Social Media Toolkit

A Primer for Local Health Department PIOs and Communications Professionals 2.0

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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

NACCHO
National Association of County & City Health Officials

Social Media Toolkit for Local Health Departments 2.0

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I. Social media platforms and what makes them unique

Local health departments should use social media to provide stakeholders with access to credible, science-based health information when, where, and how they want it. A variety of social media tools can be used to reinforce and personalize messages, reach new audiences, and build a communication infrastructure based on open information exchange. It's important to research your audience to help identify the right platforms to reach your target audience, and knowing your particular community's social media habits and trends are important. For example, does your community predominately use Facebook over Twitter? Focus your efforts wisely on what will have the biggest impact, rather than trying to have a social account on every platform that may not be working well.

Facebook
This is easily the largest social networking site in the world and one of the most widely used. Users create a personal profile, add other users as friends, and exchange messages. Brands, organizations, and companies create pages and Facebook users can "like" these pages.

Twitter
A social networking platform that allows groups and individuals to stay connected through the exchange of short 280-character messages. Twitter is also a fast-breaking news resource.

Tik Tok
If you're interested in capturing the young demographic, TikTok is now one of the most popular social channels. TikTok is used to make a variety of short-form videos, from genres like dance, comedy, and education, that have a duration from 15 seconds to three minutes. Roughly 50% of TikTok's global audience is under age 34, with 32.5% aged between 10 and 19.

LinkedIn
LinkedIn focuses on professional contacts and also allows users to collaborate and share articles and ideas through its group message boards. Local health departments can use this platform for human resources functions such as recruiting employees. LinkedIn Groups is a place where groups of professionals with similar areas of interest can share information and participate in conversations.

Instagram
Instagram is a mobile photo- and video-sharing service where users take images or videos, apply digital filters and have the ability to share them on the application itself and on a wide variety of social networking services.

Pinterest
Pinterest is a visual discovery tool where users created online "bulletin boards" of images, ideas and videos. All Pinterest content is "pinned" to boards from outside sources.

Snapchat
A mobile app that lets users send photos and videos to friends or to their "story." Snaps disappear after viewing or after 24 hours.

Flickr
An image and video hosting website and online community. Photos can be shared on Facebook and Twitter and other social networking sites.

YouTube & Vimeo
Video hosting and viewing websites.

Here is a handy chart to differentiate the various social media platforms, explained with smoothies:

Platform	What to Say
Instagram	Here is a photo of my smoothie
Facebook	I like smoothies
LinkedIn	My skills include smoothie-making
Twitter	I'm drinking a smoothie
Foursquare	This is where I like to drink smoothies
YouTube	Here is a video of me drinking smoothies
Pinterest	Here is a good smoothie recipe
Tik Tok	My friends dancing and drinking smoothies, set to music
Spotify	Currently listening to songs about smoothies
Tumblr	I like to blog about smoothies
Yelp!	You'll like the smoothies at this place
Snapchat	I can add filters to my short videos about smoothies
Reddit	Ask me anything about smoothies

II. Establishing a Social Media Presence

Building in-house capacity for using social media

Staff

Designated, well-trained LHD employee(s) should work with social media on a day-to-day basis, both to build an audience that will share messages, and to prepare for using social media during an emergency.

Determine who in your organization will be responsible for implementation of social media, and determine the number of hours they can allocate for content creation and maintenance.

If there is no budget for a full-time communications professional to implement your social media strategy, you can:

1. Identify a current member who has the time (and passion) for social media. Or, recruit several staff members who could share the responsibility.

2. Contract someone who is experienced in the area

3. Contract a digital marketing agency to handle social media for you.

Social media should not be delegated to interns without clear guidance and oversight from a communications professional.

Communication plan integration

A social media strategy should be integrated into LHDs' existing communication plans. Integrating social media into health communication campaigns and activities allows health communicators to leverage social dynamics and networks to encourage participation, conversation and community – all of which can help spread key messages and influence health decision making.

Social media also helps to reach people when, where and how they want to receive health messages; it improves the availability of content and may influence satisfaction and trust in the health messages delivered. Likewise, tapping into personal networks and presenting information in multiple formats, spaces, and sources helps to make messages more credible and effective.

Policies

Clear social media policies for staff are essential to ensure that employees understand what is expected of them when administering social media. This should include which type of content can be shared and when, who can access social media, who should respond to public inquiries and comments on social media, a timeline for response, and an appropriate process for content to be approved before it is posted.

Resources

Social media is a 24/7 medium. LHDs will need to consider how to maintain a 24/7 presence on social media, as replies, comments and questions can pop up at any time. Adopting a 24/7 public information model can be challenging and may require additional resources. If such a model isn't feasible, your social media channels should include information about when posts will be monitored and responded to (i.e., Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.). LHDs should ensure designated staff can access social media remotely such as using a mobile phone. During an emergency, LHDs can provide the public with situational awareness, dispel rumors, and establish themselves as the media's first point of contact by frequently posting timely, reliable, and transparent information to social media.

Once engaged in social media, you need to make sure there is capacity to continue this activity. Unacceptably long response times or a temporary – or even complete – withdrawal from social media could have a more negative impact than not having started in the first place. If people need to contact you repeatedly for information and receive a late or no answer, they are unlikely to have confidence or trust in you in the future. If maintaining activity is a concern, consider starting with only one or two platforms and don't initial others accounts until it's clear you will be able to maintain them.

