

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS COLLECTIONS POLICY STATEMENTS

Medicine (Class R)

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I. Scope

The Collections Policy Statement for Medicine covers class R (R-RZ) and applicable subclasses of Z (Z6658-Z6700). The Library's holdings in class R number in the vicinity of 750,000 items, including monographs, texts and journals. Additionally, the subclasses of Z contain abstracting and indexing services, such as *Index Medicus* and the *Bibliography of the History of Medicine*, historical catalogs of holdings in other libraries, specialized bibliographies, books on medical bibliography and guides or finding aids. The Library's collections focus on non-clinical medicine which is medicine that emphasizes the understanding of disease processes and biology, where clinical medicine focuses on diagnosing and treating patients.

Collecting Overlap with the National Library of Medicine

The subject areas covered by this Collections Policy Statement overlap with the collecting priorities of the National Library of Medicine. The Collecting Policy section of this document outlines the areas within this subject where Library of Congress collecting aligns with the collecting responsibility of the other U.S. national library. The Library's collections are shaped primarily by the needs of the Congress. Emphasis is placed on collecting materials that support research on current issues, legislation, and public policy to meet the reference and research needs of staff, scholars, and to support the legislative work of Congress. Though the National Library of Medicine has national collecting responsibility in the matters of clinical medicine, the Library of Congress also has this Collections Policy Statement on *Medicine*. For information on the National Library of Medicine's collecting efforts in this area, please see:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK518693/>.

II. Diverse and Inclusive Collecting Statement

As the nation's de facto national library, the Library of Congress strives to build an expansive, yet selective, collection that records the creativity of the United States and is reflective of the nation's diversity and complexity. The Library's mandate is to have collections that are inclusive and representative of a diversity of creators and ideas. A priority includes acquiring material of underrepresented perspectives and voices in the Library's collections to ensure diverse authorship,

points of view, cultural identities, and other historical or cultural factors. The Library also seeks to build a research collection that comprises a globally representative sample of international materials that are diverse in voice and perspective, relative to their places of origin, further supporting the Library's mission to sustain and preserve a universal collection of knowledge and creativity for Congress and future generations.

Diverse collecting is mentioned within many of the Library's Collections Policy Statements. In addition, the Library has adopted several specific collection policies in an effort to ensure it is building an inclusive and representative collection. For more information, see the Library's Collections Policy Statements on [Ethnic Materials](#), [LGBTQIA+ Studies](#), [Women's and Gender Studies](#), [Independently Published and Self-Published Textual Materials](#), and [Countries and Regions with Acquisitions Challenges](#).

III. Research Strengths

The Library's collections are especially rich in materials for historical research, including items such as the Royal College of Physicians Digital Archive. Although many valuable books and long runs of important medical journals are located in the general collections, one of the most notable collections in the Library is the Joseph Meredith Toner Collection housed in the Rare Book and Special Collections Division. In 1882 Dr. Toner donated nearly 50,000 books, assorted pamphlets, periodicals and papers which constitute a history of medicine in America from its settlement to the end of its first half century.

This division of the Library is also home to medical books dating back to the fifteenth century. The 1643 Latin edition of William Harvey's *On the Motion of the Heart and Blood in Animals*; the first English edition of that same title published in London in 1653; and the 1543 Basel edition of the *Fabrica (De humani corporis fabrica)* of Vesalius, considered by many to be the greatest medical book ever written. The Library has the 1492 Venice edition of Boccaccio's *Decamerone*, detailing the plague of Florence; the first book on eye surgery, the 1583 *Ophthalmodouleia* of George Bartisch; and the 1479 Padua edition of Persian physician Avicenna's five-volume *Canon of Medicine*, described as the final codification of all Greco-Arabic medicine. The Library has several editions, beginning with the second Latin edition (Venice, 1495), of the first printed illustrated medical text, *Fasciculus medicinae*, compiled by the German physician/anatomist Johannes de Ketham.

