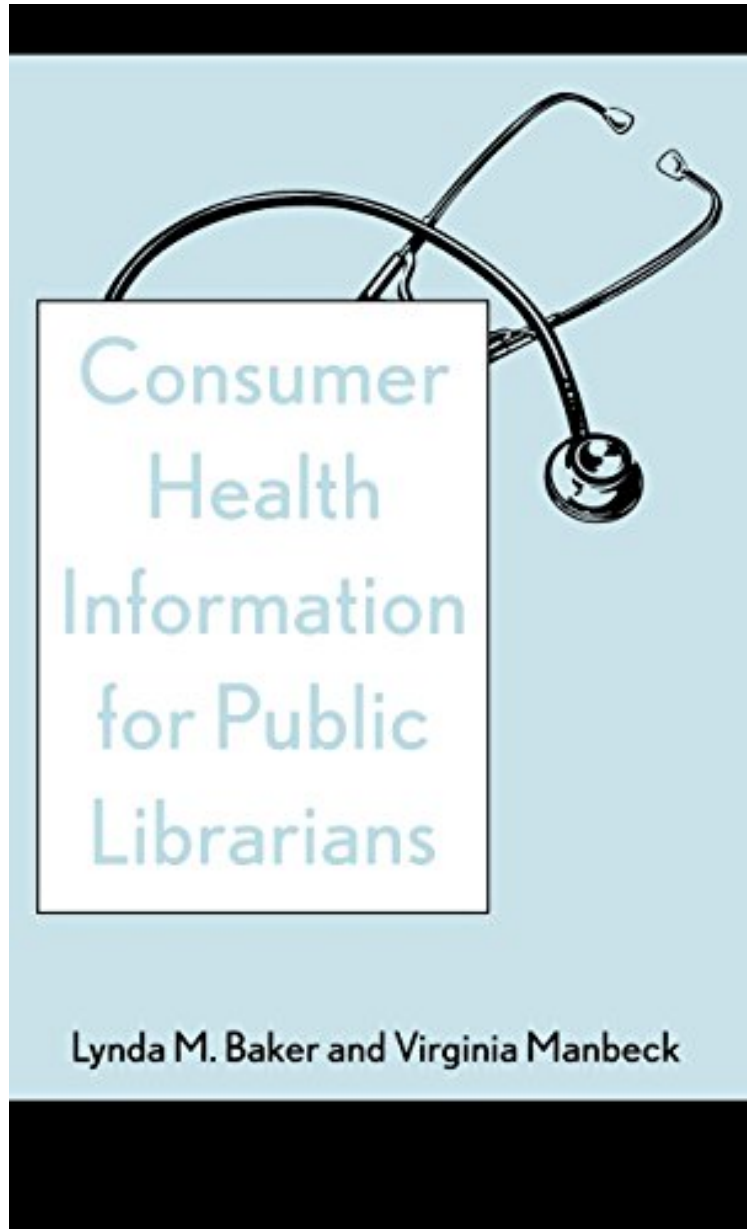


## Consumer Health Information for Public Librarians

*Lynda M. Baker, Virginia Manbeck*  
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#5623671 in Books Scarecrow Press 2002-01Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.58 x .61 x 5.621, .68 #File Name: 0810841991192 pages | File size: 41.Mb

**Lynda M. Baker, Virginia Manbeck : Consumer Health Information for Public Librarians** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Consumer Health Information for Public Librarians:

In today's healthcare environment, lay people are increasingly anxious to play a more involved role in decisions that affect their well being. They actively seek medical and health information in libraries, bookstores, and on the Internet. Such high demand has left many public librarians struggling to meet their clients' needs, even as large numbers of new publications are becoming available. This book addresses the issues involved in developing a CHI collection in public libraries, with particular attention to the needs and behaviors of its target clientele.