IT Support

LHDs should consider the role of information technology (IT) staff when establishing a social media presence, and work with IT staff initially to set up permissions needed on network computers. IT support may be needed for technology including setting up a mobile phone or tablet specifically designated for social media monitoring.

Training

It is important to ensure that staff members are fully trained before granting them access to the agency's social media accounts. They also need to be aware of information sharing policies so they know what can be shared and published. Training requirements may depend on the skillset of the designated staff member. Social media technologies are constantly evolving, and it is important to remain up-to-date on the latest platforms and updates that are made. There are a wide variety of training resources, including many webinars available at no cost.

Content /Editorial Calendar

LHDs should develop monthly or seasonal editorial calendars, to plan for the type of content to be shared on social media. Facebook allows page administrators to schedule posts, which is beneficial for staff with limited time to create content. Setting aside one hour a week will allow the staff member to schedule all content for the following week. It remains critical to monitor and respond to social media. Third-party platforms for Twitter, such as HootSuite, provide the same scheduling features.

The Pennsylvania Department of Health in partnership with Drexel University School of Public Health have created an extensive online Social Media Message Library that provides message templates for Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram and is geared toward emergency use. Message templates cover natural disasters, infectious diseases, accidental disasters, and intentional disasters. Messages have been reviewed by subject matter experts in both hazard content areas and public health risk communication. Messages are designed to help public information officers and other spokespersons create and deliver timely, accurate, and consistent information that will likely be needed during a public health emergency. Instructions are provided as to how to use the library.

Developing a Social Media Policy for a Local Health Department

Social media is an opportunity to engage with the agency's customers and stakeholders and build the agency brand. A decision to use social media must be based on a strategic communications plan and consider the commitment of resources necessary to manage and maintain this type of engagement. When creating a social media policy, it is recommended that to include employees in the process. Employees can provide great insight into how to engage with audiences and can also become

internal advocates for the policy. Once the social media policy has been finalized, it is important to communicate it to every member of the agency. Review and acknowledgment of the social media policy may even be made a requirement for each employee when he or she is hired.

Personal Use of Social Media

Local health departments are encouraged to develop a social media policy as a standard for appropriate use of social media. Employees are responsible for reviewing and complying with the policy while at work and after-hours. Employees are expected to demonstrate a high standard of conduct, integrity, and responsibility at all times.

When crafting the policy, the following should be included:

Applicability: Who does the policy apply to?

Definitions: Social media is constantly changing. Definitions of types of social media should be included such as networking sites, blogs, microblogs, photo, and video sharing sites.

Use of Social Media: Personal use of social media during work hours should be consistent with the terms of the department's other Human Resources policies and regulations. In most cases, social media during work hours and/or anytime while using official equipment is prohibited for political purposes, to conduct private commercial transactions or to engage in private business activities.

Employees should be advised not to represent themselves as an agency employee when posting content to social media sites. The exception is if the employee is posting in an official capacity as an administrator of an authorized account or with prior approval.

Discipline: The policy should identify what, if any, disciplinary actions could be taken if an employee violates the Social Media Policy.

Privacy: Employees should be trained on the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and be made aware of how HIPAA relates to social media. Some common social media HIPAA violations include posting of images and videos of patients without written consent, posting gossip about patients, posting any information that could allow an individual to be identified, etc.

Agency Use of Social Media

A social media policy should provide guidelines for creating and managing official social media profiles, channels or applications for the agency. There are two approaches to creating a social media policy for this purpose: You can create one complete social media policy that addresses all currently available social mediums, OR you can write separate policies for each platform as you need them. (For example, if your agency doesn't have a social media presence on YouTube, you may not need to address YouTube and online video usage).

When crafting the policy, the following should be included:

Purpose: State the purpose of the policy and whether it applies to multi-media, social networking websites, blogs, and wikis, etc.

Roles and Responsibilities: Designate who in the agency has authority to manage social media accounts and who has the authority to post content. Determine if someone will be responsible for monitoring or moderating messages and comments.

Approval Process: Describe the process by which new social media accounts, profiles or applications are created and official posts approved within the agency.

Posting Guidelines: Provide guidance on how social media accounts should be used to promote the agency's brand, vision, mission, and values. Determine the agency's "voice" or "tone" on social media and any topics that will be off-limits when posting or engaging with the public on behalf of the agency.

Branding: Identity what elements, including official names and logos, may be required to be consistent and complementary to the agency's brand.

Security/ Privacy Concerns: State whether policies regarding patient privacy and confidentiality and information security will also apply on social media and what employees need to know to mitigate potential risks.

Accessibility: Address any requirements necessary to be in compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Linking, Liking, Following and Endorsing

Linking to or liking non-government or other third-party sites may imply or convey an endorsement to the audience. Provide guidance on liking, following, reposting or retweeting content from another entity.

Comment Policy:

Determine if the public will have the ability to post or comment to the site or page, and if so, how the agency will handle negative or inappropriate comments. Also, consider if the agency will actively engage with comments or take a more passive approach and consistently implement.

Use of Images/Copyright:

State how employees are to adhere to copyright, intellectual property rights, and other applicable laws. Describe the process for the removal of material that infringes on the copyright or intellectual property rights. When taking photos of clients, ask the client to sign a waiver allowing you to use the photo with their image.

HIPPA Considerations:

HIPAA relates to social media and its use. Identify common HIPAA violations that may be of concern to the agency.

Archiving:

Content posted on a social media site may constitute a record that must be temporarily or permanently retained. Describe the system or process in place to ensure that content is captured and archived appropriately.