The great American physician Benjamin Rush, who is regarded as the father of American psychiatry, is represented in the Library's collection by a first edition of his 1812 treatise *Medical Inquiries and Observations upon the Diseases of the Mind*, as well as some of his medical lectures, papers and correspondence. The Library has a first edition of army surgeon William Beaumont's 1833 classic *Experiments and Observations on the Gastric Juice, and the Physiology of Digestion*, which is based on his studies of human digestion in a patient who was shot in the stomach and saved by Beaumont, but left with a permanent abnormal opening leading to his stomach. The original 1897 Russian version of Ivan Petrovich Pavlov's *Lektsii o rabotie glavnykh pishchevaritel'nykh zhelez* (Lectures on the function of the main food-digesting glands); Harvard physician Oliver Wendell Holmes' article on childbed fever entitled "On the Contagiousness of Puerperal Fever," as well as a first edition of his book on the same subject, *Puerperal Fever, as a Private Pestilence*.

The Library also holds a complete set of the *Comptes rendus* of the Academie des Sciences, Paris, which

contain countless articles on medical discoveries by great scientists such as Claude Bernard and Louis Pasteur. The Library's psychoanalytic collections, which include the papers of Sigmund Freud and those of most of his European and American disciples, are among the finest in the world.

The Library's digitized collections also hold items of historical interest to researchers, such as advertisements for medicines in the Emergence of Advertising in America Collection: 1850-1920. The Prints and Photographs collection online has the LOOK Magazine Photograph Collection, which contains many photographs of medical topics, such as mental institutions in the 1950s and 1960s.

IV. Collecting Policy

The Library collects in medicine on a worldwide basis, primarily at the research level and acquires materials across multiple formats and in many languages. Medicine material in non-English languages reflects the science and governmental policy of those countries. The Library strives to collect important reference works, monographs and serials across a variety of languages in classes and subclasses relating to non-clinical medicine as well as U.S. Government documents, bibliographies, and indexes that provide access to the collections. These items are not limited to medical atlases, general reference text on anatomy, biology, virology and other medical fields, medical dictionaries, and other materials that focus on emerging medical topics of the day, such as mental health, consumer health, Covid-19, etc. This also includes those items of historical significance to the evolution of medicine. The materials come in a variety of formats both print and digital born, including digitized archives, microform, audio, video and pictorial.

In the field of medicine and health policy, the Library currently provides access to a large number of subscription and freely available online databases, e-journals and e-prints through its electronic resources Web page. Subscription titles in the fields of medicine include ProQuest Health and Medical Collection, ProQuest Nursing & Allied Health Database, ProQuest Public Health Database, CINAHL, AgeLine, BioWorld, Toxline and HerbMed Pro. Freely available electronic resources available to the Library which often have materials of interest in the area of medicine include PubMed Central, BioMed Central, Elsevier Novel Coronavirus Information Center and Bentham Open Access.

The Library of Congress generally defers to the National Library of Medicine (NLM) in the area of clinical medicine. NLM has a mandate to acquire the professional literature of clinical practice addressed primarily to professional medical and health practitioners, as well as to acquire standard U.S. examination review guides in the health and medical sciences which serve as aids in preparing for entrance or board certification examinations. The Library of Congress has attempted to meet the expanding needs of Congress and other Library constituencies in grappling with new and increasingly complex health and medical issues and technologies. In this context, many clinical texts, especially in the areas of diagnosis and treatment, are now selected as reference materials.

The Supplementary Guidelines for [Electronic Resources](#) and for [Web Archiving](#), and the Collections Policy Statements for [Dissertations and Theses](#), [Countries and Regions with Acquisitions Challenges](#), and the [Copyright Office's Best Edition statement](#) are used in conjunction with this policy and the Collections Policy Statement for the [History of Science and History of Technology](#).

V. Best Editions and Preferred Formats

For guidance regarding best editions for material acquired via the Copyright Office, see: <http://copyright.gov/circs/circ07b.pdf>.

For guidance regarding recommended formats for material acquired via all other means, e.g., purchase, exchange, gift and transfer, see: <http://www.loc.gov/preservation/resources/rfs>.

For information regarding electronic resources, open digital content, web archiving, and data sets, see the following Supplementary Guidelines: <http://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/electronicresources.pdf>, <https://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/opencontent.pdf>, <http://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/webarchive.pdf>, and <https://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/datasets.pdf>.

