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Royal College
of Nursing

Electronic boost to nursing knowledge

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For the first time ever, leading nursing organisation, the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) is providing members with free personal Internet access to a range of up-to-the-minute on-line nursing information products.

Working with the Health Communication Network and Blackwell Science, the RCN is now offering nurses the opportunity to tap into electronic nursing journals and a key nursing database as part of their RCN membership package. The service is so flexible that it can be accessed whenever and wherever nurses need it - for example at home or at any number of RCN Libraries and Resource Centres.

This move is part of the RCN's commitment to provide nurses with greater access to quality nursing information and is part of the programme to improve services to members.

The new service, believed to be the first of its kind offered by a professional organisation, provides personal access to the British Nursing Index (BNI Plus) - a database indexing over 220 core nursing journals - together with World Information Nursing, including references to additional English language journals selected from Medline. The Journal of Advanced Nursing, Journal of Clinical Nursing, International Journal of Nursing Practice and the Journal of Nursing Management are among some of the journals available.

Initially the service is being piloted for one year. RCN members must register for the service by visiting the RCN website at www.rcn.org.uk, by emailing eservices@rcn.org.uk or by telephoning the RCN on 020 7647 3610.

SUCCESSION PLANNING

Living in a part of Britain in which there is a shortage of specialist professionals among the local population, my contractual retirement, due next year, became a worry to my line manager, who is both supportive of, and appreciative of Library services. In the area, there are about 14 professional posts for qualified librarians, 11 of them being at the Public Library which incorporates the Schools Library Service. The other roles are Further Education, Local History and Health.

Any Librarian choosing to develop a Health Information speciality would be unlikely to be able to transfer to a higher post in another service, as there is keen competition for the few senior posts. Moving into Health could be seen as a career block. I have not found it so, as one develops the service itself and I have a great deal of autonomy. Also involvement in groups such as LfN gives specialist professional support and enables self-directed career development. This job evolves as do the Health Professions and Librarianship, but this is not always obvious to the outside observer.

The first step in finding my successor was to exploit the local grapevine. I remembered a good qualified Librarian who had left to bring up a family consisting of two children whom I calculated to be approaching their teens. Meeting my target, X, at a concert one evening I asked her if she would like to consider a part-time role. I felt that this would be a start, if we got an assistant to take on the remaining hours of my full-