Social Media in Emergencies in Emergencies:

Consider how any of these elements may be affected or need to be modified during an emergency.

See examples of social media policies in the Appendix

- Cambridge Public Health Department, Cambridge, MA
- Ottawa County Department of Health, Ottawa County, MI
- Shelby County Public Health Department, Memphis, TN

III. Expanding Social Media Audiences

There are a number of ways in which you can expand your social media audience. Here are a few tips:

1. Post signs in your office and lobby areas with your social media handles to drive the public to your social media accounts. Include social media handles on every printed piece. During presentations, announce your social media handles verbally or include them on a PowerPoint slide.

2. Include links to your social media accounts in your email signature.

3. Identify employees who have a strong social media following and ask them to share and retweet your posts. Send out an email to staff asking them to share your post about a hot topic or newsworthy event. Hold a contest to see who retweets and shares your posts the most. The winner gets a small prize and bragging rights!

4. Tag partner agencies in your posts to attract new followers and push your message out to a larger audience. Repost partner agency posts.

5. Tag staff when appropriate and with their knowledge (i.e. when they are quoted or pictured).

6. Repost news promulgated by the CDC and the Surgeon General. Add links directing viewers to your website and/or program pages. Consider adding CDC content syndicated information to your website, so that it is up to date with the latest information on newsworthy subjects, e.g., COVID-19, Zika virus or Seasonal Flu.

7. Post a link to all of your news releases. Residents want to know if you are treating their neighborhood for mosquitoes or if their local beach is closed due to elevated levels of bacteria. This type of news draws followers. Follow this type of news with a health promotion message, e.g., "Replace your sweetened beverage with water for good health."

8. Embed social media widgets into your website.

9. Make sure profile and cover images are the right size, your logo is featured prominently, and that you have a reputation for responding promptly to questions, comments and messages.

10. Host a chat on Twitter or Facebook. Promote the event in advance and use a strong hashtag. Verify that the hashtag is not already being used by doing a search in Twitter and Facebook.

11. Give something away. Prizes should align with the program or service you're promoting.
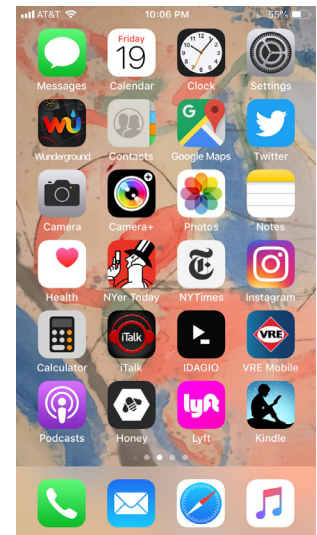
12. If you have marketing dollars, allocate a portion to advertise on social media. Your posts will stand out amongst the clutter.

13. Engage influential people popular with your target audience. Whether its mommy bloggers, YouTube stars, actors or politicians, these individuals can amplify the reach of an agency's message.

14. Use visuals and pictures. Create high-quality custom visuals with resources like Canva.com.

15. When people like or interact with your content, invite them to like your page (Facebook) or follow them, if appropriate.

16. Consider using video. Post links to local media interviews with your health specialists. For health promotion, use CDC videos that are available for partners to share on social media.

17. Consider live streaming information from your smartphone.

Increasing Accessibility and Visibility of Social Media Platforms

Follow all local media and federal, state and local public health agencies. This allows them to know that your agency exists on social media. Consider following nonprofits your agency works with and other thought leaders on public health. Also consider following local Hispanic media or media that broadcasts in the foreign language most used in your jurisdiction. Follow social media for other organizations that represent vulnerable and at-risk populations in your local area. Follow the social media accounts of your state health department and all local and regional health departments. Retweet and share their public health messages. Tag them   in posts when you work together on a project.

Post at least 2-3 times per week to keep your agency visible in news feeds. To stay visible on Twitter, you will need to post much more frequently--at least daily. Twitter is the primary social media source that people go to for government information per the Pew Research Center. Photos and videos get the most engagement.

Social media are widely used by non-English speaking audiences. Sometimes different language groups in the U. S. use social media platforms from their countries of origin, such as Sina Weibo (also known as Weibo), a Twitter-like platform used in China. Many are using the same platforms that are widely used by English speaking audiences, such as Facebook and Instagram.

Options for reaching other language groups on social media

Set up mirror accounts

If you have staff who can monitor and post in other languages, you could consider setting up mirror accounts to your English language accounts that would have translated versions of the English-language content and/or content that was specifically created in those languages for the target language group. This helps build a regular audience in that language group.

CONDADO DE LOS ANGELES
Salud Pública

Example: Departamento de Salud Pública del Condado de Los Ángeles is the Spanish language Facebook site for the Los Angeles County Public Health Department.

Post occasionally in other languages and boost to the target audience

If you occasionally have translated content to post, you could post it to your English language social media accounts. Follow cdc en español and repost their information (use the translate tool to be sure of what you are reposting). Be aware, however, that the number of people in the target language group that sees your content may be very low since they are unlikely to subscribe to English language accounts.

One way around this on Facebook is to use paid boosts or ads. When you create the audience for a Facebook ad, it will allow to select from some language groups (e.g., Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Punjabi, etc.). Using either paid boosts or ads, you can also segment the audience by interests. Try entering interests that may include members of the target language group, such as "Amharic language" or "Univision."

Check with your webmaster to make sure your website follows U.S. ADA guidelines and is accessible to people of many languages and abilities.

