



**NORTHWEST  
SUBURBAN  
COLLEGE**

# Library News

VOLUME 2, NO. 1

WINTER 2023

## Considerations in Providing Medical Information

One of the unfortunate and damaging effects of the COVID-19 pandemic was the distribution of misinformation about the spread and treatment of the virus. The Surgeon General released a report in 2021 on this very topic entitled, [Confronting Health Misinformation](#). Information about the virus changes rapidly and, in some cases, reverses what was previously thought and said about the nature of the virus. As a result, many people have a difficult time believing anything about COVID-19 and/or health related information in general. As employees in the health care field, medical and dental assistants and pharmacy technicians are frequently called upon to provide health related information to the patients they are assisting. Librarians working in all types of libraries find

themselves in the same position. There are several considerations to remember when you are asked to provide medical information. What type of information is needed (causes, treatment, prevention, etc.)? In what format and language (print, online, audio, Spanish, English, Polish, etc.) can the patient receive and understand the information? In some instances, the patient may be emotional and request information in an urgent manner. Patients dealing with a diagnosis frequently just “google” the condition or disease, which can lead to inaccurate and sometimes, alarming information. It is important to remain calm and show empathy, but also, to remain neutral. If you can provide the requested information, do so, but do not interpret it or make any personal recommendations. Re-

main objective. Of course, the patient should be referred to the physician, dentist, or pharmacist, for any recommendations, but sometimes, access to the professional is limited. If you cannot provide information, try to refer to a source of reliable information. I always point to [MedlinePlus](#) as a reliable and objective source of medical information. [KidsHealth.org](#) is a good source for pediatric information. A tutorial from the [National Library of Medicine](#) provides guidelines in selecting trustworthy health related information. It is worthwhile to take a look at this site so that you can be more confident of the information you provide to patients. Many health care facilities have ready made pamphlets which answer common questions posed by patients. When you need to consult online sources for medical information, just be sure the information you provide is trustworthy and comes from an authorized source.

### Contents:

Providing Medical Information—p. 1

Local community information—p. 2

NWSC staff and program news—p.2

Link between screen time and childhood obesity— p.3

Librarian contact:

[mbyrne@nwsc.edu](mailto:mbyrne@nwsc.edu)

Click [here](#) to obtain a list of the recommended vaccines and immunizations for all age groups (Birth to 18 and Adults, 19 and older).

## The Value of Local Community Information

It is very beneficial to be familiar with the health profile of the communities where you live and work. This is especially the case if you are employed in a health care field. There are many helpful web sites that provide snapshots of the health issues of concern in local communities. The [County Health Rankings](#) site provides information on health outcomes (length and quality of life), as well as health factors such as smoking, obesity, alcohol

consumption, etc. in a particular community. Improvement or worsening trends in these conditions are also indicated. Social and economic factors such as education, unemployment levels, and physical environment are also taken into consideration. The [City Health Dashboard](#) provides similar information for large metropolitan areas such as Chicago, Arlington Heights, and Schaumburg. Statistics for these locations are compared to those

from the averages of the other cities included in the Dashboard. Both of these sites are national in scope.

Do not forget to check out the Public Health Department web sites for [Cook](#) and [Lake](#) Counties. These sites not only provide current information about general and local health issues, but also include location information for health care providers in all health related fields,

## NWSC Staff and Program News

Northwest Suburban College is proud to welcome Dr. Alonzo DeCarlo as Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs. Dr. DeCarlo comes to NWSC with extensive experience teaching and administering in the academic world. He holds Master's Degrees in Experimental Psychology and Clinical Social Work, and a Doctorate in Developmental Psychology. Dr. DeCarlo will be working primarily on developing and managing Associate's and Bachelor's

Degree programs, including attaining proper approvals and Higher Learning Commission accreditation. NWSC has also recently received approval to accept international students. Dr. AliNiasee and Dean Gold are currently working on the details necessary to market and recruit international students. This is exciting news and represents a significant effort by NWSC to grow its programs and its student body.

## Screen Time Warnings for Children and Youth

We have all heard or read about the many negative effects of excessive screen time on children and adolescents. This includes time on the computer, smartphones, tablets, as well as time spent viewing television. Brain function can be affected, resulting in limited attention spans. The isolation from spending hours on devices can have a detrimental effect on the social development of this population. In addition, children can become victims of predators who visit popular sites with the goal of exploiting and even, abusing youth. Marketing companies also target children and youth with ads for unhealthy snacks and food products.

The lack of exercise and physical activity resulting from excessive screen time have led to very negative consequences. Of major concern is the increased rate of obesity among

this population. This topic has received quite a bit of coverage, but the alarm was sounded recently when the American Academy of Pediatrics recommended the use of drugs and even, surgery, in cases of severe childhood obesity. These recommendations appeared in a **study published in the journal, Pediatrics, by the Academy in January of this year.** Among other findings, the study revealed that obesity among children and young people increases with age. Specifically, the study focused on the age groups of 2-5, 6-11, and 12-19 year olds. The study concluded that more than two hours per day of screen time increased the risk of obesity among these groups.

The National Institutes of Health has published some **guidelines** for parents in addressing the issue of limiting screen time for children.

These include parents having an open and honest discussion with children about the use of devices, and also, about trusting the information on various sites. Apps are available that can be installed on devices in order to avoid certain sites. Rules to set time limitations can be discussed and implemented.

We can agree that online communication has benefits in keeping young people connected with family and friends. In addition, there are many valuable online interactive educational programs for young people. However, the increase in health risks resulting from excessive screen time needs to be addressed as a serious issue.



[Northwest Suburban College](#)



[@NWSC\\_College](#)



[Northwest Suburban College](#)



[NWS\\_College](#)

