In this Issue

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We are fully and firmly in the information age, and in fact have transitioned to a time where there may be too much of it. The well-known hierarchy of Data → Information → Knowledge → Wisdom (DIKW) is a theoretical framework that can only lead to meaningful public health impact if each element is appropriately curated and presented. This is where libraries come in: as real and virtual portals to DIK (and therefore, W), they and those that run them are indispensable in our current times.

From a 2018 original research article published in **Preventing Chronic Disease** (a peer-reviewed public health journal sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention):

> "Public libraries are free and accessible to all and are centers of community engagement and education, making them logical choices as partners for improving population health. Library staff members routinely assist patrons with unmet health and social needs."[1]

This statement is certainly true in the State of Delaware, and we are pleased to welcome Annie Norman, Ed.D., Delaware's State Librarian, as the guest editor for this issue of the Journal.

Delaware is fortunate to have fifteen public libraries in New Castle County, six public libraries in Kent County, and fourteen public libraries in Sussex County. As participants in the statewide Delaware Library Consortium, these public libraries provide full services which are available to all Delawareans, and act as an access gateway to other essential services as shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Delaware Libraries: Basic Needs Chart[2]

	Food/Nutrition	Shelter/Housing	Clothing/Hygiene	Health/Mental Health	Technology	Training/Education Literacy	Childcare	Transportation	Legal	Employment/Income
	Food Bank DHSS, DOE	Housing	DHSS	DHSS		DOE, Higher Ed	DOE, Office of Early Childhood	DELDOT	Courts	DOL
NEEDS	TANF, food stamps	Heating assistance	Laundry	Specialist appointment				Funds for gas or bus tickets		Job & income, financial literacy and management
	Food banks, shelters that serve lunch	Rent assistance	Hair cuts	Dental & optical coverage	Credit/Debit Card	Computer skills training		License, insurance	Record expungement	Benefits
	Meals for children	Transitional, temporary, or substandard housing	Clothing	Medicaid	Stable email account	GED	Purchase of Care	DART, bus tickets Bike share	Probation/ parole	Adequate pay
	Food deserts, insecurity	No shelter	Shoes	Insurance	Cellphone	Illiterate, ESL no computer skills, no math skills	No childcare available, affordable	Access to transportation, public or private	Outstanding tickets or warrants	Assistance to complete/submit application online
			Coats	Access to doctors, clinics	State & SSID					
			Showers	Substance abuse, PTSD, ACEs, violence, isolation						

As you look at this chart, you can quickly appreciate the depth and breadth of services that can be accessed via the state library system. Add to that the multitude of programs that libraries operate for the betterment of our community including the new *Dolly Parton's Imagination Library*, STEM program, and a wide variety of virtual events which were enhanced as a result of COVID-19, and you can see how important libraries are.

The key to Delaware's Public Libraries full resources is simple: obtain a free *library card*. Even without a library card, there is still much that can be accessed.

At all times, and especially during these tumultuous times of world-wide pandemic and social strife, our public libraries continue to play a critical role on behalf of our publics' health and wellbeing. We applaud the critical role of libraries in taking us on the arc from Data to Wisdom, ultimately to improved health for all Delawareans.

References

1. Whiteman, E. D., Dupuis, R., Morgan, A. U., D'Alonzo, B., Epstein, C., Klusaritz, H., & Cannuscio, C. C. (2018, May 24). Public libraries as partners for health. *Preventing Chronic Disease*, *15*, E64. PubMed https://doi.org/10.5888/pcd15.170392

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