Messaging to diverse populations

Guidance for Integrating Culturally Diverse Communities into Planning for and Responding to Emergencies: A Toolkit. http://www.aha.org/content/11/OMHDiversityPreparednesToolkit.pdf

Advertising on Social Media

There are a number of reasons to advertise on social media. You may want to promote your brand with the objective of increasing website visits, or post engagements, or gaining followers, or awareness of your brand. You may also want to drive conversions. A conversion is "The point at which a recipient of a marketing message performs a desired action." For instance, you may want a specific demographic to open a survey online and complete your questionnaire so that you have better data for program planning. Or, perhaps you want people to go to your website and sign up for local public health alerts so that it's easier to automatically inform the public if there's a public health emergency. These are both examples of conversions.
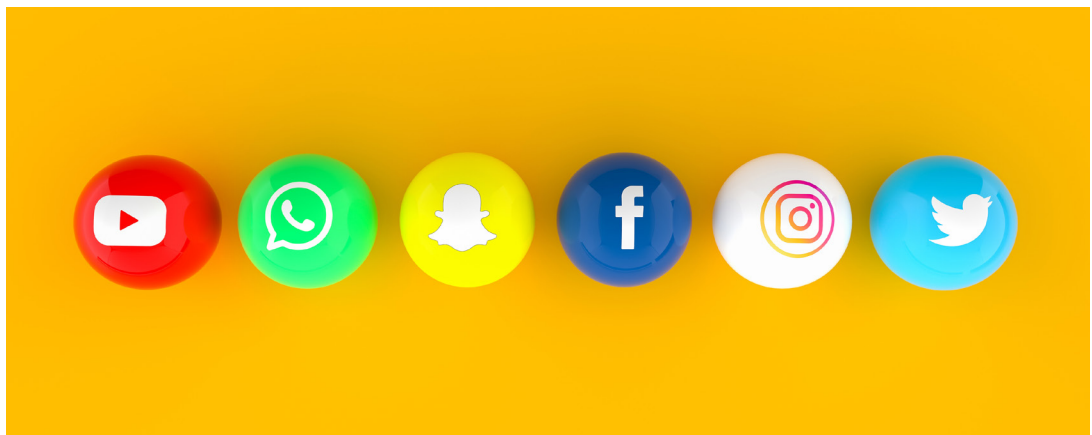
Social media can reduce your overall marketing costs. Social media advertising costs are inexpensive when compared to traditional advertising on radio, TV and print. This is especially true when social media channels provide a means for you to choose your target audience. Facebook allows you to hyper-target your audience so your post shows up in the news feeds of those most likely to be interested in your program or service. You can narrow your audience by demographic, zip code, age, gender, and personal interests.

Most social media sites welcome your advertising and provide help centers for advertising. The table below lists the majority of the top social media platforms, provides a link to an advertising help menu for the platform, lists audience size, and provides a basic demographic profile. It's important to know who uses each social media platform and what the general demographic profile is for each before you purchase advertising. The Pew Research Center offers a snapshot of current social media audiences in its Social Media Use in 2021:

	Platform	Advertising Links
	Facebook	Facebook business
	YouTube	YouTube Advertising
	TikTok	TikTok for Business
	What's App	WhatsApp No-Ad Policy
	Google AdWords	Google AdWords
	LinkedIn Marketing Solutions	LinkedIn Marketing Solutions
	Instagram Business	Instagram Business
	Twitter Ads	Twitter Ads
	Reddit Advertising	Reddit Advertising
	Tumblr Business	Tumblr Business
	Flikr Photo Advertising	Flikr photo advertising
	Snapchat Ads	Snapchat Ads
	Promoted Pins	Promoted pins
	Advertising & Advertisements	Advertising & Advertisements

Live Streaming on Social Media

What is Live Streaming?

Livestreaming is the term used to describe the process of broadcasting live video via different web-based applications to an online audience. You do not need any special equipment beyond a smartphone and/or computer. These videos can be viewed on any internet-connected device including desktop/laptop computers, tablets, and smartphones. Live streaming has exploded in popularity and there is no shortage of platforms offering both free and paid for service. Many public health agencies are now using live streaming tools to broadcast a variety of events such as press conferences, educational public seminars, and other live events.

Live Streaming Platforms

Several popular platforms offer free live streaming services, including:

- Facebook Live: Facebook Live is available to all Facebook pages and profiles on iOS, Android, and the Facebook Creator app. Additionally, live broadcasts can be streamed in Facebook groups and events. Not only does Facebook Live give organizations access to an immense audience—roughly eight-in-ten online Americans (68%) now use Facebook—it also lets you broadcast from a laptop or desktop computer and offers a range of other features, such as notifications, filters, masks, and live reactions. Follow these instructions to start a live video. You can practice with a personal account before attempting to live stream from an official public health account. **Note:** Facebook considers Live video a distinct content type from other video shared on the platform. This distinction is important for brands because it means that the Facebook algorithm treats native video and Live video differently, with Live videos being more likely to appear higher in News Feed while they are live.

- YouTube: YouTube has been offering live-streaming since 2011. In 2016, the site added 360-degree streaming and the ability to stream directly from its mobile app.

- Twitter: Twitter's "Go Live" feature lets you live stream directly from the Twitter app.

- Instagram: While Instagram offers a live feature, it is not archived and disappears after the broadcast unless you share it to your standard feed.

Why Livestream at a Local Health Department?

