

## Directory of History of Medicine Collections

**Organization Name:** Center for the History of Medicine Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine  
Harvard University

**Organization Type:** Library

**Address:** 10 Shattuck Street

**City:** Boston

**State/Province:** Massachusetts

**Zip/Postal Code:** 02115

**Country:** United States

**Telephone Number:** 617-432-2170

**Fax Number:** (617) 432-4737

**Web Site:** <https://www.countway.harvard.edu/chom>

**Online Catalog:** <http://lib.harvard.edu>

**Other:**

**Abstract:** The Countway Library contains the combined collections of the Harvard Medical Library (dating from 1816) and the Boston Medical Library (founded in 1875). It is the largest academic medical library in the world, and its collections, which have been formed over nearly two centuries, sometimes through the medical holdings of other libraries, include rare and historical materials that can be numbered among the largest in the world. The historical library and museum collections are located in the Countway's Center for the History of Medicine and are open to scholars and all other qualified researchers. SERVICES: Reference, interlibrary loan (when appropriate and applicable) photocopying, microfilming, etc.

**Holdings:** The combined historical collections administered by the Center for the History of Medicine include nearly 800 incunables; medieval and Renaissance manuscripts; an extremely large holding of European and English medical literature from the 16th century onward; and a comprehensive collection of American medical literature from the beginning of the 18th century. The collections are strong in almost all periods, subjects, and specialties of medicine, but are particularly strong in anatomy and surgery, chemistry, obstetrics and gynecology, pharmacy, medical botany, materia medica, and pharmacology. In all, the printed collections in the Center for the History of Medicine amount to several hundred thousand items. There is also a collection of approximately 500,000 printed European medical theses. The manuscript holdings, which include the Harvard Medical Archives (archival records of the Harvard Medical School, the Harvard School of Dental Medicine, and the Harvard School of Public Health) as well as the archives of the Massachusetts Medical Society, are the largest held by a medical library in this country. The manuscript collection, when letters and individual pieces are considered, numbers between 15-20 million. The overall periodical holdings, which date from the late 17th century, include some 18,000 titles. The Center also has oversight of the Archives for Women in Medicine at the Countway Library. The Harvard Medical School's Warren Museum is administered by the Center for the History of Medicine. Presented to Harvard in 1847 by John Collins Warren, the Warren Museum was one of this country's leading medical museums during the second half of the 19th century and the early decades of the 20th. Today the Warren Museum, comprised of approximately 13,000 items, is one of the few medical museums established in this country during 19th century that still exists.

**Collection Subject Strengths:** History of Anatomy; History of Gynecology and Obstetrics; History of Medicine; History of Pharmacology and Pharmacy; History of Surgery; Materia Medica

**Other Collection Subject Strengths:**

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