From Library Journal With these two new books and the current edition of Alan Rees's *Consumer Health Information Source Book* (Greenwood, 2000, 6th ed.), librarians will be well prepared to meet the health information needs of the general public both titles do an excellent job of illustrating the need for quality consumer health information services. The flavor differs, with the first work more grounded in public library experience and the latter based on academic library consumer health outreach programs. While public librarians are the primary audience for Baker and Manbeck's guide, all professionals providing consumer health information services will also benefit from studying their work. Baker is an experienced nurse with an MLS and a Ph.D. in Library and Information Science who has worked as a health science reference librarian; she now teaches health science librarianship at Wayne State University, Detroit. Manbeck has an MBA and MLS and works as project consultant to the New York Public Library's consumer health information program. Drawing on the library and nursing literature, their book focuses on meeting the health information needs of consumers in conjunction with a wide range of community partners. Beginning with the vital aspect of community analysis, the authors examine both consumers and the healthcare environment. Well-referenced chapters that address a historical perspective, collection development issues, Internet resources, promotion, outreach, staff development, and evaluation follow this needs assessment. Almost all the advice is sound, based on professional standards and knowledge. Only the weeding advice seems unrealistic two years is too short for works that are updated on a three- to five-year cycle. This work includes a limited number of recommended resources, including web sites. The Medical Library Association's (MLA) handbook has a broader purpose: to guide librarians providing health and medical reference service to the general public in any setting. The authors are librarians at the Houston Academy of Medicine-Texas Medical Center Library, where Halsted has managed several consumer health information projects. Barclay has worked in various academic libraries and published other books and articles on library topics (*Managing Public Access Computers*, *Professional Media*, LJ 6/15/00). In contrast to the Scarecrow title, the MLA book covers three distinct topics: consumer health essentials, consumer health resources, and consumer health services. The first part briefly reviews medical terminology, common health concerns, and complementary/alternative medicine. Given the brevity of this section, it was not surprising to find some minor errors, such as uneven coverage of the health professions and common medical conditions. For example, not all nurses have a four-year degree, and many allied health professions are not described, while osteopathic physicians are described in two separate chapters, one on alternative therapies. The second part goes beyond the scope of Baker and Manbeck's book by including annotated lists of both web and print resources, along with a section of information for and about children. Without shortchanging print resources, this book serves as an excellent introduction to consumer health on the web. Selections are limited to English language, with the exception of the NOAH web site, which offers health information in English and Spanish. This book is definitely a better value than *Healthcare Online for Dummies* (LJ 3/1/02) and other popular titles on this topic. The CD-ROM includes links to the fewer than 100 selected web sites (of 400 reviewed), along with a sample brochure and a prototype web site. The site descriptions include title, URL, and a chart indicating type of site (commercial, nonprofit, government), privacy policy, advertisements, and sales. Each description includes authority, content, and special features. However, for quick reference on specific topics, one would do better to search MEDLINEplus at [medlineplus.gov](http://medlineplus.gov) or one of the other general sites recommended in this book. The book's final and most valuable section provides a practical approach to four key areas: creating consumer healthcare services, evaluating consumer health resources, creating effective print consumer health publications, and building successful consumer health web sites for your users. Ethical concerns are addressed along with the practical aspects, as well as collaboration between medical and public libraries. These chapters, read in conjunction with Baker and Manbeck's guide, go a long way to supporting effective consumer health information programs. In conclusion, both titles are recommended for their unique strengths. If your library can afford just one, purchase Baker and Manbeck's book, which will have enduring value. Margaret Allen, Library Consultant, Stratford, WI Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. The authors clearly present anticipated health questions asked by consumers on popular medical diagnoses...This work is appropriate for professional practitioners who provide CHI services to the public. Public and hospital libraries...will benefit most from this resource. (Collection Management)About the AuthorLynda M. Baker is Associate Professor, Library and Information Science Program, Wayne State University. Virginia Manbeck is Project Consultant to The New York Public Library's CHOICES in Health Information service.