- Live streaming allows real-time information to immediately reach your existing audiences, and through shares and paid promotion (optional), can further extend its reach. Live streamed videos can be archived, reposted, rebroadcast or put on web pages so that those who didn't view it live have opportunities to see it later.

- As a video format, it can put a human face on your department and build a connection with your community. Live streaming also creates opportunities for the public to ask questions live, so can serve as a form of public engagement and feedback.

- It also allows your department to become a broadcast news source, with the health department determining the spokespeople and the message. In fact, some reporters will watch live streamed news conferences and some media outlets will even rebroadcast them.

Suggestions for What to Broadcast for Public Health Departments

- **Breaking news or trending topics**: Did you just get a severe weather warning? Broadcast live to share and demonstrate tips for how to stay safe. Is it the beginning of flu season? Broadcast a visit with a pediatrician, OB-GYN, or nurse to talk about the importance of getting flu vaccinations.

- **Major announcements, media briefings, and campaign launches**: Even if you have media attending a briefing, by broadcasting the entire briefing, you'll be able to share everything your experts have to say (in contrast to the edited version that will appear in media). You can also become your own broadcast news station for announcing initiatives that might not otherwise get traction from news media.

- **High profile meetings, conferences, and other events**: If there's a hot topic at a conference or your department is hosting an important community meeting, you could live stream short, engaging presentations. Live streaming may not be the right medium for longer presentations since social media users generally won't sit through long videos. You could also interview attendees or conference organizers from the floor of the conference.

- **Interviews and Q&As**: This is a great way to help your community connect with the experts and leaders in your health department. Consider interviews to help residents understand emerging outbreaks and also everyday health issues, such as why we're concerned about e-cigarettes, how does where you live affect your health, or who should get the HPV vaccine.

- **Behind the scenes and in the field**: Using live streaming video, take your audience to see the work that your department does. What happens during a restaurant inspection? How long are the lines at the vaccine clinic? How is your health department working with schools on improving school lunches or safe routes to school? How do you install a car seat properly?

General Best Practices for Live Streaming

- **Plan your broadcast.** Consider how relevant, timely or actionable the potential livestream will be for your audience. Does it make sense as a livestream as opposed to other format or content? Take the time to think about what you want to say, where you will stand/sit to stream, as well as sound, lighting, backdrop and other visuals.

- **Let your audience know it's coming.** You don't want to throw a party and forget to invite the guests. Using the Facebook Live API, publishers can schedule Live broadcasts in order to build up an audience before they begin streaming. Or you can tweet or post in advance to let your audiences know when to tune in. You may want to notify key journalists or partners through email or other means.

- **Make sure your internet connection is strong.** While a good Wi-Fi is ideal, if it is unavailable, a 4G connection works well.

- **Write a compelling description for your video before going live.** A good title is more likely to capture your audience's attention. It should give context about your broadcast and make it clear why a viewer should watch.

- **Respond to questions/comments.** Social media is all about engagement. Say hello to viewers by name and respond to their questions. If you can't answer them during the broadcast, take the time to go back and answer questions after the stream is finished.

- **Ask viewers to follow you.** Live streaming is a good way to grow your audience. Be sure to tell viewers how they can subscribe to your videos or follow you on other platforms.

- **Broadcast for a sufficient length of time.** The longer you continue your broadcast, the more time people have to discover your stream, watch it, and invite their friends to join in. Depending on the policies of the platform, a broadcast can last up to 4 hours, but around 10 minutes is ideal.

- **Don't publish another post immediately before or after the livestream begins.** Facebook's algorithm may not show the livestream to as many people if you just recently posted.

How to make your livestream broadcasts more polished

- **Always use a tripod.** This makes your footage much less shaky for viewers, and also frees you to do other things. If a tripod is unavailable, brace your arms against the arm of a chair or table to increase stability

- **Pay attention to the environmental recording conditions.** Often strong light sources or close noise can distract from the subject you are recording, but can be easily avoided by changing the placement of your phone.

- **Shoot horizontally.** Most video footage is recorded in a horizontal (landscape) format, so it will look more natural to your viewers.

- **Charge your phone/computer ahead of time.** Live streaming eats up battery power. If you think you'll be streaming for a long time (an hour or more), have a backup battery or plug into a power source.

- **Use a microphone**. Viewers can tolerate poor picture quality but not poor sound. If it's noisy, plug in a microphone that has an adapter for your phone (see the link to Kerry Shearer for information about gear).

- **Consider visual aids.** If you are doing an interview or panel, consider having some sort of visual aids, such as flip charts or props that can draw the eye or indicates the topic. People may scroll past a video in their social media feed if it just looks like a talking head.

- **Vary your camera angles.** Panning to the audience or to different members of a panel is a good way to keep your broadcast interesting.

- **Make sure live streaming is the best option.** When you are live, there is no way to retroactively edit what your audience has seen. If you want a polished, edited look to your videos, consider other video options.

IV. Using Social Media for Risk and Emergency Communication

During an emergency, local health departments can provide the public and responders with situational awareness, dispel rumors, and establish themselves as the media's first point of contact for a public health story by monitoring social media and posting timely, reliable, and transparent information to social media accounts. Social media strategies should be included in every department's risk communication plan.

While social media can help share critical emergency information, it can also be an opportunity for misinformation and rumors to spread. Public health agencies can use social media to disseminate time-sensitive health information, promote information sharing to encourage behavioral changes (including corrective changes during potential health crises), be a platform for conversation between agencies and constituents (rather than just as an information provider) and allow the public to provide useful information and feedback.

