Innovative health partnership prevents library closures

Funding cuts are a common and challenging reality for many libraries. To overcome the budgetary challenge, public libraries in Staffordshire, England, UK, have strategized to keep all libraries open through a creative partnership. Their new partner is the South Staffordshire and Shropshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (http://www.sssft.nhs.uk/).
The goals of the partnership are to improve well-being throughout the community, while making health services more visible and accessible to its users. “We can’t just keep salami-slicing our services, we’ve got to look at different ways of doing things,” noted Mark Caldwell of the foundation trust. “Libraries already offer an awful lot that supports the wellbeing of communities and populations.”

The emphasis of the initiative will be on mental health, learning disability, and children’s services. Additionally, volunteers making home visits will be trained to assess potentially unhealthy living situations; for example, proper heating during winter in the homes of seniors.

Partner work has begun in health promotion with the production of consumer health pamphlets to be distributed.


Libraries save lives
Public libraries in the United Kingdom have begun lending out life-saving equipment and providing training programs to the public.

In partnership with the British Heart Foundation (BHF) and Westfield Health, public access defibrillators have been made available at all public libraries in the region, along with CPR training kits that provide the training in thirty minutes. The kits may be borrowed to provide training in local organizations. Patrons can also attend defibrillator and CPR training sessions in the library provided by Yorkshire Ambulance Service, the organization that will also maintain the equipment on an ongoing basis.

The aim of the project is to increase public safety by getting help to the people who need it more quickly. When someone has a medical emergency requiring a defibrillator or CPR, every minute they go without help decreases their chance of survival by about 10%.

According to the chairman of Westfield Health, “We’re very pleased to support the BHF and the people of Rotherham in this fantastic initiative and we hope to see the pilot project rolled out more widely—helping to save lives across the UK.”


Donated medical books enhance education in Ghana
The quality and availability of medical books has been greatly enhanced at the University of Health and Allied Sciences (UHAS) in Ghana, thanks to a generous donation of over 300 high-quality medical books from Louisiana State University–Shreveport (LSUS).

The only institution in Ghana that trains health professionals, UHAS had previously relied on about one specialized text book for every thirty students to meet all their study and research needs. “Opportunities such as the generosity from LSUS will allow a diverse range of books which can be available to our students that they would not previously have had,” says Francis Zotor, acting director of international programs at UHAS.

For the next step in the initiative, an exchange program will be offered to students who wish to teach, take classes, and research in Ghana. Students in Ghana will soon be able to participate in the exchange once visas allow.

Largest collection of online health and safety training courses in Canada is launched

The delivery of workplace health and safety training has been revolutionized by the Canadian company Safety First Training (https://safetyfirsttraining.ca/). Early this year, the company launched Canada's largest collection of online training courses in safety. The online catalogue (https://safetyfirsttraining.ca/online-safety-training/) lists more than 700 courses.

The extensive collection of online courses will mean significant cost savings to companies. Clients pay only for the courses they need, which can be completed in lieu of face-to-face training. “While working with our clients over the years we felt that by offering such an extensive online training library we could further assist companies who are looking to keep all their employees in compliance with the latest safety training requirements while keeping their costs under control along with increased productivity,” says Allan Nolan, president of Safety First Training.