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Advancing Community Health Communication Practices

A checklist to stay proactive and centered on community when sharing and spreading quality health information.



Checklist: Advancing Community Health Communication Practices

The steps below will enable leaders to stay proactive and centered on community when sharing and spreading quality health information.

1. Set Shared and Measurable Goals

- ☐ Define clear goals aligned with community health priorities, including trust-building, health literacy, preventive care uptake
- ☐ Prioritize equity-centered outcomes using social determinants of health and community needs/resource assessments
- ☐ Distinguish between immediate deliverables (e.g., quality health information responses) and long-term needs (e.g., ensuring safety in digital interactions)

2. Build a Coordinated, Community-Led Response

- ☐ Strengthen or establish partnerships within the community health center or local health network to coordinate a communication strategy
- ☐ Establish or join community coalitions including a mix of stakeholders, including public health agencies, media partners, local educators, and behavioral scientists
- ☐ Develop a local health information network for real-time sharing of trusted content, response to threat signals, and community feedback
- ☐ Align data collection tools and protocols with ethical standards and community governance models, prioritizing under-resourced populations

3. Develop a Community-Centered Communication Strategy

- ☐ Create community-centered messages and materials with languages and formats reflective of the populations served, using audio and visuals
- ☐ Use a multichannel approach that integrates trusted messengers, platforms, and community-based events
- ☐ Identify trusted local and digital messengers who equip communities with accessible, vetted quality health information content

4. Implement the Communication Plan with Visibility, Partnership, and Accountability

- ☐ Launch coordinated messaging campaigns supported by local health staff, patient navigators, and community partners
- ☐ Publicly track progress and challenges in health communication initiatives, including transparency about rationale for evolving messages
- ☐ Monitor online and offline discourse to improve insights into planning.
- ☐ Empower communities to co-create the information ecosystem through training, civic media projects, and storytelling

5. Remain Responsive and Adaptive

- ☐ Acknowledge the dynamic nature of health information needs and be ready to pivot strategies based on community trends, new risks, or policy changes
- ☐ Regularly assess local dynamics and narratives that may affect message reception (e.g., stigma, historical trauma, political climate).
- ☐ Anticipate and prepare accurate messaging for emerging topics (e.g., climate-related health threats, new treatments, health and digital access rights)
- ☐ Close data and trust gaps by proactively generating transparent, accurate, and easily findable content via many channels, including social, phone, email, text, to prevent harmful information vacuums
- ☐ Foster scientific humility: communicate what is known, what is not yet certain, and what evidence is evolving with clarity and care

Have a question or resource request? Visit:

<https://www.healthequitycommunitycollaborative.org>

Source: Checklist prepared by Scott Ratzan, Rebecca Ivic and Sue McCarron.
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