Social media should be one of several tools used to communicate important information during a public health emergency. However, do not rely solely on social media, as it will reach only those with internet access or only those who are connected to your organizations or your followers on social media. Some platforms like Facebook also use algorithms that may limit how many of your followers see your post unless you pay for additional promotion.

It is important to develop social media capacity as part of day-to-day communications for your health department so that staff are capable during the fast pace of social media during an emergency. Routine social media use will also help you identify important social media accounts to follow (e.g., media, reporters, partner organizations, elected officials, emergency management) so that you are best positioned to use social media in a crisis.

Adding social media to emergency communications plans

Plans for social media should include:

- Instructions for how to access social media account login information and passwords

- List of PIOs and other staff trained in social media to monitor and create posts

- Procedures for rapidly approving messages for use in social media through ICS. Creating pre-written messages for anticipated hazards can help save time to ensure timely posting.

- Create a Twitter list containing only media accounts so you can view their Tweets quickly. You can create other Twitter lists or government agencies, community partners, volunteer organizations, etc. to assist with monitoring.

Posting on Social Media During an Emergency

Social media can play a critical role in the public health risk communication approach to "Be first, be right, be credible." The speed at which social media moves may make it virtually impossible to be the very first with messages about a crisis situation, but public health departments can aim to be the first with public health information in that crisis if we are ready to use social media effectively. By getting credible information out quickly via Twitter, Facebook, live streaming, and other social media, we can feed the information demand with public health messages. Twitter is also an important way to reach reporters and news outlets as many comb Twitter for breaking information.

Quick tips:

- Identify the hashtags that are being used by the public and emergency responders (e.g., #HurricaneHarvey or #WoolseyFire) so that you can tag your posts so that people can find them more easily.

- Tag your tweets (you can tag images as well with up to 10 accounts) with the Twitter handles of organizations, reporters, news organizations, or opinion leaders who you want to see your tweets.

- In addition to the main message of the tweet, include a link to a website with further information.

- Repost from partner organizations, agencies, and other credible sources to help fill the information vacuum.

- To greatly increase the number of people who see your Facebook posts, pay to boost the posts using Facebook ads. Within Facebook ads, you can target your audience by demographic information such as city or zip code, age group, gender, some language groups, and interests (e.g., parenting, diabetes, volunteering, etc.). Even a modest amount of $5-25 can elevate the views of your posts.

Social Media Monitoring

Social media is a two-way street, and allows non-experts to share information just as rapidly as health agencies, if not more so. Monitoring social media during emergencies can help you glean what common concerns and rumors are in your community, identify emerging situations, and provide content from partner organizations that you can share.

Managing misinformation during a public health emergency is an important role that health agencies and other organizations have been forced to take on during disasters and events. It is crucial that public health agencies and organizations are equipped before a crisis with strategies on how to manage social media on multiple platforms

and monitor for misinformation and rumors. Consider using a social media aggregator, such as Tweetdeck (visual below) or HootSuite, to help you monitor using different keywords, hashtags, or lists. Utilize the search tool in Facebook to find relevant posts on publicly available accounts. You can also create Google Alerts at the time of an incident to find and notify you by email of relevant content based on keywords (e.g. news articles). If funding is available, consider getting demos for subscription-based social media tools which allow for in-depth searches across multiple platforms simultaneously.
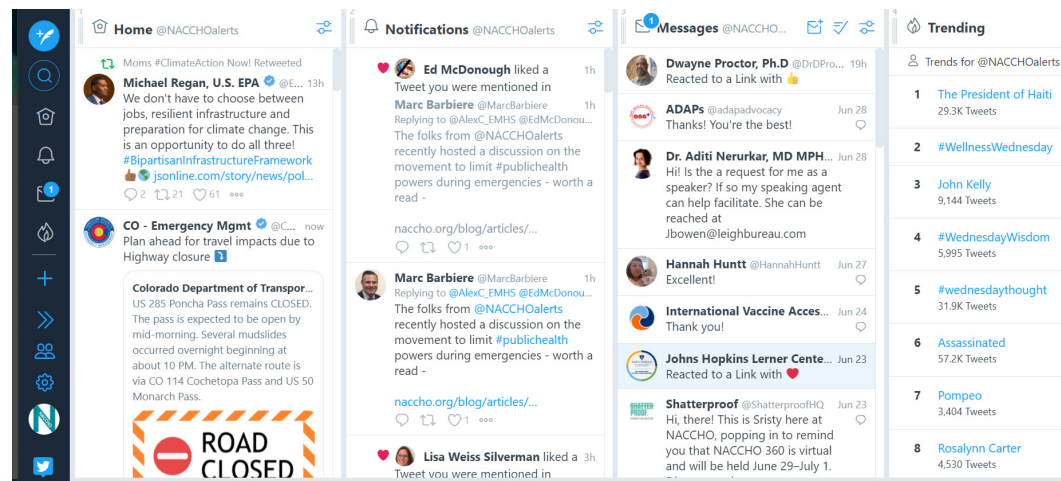
V. Communicating in a Crisis: Social Media and COVID-19