VI. Acquisition Sources

Whenever possible the Library attempts to acquire materials through non-purchase means, such as copyright, exchange, gift, or the Cataloging in Publication program. The Library of Congress collections are heavily dependent upon materials received through the copyright deposit provisions of U.S. copyright law ([17 USC section 407](#) & [17 USC section 408](#)). For copyright demand, the U.S. regulations allow for the Library to receive analog and some digital materials. When items are offered in both formats the Library's default is normally the Best Edition print version, unless the publisher has arranged a special relief agreement with the Copyright Office. For materials not available to the Library through copyright deposit, or other non-purchase means, the Library acquires materials through purchase. Purchase is used predominately for non-U.S. publications that are not widely available within the United States. The Library utilizes an array of traditional methods of library acquisition (firm orders, subscriptions, and approval plans) with vendors located in different areas of the world. In addition, the Library uses its six Overseas Operations Offices to broaden its acquisitions opportunities outside the United States.

The Library acquires materials which contribute to a knowledge of the social, religious, economic, historical, political and legal aspects of medicine worldwide. The Library also acquires material related to public safety and quality of care provided to the public through health care organizations, such as the publications of the Joint Commission. These collections support the needs of Congress and the Library's mission to make its collections and reference services available to assist Congress, government agencies, the scientific, academic and library communities, as well as the general public.

As more publications are issued digitally, the Library must ensure that all important and appropriate information is added to the collections and that the formats represented are maintained to assure continued access. As e-prints, podcasts, webcasts, and new technologies for creating medical material proliferate, they will be collected using the same criteria as for print acquisition.

Materials on medicine and health can also be identified through Library of Congress finding aids and bibliographic guides, which themselves are listed on the [Research Guides](#) page on the Library's website. Access to webcasts and born digital materials is available across all of the Library's Web pages. Webcasts on medical topics in the lecture series presented by the Science, Technology and Business Division can

be accessed through the Science Reference Section's Web site, as well as on the Library of Congress home page, and include programs such as a joint series with the Health Services Division on a variety of topics surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, the annual Cancer Moonshot panel, discussing a cancer based topics from experts in the field and a variety of other thematic webinars and lectures surrounding medical and health topics. Also included are born digital medicine content collected via web archiving such as the Coronavirus Web Archive: <https://www.loc.gov/collections/coronavirus-web-archive/about-this-collection/>

VII. Collecting Levels

Meeting the Library's Diverse and Inclusive Collecting Statement (see Section II) and the collecting levels outlined below requires continual evaluation of the publishing landscape, sources of expression, current events, and socio-cultural trends to thus maintain effective collecting policies and acquisitions methods. Changes in publishing or in the creation of materials covered by this policy statement may necessitate collecting efforts not explicitly referenced here. Such efforts will be handled on a case-by-case basis while the Library evaluates the need for policy statement updates.

For explanation of the Collecting Levels used by the Library, see <https://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/cpc.html>. It should be noted that these collecting levels are aspirational in nature. That is, they are goals for guiding the Library's collecting policies. Changing resources in, for example, budgets or human capital, may require adjustments in collection building, especially at the comprehensive level (level 5).

Collecting levels for class R range from the research level (4) to instructional levels (2) for some medical disciplines which are collected comprehensively by the National Library of Medicine.

LC Classification	Subject	U.S. Levels	Non-U.S. Levels	Notes
R5-920	Medicine (General)	4	3	Unless otherwise noted below
R728-733	Practice of Medicine	3	3	
R864	Medical Records	2	1	
R895-920	Medical Physics	3	2	
RA1-1270	Public Aspects of Medicine	4	3	
RB1-214	Pathology	3	2	
RC31-1245	Internal Medicine	4	3	
RD1-811	Surgery	2	2	
RE1-94	Ophthalmology	2	2	

LC Classification	Subject	U.S. Levels	Non-U.S. Levels	Notes
RF1-547	Otorhinolaryngology	2	2	
RG1-991	Gynecology & Obstetrics	3	3	
RJ1-570	Pediatrics	3	2	
RK1-715	Dentistry	2	1	
RL1-803	Dermatology	3	2	
RM1-950	Therapeutics, Pharmacology	3	3	
RS1-441	Pharmacy and Materia Medica	3	2	
RT1-120	Nursing	3	2	
RV1-431	Botanic, Thomsonian & Eclectic Medicine	3	2	
RX1-681	Homeopathy	2	2	
RZ201-999	Other Systems of Medicine	3	2	

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