

NAHLA Member Profile

Rachel Zhao

Librarian, Alberta Health Services Library Services

Rachel is a librarian at the Alberta Health Services (AHS) Library Services. AHS Library Services supports the needs of physicians, nurses, other clinicians, administrative staff, and patients.

How do you spend a typical day?

Rachel's day involves a variety of tasks that keep the library functioning. A large part of her day is devoted to helping clinicians with their literature searches. She estimates that she does thirty literature searches a month. The variety of topics and disciplines makes this both a challenging and rewarding aspect of her work. Rachel says, "Everyday you are learning something new, so you never get bored".

Other aspects of Rachel's work include training clinicians to formulate clinical questions and search databases, and building a collection for the diverse needs of her users. The professional collection considers the needs of the hospital staff, and the patient and family collection provides consumer health information to patients and families. The library also provides a sizable and diverse collection of audio visual materials for patients and clinicians.

What do you enjoy about health librarianship?

"Health librarianship is a very cool librarianship. In my position, I feel that I am really contributing to the health care system in Alberta. I do this through helping clinicians, patients and families find the health care information they need. It is a rewarding job"

Please tell us about your educational background.

Rachel completed an Engineering degree in China and an MLIS from the University of Alberta.

What attracted you to librarianship?

In China, Rachel was working as a Geological Engineer at a Research Institution. Through her work, she found herself frequently using the organization's resource centre. The resource centre became an integral part of her research. She even became involved in building the centre's geological resource collection. "Over time, I developed an understanding and appreciation for the importance of the librarian's role," Rachel said. These experiences motivated her to pursue a career in librarianship when she moved to Alberta.

What do you like about NAHLA?

Rachel has been a member of NAHLA since she moved to Edmonton in February, 2009. Rachel finds the NAHLA's workshops are accessible and are specific to her needs as a health librarian. She says, "I really like the workshops. They're easy to go to and convenient for me." She also appreciates that NAHLA offers the opportunity to connect with peers in different libraries that she may otherwise not see.

What do you like to do off duty?

When she is not working, Rachel is likely to be found playing one of many sports with her nine-year old son and her husband. They play everything from tennis and soccer, to hockey in the winter, where she can be often found as the goalie. She is an avid reader and likes to keep up with professional journals. Some of her preferred journals are: *Journal of the Medical Library Association (JMLA)*, the Special Libraries Association's *Information Outlook*, and Evidence Based Library and Information Practice (EBLIP). She also loves to read classic fiction, such as *Gone with the Wind*, which is her favourite book.