Even in the best of times, public health communications is a challenge. When a once-in-a-century pandemic began in early winter 2020 with reports of a new zoonotic pathogen emerging from Wuhan, China was announced by the **World Health Organization**. Decades of chronic underfunding, a failure to invest in the public health workforce, physical infrastructure of local and state health departments, and vital data systems had left the country vulnerable. With more than 604,000 American deaths caused so far by Covid-19, the effects of chronically underfunding public health have never been clearer. Against this backdrop, local public health departments—which have been steadily losing staff since the 2008 recession—began planning for their pandemic response activities.
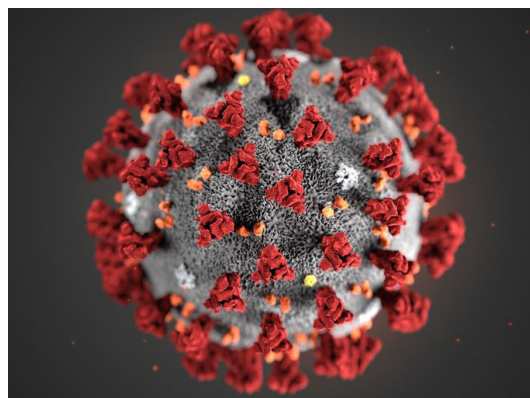
Throughout the confusing early days of the pandemic, local health departments did an extraordinary job in their messaging in efforts to keep their communities safe and informed. This section will highlight some of the health departments' resources, as well as those of organizations rapidly scaled up to serve as clearinghouses for information, including the **Public Health Communications Collaborative**. NACCHO's Public Health Communications Exchange, hosted on the **honey.is** platform, also became a primary source and repository of articles and communications resources to help local health departments craft their messaging. Once the pandemic started, the **de Beaumont Foundation** conducted polling and convened focus groups to place an even **greater emphasis on communications** to develop messaging to build confidence in COVID-19 guidance and vaccines.

One of public health communications' overwhelming challenges since the pandemic began in early 2020 was the extraordinary amount of mis- and disinformation being spread, that it was difficult to keep up with. It was critical that public health officials and their communications staffs quickly pushed out the facts via every possible channel, especially through their social media platforms. The defense against misinformation is facts from trusted, credible, and reliable sources, especially health officers.

Cultivating and Leveraging Relationships with the Media

How can we communicate more effectively, in ways that lead to action? What has been true in communications pre-pandemic is even more urgent and true during the pandemic: We begin by establishing trust and credibility. In order to receive and act on information effectively, especially during unanticipated and extraordinary events, people need to feel like the source of their information is credible and trustworthy. We can increase trust by providing timely and accurate information; inviting questions

from and encouraging dialogue with community members; and remaining transparent about the "good" and "bad" of what we know, and about any uncertainty that still exists.

Despite the challenges of the past pandemic year, public health is in a unique position to leverage relationships with media and their local press. Reporters want and need your expertise, and public health departments know how to tell their stories in the most effective ways possible. One of the most critical roles public health departments can play is helping reporters make sense of the data that is a constant during the pandemic. Reporters are your allies in validating stories, documenting changes in policy, illustrating how an issue affects a community, explaining complex issues, evaluating policies (such as the ever-changing mask policies), and perhaps most important, combatting misinformation and telling the truth.

Reaching Diverse Communities by Meeting People Where They Live

Communicating risk, as well as day-to-day issues, more effectively to diverse, low-income, and vulnerable communities—those affected most profoundly and disproportionately during the pandemic—begins with understanding the importance of using messengers that reflect the identities of your audience, and crafting targeted, culturally competent messages that resonate with your audience's values and experiences. Our messengers—whether they are a person from our organization or a "persona" we create via stock photos and imagery—should look like the people with whom we are communicating. An even better (yet sometimes more complicated) approach is to take it a step further and recruit community members to serve as liaisons between the agency and the public.

Below is a sampling of the many resources that were created in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as a list of webinars created to help local public health departments build capacity in communications.

Webinars and Video Resources

NACCHO Communications Webinar Series, 2019

In 2019, as part of a CDC-funded communications capacity project, NACCHO developed a **multi-part webinar series** to help local health departments build capacity to engage in public health communication. The webinar topics were selected based on a two-part needs assessment that NACCHO conducted in 2017-2018 to determine local health departments' communications capacity, capabilities, and skills gaps. Each webinar in the series is now available for on-demand viewing and has an integrated audio transcript. Please note that you must register to access the recordings. The presentation slides are also available. **http://essentialelements. naccho.org/archives/14152**

Archived Webinar Series: Crafting Richer Public Health Messages - Gaining Broad Policy Support in Politically Polarized Times

Designed for public health practitioners, lawyers, researchers and scientists, government and healthcare officials, and business and community leaders, this three-part webinar series, co-sponsored by the Network for Public Health Law (NPHL) and the Center for Public Health Law Research, explored the interdisciplinary messaging teamwork necessary to fashion legal and policy interventions in these politically polarized times. *The series was originally hosted in Fall/Winter 2017.*

Webinar One: Crafting Richer Public Health Messages Using Moral Foundations Theory | Watch the recording]

Effective messaging of public health challenges and interventions is essential to public health practice and especially to implementing public health laws and policies in a polarized political environment. It is easy for public health leaders to become consumed with the ongoing political and resource shifts taking place in public health and health care. However, it is also clear that those in public health, at all levels, want to engage more deeply and meaningfully with communities of all backgrounds who are burdened by poor health. Using Moral Foundations Theory, the speakers will explain how liberals and conservative audiences resonate differently to six intuitive foundational moral values. This session will explore crafting messages that embrace all six foundational values so that public health practitioners may engage a broader base of support and develop new community partnerships.

