

February 12, 2008

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
731 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Harkin,

Thank you for your continued leadership on health care issues.

The Medical Library Association (MLA) and the Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries (AAHSL) write to express our appreciation for your successful efforts to improve the Public Access Policy at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). As you are aware, the current, voluntary policy has failed to achieve its goals by accounting for a deposit rate of only 5% among NIH-funded peer-reviewed manuscripts. Our associations are optimistic that the update policy (NOT-OD-08-033), which requires that final peer-reviewed manuscripts are deposited in the National Library of Medicine's PubMed Central within 12 months of publication, will speed the pace of discovery by expanding access to research findings supported with federal tax dollars.

The improved Public Access Policy was developed in a manner consistent with the Congressional mandate in the *Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2008* (PL 110-161, Division G, Title II, Sec. 218). When Congress undertook revision of the policy, it utilized a process that included stakeholder input and revision in an effort to balance the interests of the public and private interests. Under this new policy, public access to federally funded research will stimulate sustained progress in biomedical research and translate into a watershed of improvements in public health. For all of these reasons, MLA and AAHSL urge you to support the April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2008 date for implementation of the updated NIH Public Access Policy.

Once again, thank you for your strong leadership on the issue.

Sincerely,



Mark E. Funk, AHIP  
President  
Medical Library Association



Linda Watson, AHIP, FMLA  
President, Association of Academic  
Health Sciences Libraries

MLA is a nonprofit, educational organization with more than 4,500 health sciences information professional members worldwide. Founded in 1898, MLA provides lifelong educational opportunities, supports a knowledgebase of health information research, and works with a global network of partners to promote the importance of quality information for improved health to the health care community and the public.

AAHSL is composed of the directors of the libraries of 142 accredited American and Canadian medical schools that belong to the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC). AAHSL's goals are to promote excellence in academic health sciences libraries and to ensure that the next generation of health practitioners is trained in information-seeking skills that enhance the quality of healthcare delivery.