continuum of care, and administered and funded through a variety of local, provincial or national organizations, systems and jurisdictions, from coast to coast to coast.

While it is anticipated that part of the plan will address coordinated licensing of electronic full text information resources, it also is essential that the plan address access to, and delivery of, print, multimedia and other key resources, end user training and support,

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and the provision of search, alerting and other customized “to the desktop” services as identified by stakeholders/potential network users.

The goal of the NNLH is to ensure that health providers across the continuum of care have fast and easy access to evidence/knowledge based information resources. Access to consumer health information, patient information/records, and other data repositories or health information systems are beyond the scope of this initiative.

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## **Project Milestones**

- i. A preliminary report on project status will be issued one month after the contract has been awarded.
- ii. An interim report, suitable for distribution to stakeholders and the health library community, will be available two months after the award date, and there will be an opportunity for responses to be reviewed, prior to completion of the final plan.
- iii. The business plan must be completed approximately three months after the award date for review and approval by the Project Advisory Team

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## **Proposal Requirements**

The consultant/firm will be expected to work closely with the NNLH/RNBS Project Advisory Team. The consultant/firm will also be expected to consult with key stakeholders including government, professional associations, and resource publishers/vendors, and representative health libraries.

The proposal should include the following information:

- Name of the consultant/firm
- Relevant experience/qualifications (if there will be a project team, the names of all individuals who will be involved in this project and relevant experience/qualifications should be included)
- References with details of work completed
- A description of the approach that will be used to complete the business plan, including a detailed timeline
- A description of project deliverables
- A detailed budget for the project including estimated expenses (i.e. travel) and billing and payment structure.

## **Expressions of Interest:**

Expressions of interest must be received by 4:00 pm EDT on October 12, 2005.

## **Submission of Proposal:**

Following receipt of the expression of interest, the Project Manager will be in touch with you to identify the date for the submission of the proposal document. Proposals received after the date agreed upon will not be considered.

Any proposal must remain open for acceptance for a period of not less than 30 days after the closing date of this RFP

Proposals may be submitted by mail, courier, e-mail or fax to:

CHLA/ABSC  
39 River St.  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada  
M5A 3P1

Attention : Wayne Glover  
Email: [wglover@associationsfirst.com](mailto:wglover@associationsfirst.com)  
Fax: 416-646-9460

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**For further information contact:**

Patrick Ellis  
Dalhousie University  
Sir Charles Tupper Medical Building  
Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3H 4H7  
Tel: (902) 494-1669; Fax: (902) 494-3750  
Email: [pellis@dal.ca](mailto:pellis@dal.ca)

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## **Evaluation and awarding of contract**

The contract will be awarded to the consultant/firm whose submission offers the best value. This may not necessarily be the lowest bidder. We reserve the right not to award the contract to any of those submitting proposals, and we make seek further responses.

Proposals will be evaluated on the basis of:

- Degree to which the vision and goals described in this RFP are met
- Quality of the proposed project approach and methodology
- Qualifications and experience of consultant/firm
- Project budget and timeline, including cost effectiveness of activities outlined in the proposal and feasibility of the timeline
- Other criteria as deemed appropriate by the Association

## **Ownership of Materials**

Any information provided by CHLA/ABSC either in this RFP or in subsequent verbal or written communications shall be considered confidential and for express use in the preparation of this proposal.

All proposals submitted become the property of the CHLA/ABSC. They will be received and held in confidence by the Association.

All data collected and all resulting reports and publications prepared by the successful bidder will be the exclusive property of the Canadian Health Libraries Association/Association des bibliothèques de la santé du Canada. The consultant/firm will be appropriately credited on any resulting publications or presentations.

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## **Additional background information:**

Canadian Health Libraries Association. NNLH/RNBS website  
<http://www.chla-absc.ca/nnlh/vision.html>

Provincial Initiatives  
<http://www.chla-absc.ca/nnlh/prov.html>

Canadian Health Libraries Association. Submission to the Commission on the Future of Health in Canada. A National Network of Libraries for Health.  
<http://www.chla-absc.ca/news/romanow.html>

Marshall J. A national health library and information network for Canada : a brief concept paper. 1997  
<http://ils.unc.edu/~marshall/nnhl/hcansia.htm>

United States. National Network of Libraries of Medicine website  
<http://nnlm.gov/>

United Kingdom. National electronic Library for Health website.  
<http://www.nelh.nhs.uk>

United Kingdom. National Library for Health website  
<http://www.library.nhs.uk/about/>