How Words Change Minds: The Science of Storytelling

In this TEDx Talk, Nat Kendall-Taylor, PhD, breaks down the science of framing for philanthropy and nonprofit communications. He explores how people think about social issues and how advocates, experts, and strategic communications professionals can use an understanding of culture, storytelling, and science to communicate about social and scientific issues, shape policy, and lead change. **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y8wol2nGSpY**

Recording and Slides, "Public Health Messaging Across the Political Divide in the Time of COVID" Webinar

In a politically polarized environment, effectively communicating about public health challenges and interventions is essential to public health practice and implementing public health policies that keep the community safe. In Kresge Foundation's recent webinar, "Public Health Messaging Across the Political Divide in the Time of COVID," presenters discuss the Moral Foundations Theory of Dr. Jonathan Haidt and introduce the audience to strategies that can help them shape and frame their messaging so it resonates with people across the political spectrum. Here's a link to the slides and webinar recording: https://bit.ly/3mnF2Ko

Campaigns and Videos

Cabell-Huntington Health Department's Campaign "It's Not Forever, It's for Each Other"

The Cabell-Huntington Health Department has a great new campaign underway, "It's Not Forever, It's For Each Other." Watch the video here: vimeo.com/user36327056/review/491747807/ed6717da49

Snohomish Health District Rolls Out Vaccine Video

From the Snohomish Health District: To celebrate the first vaccines arriving, the Health District and Snohomish County released a short video. We're also busy preparing to commemorate the 1-year anniversary of response since the first confirmed case in the nation was found here (January 20, 2020).

## Video on Building Vaccine Confidence

Watch this excellent three-minute video testimony from Dr. Reuben Varghese, Arlington County, Virginia's public health director on building vaccine confidence: https://youtu.be/2KONDBWcpJk In the video:

- He talks about why he trusts the vaccines and how the benefits clearly outweigh the risks
- He talks about his personal reasons for getting vaccinated
- The video shows lots of photos of others happily getting vaccinated
- It's filmed in a busy health department, with noise and hustle and bustle. That's public health in action.

Kaiser Family Foundation's Campaign "THE CONVERSATION: Between Us, About Us," by Black Healthcare Workers for Black People about the COVID-19 Vaccines

This campaign from Kaiser Family Foundation as part of its "> Than COVID" campaign is designed to provide Black communities with credible information about the COVID-19 vaccines co-developed by **Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF)** and the **Black Coalition Against COVID**.

Black doctors, nurses and researchers dispel misinformation and provide accessible facts in 50 FAQ videos that deliver the information Black people are asking for about the COVID-19 vaccines. More videos and voices will be added to this one-of-its-kind living video library as new questions arise and information becomes available.
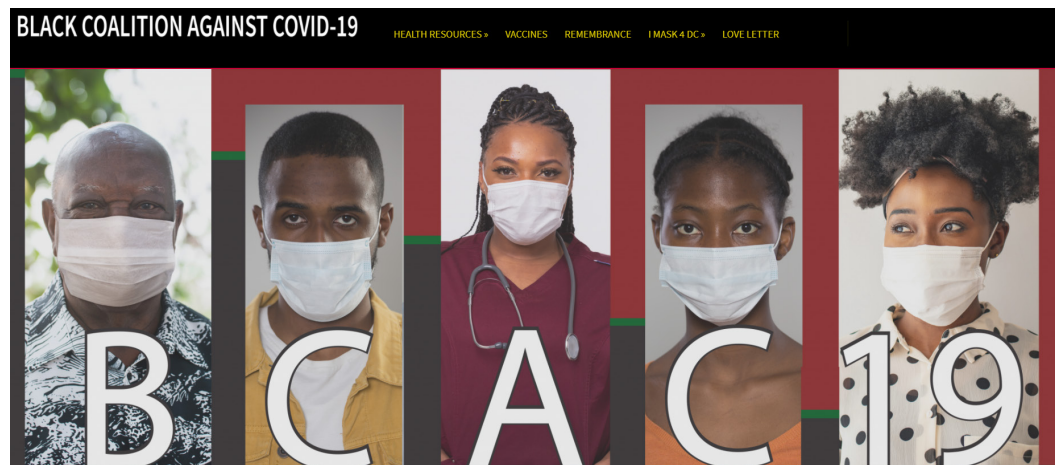
The series debuted on YouTube on March 4, 2021, with a launch video featuring W. Kamau Bell in an open, honest conversation with Black healthcare workers that gets to the heart of Black people's questions and concerns. YouTube is providing significant

support for the campaign, including high visibility promotion across its platform. For more about THE CONVERSATION: Between Us, About Us, go to: https://www.greaterthancovid.org/theconversation/toolkit/ and www.YouTube.com/GreaterThanCOVID

In the latest installment of THE CONVERSATION / LA CONVERSACIÓN, Latinx doctors, nurses and promotoras provide accessible facts and dispel misinformation about the COVID-19 vaccines. Over 75 new FAQ videos, in English and Spanish, address common questions from the Latino community. The new campaign from Kaiser Family Foundation and UnidosUS comes at a critical time with vaccines now authorized for individuals 12 and older. Even as vaccine availability expands, concerns about equitable distribution remain with most states reporting that Hispanic, as well as Black, populations, have received smaller shares of vaccinations relative to their population size to date.

Opportunity for LHDs to Partner with Barbers and Salons on "Shots at the Shop" National COVID Initiative

A part of the Biden Administration's National Month of Action, the "Shots at the Shop" initiative provides $1,000 to enrolled and trained barber shops and beauty salons in communities all across the nation to support local vaccine education and outreach efforts. A partnership of the Black Coalition Against COVID, the University of Maryland Center for Health Equity, and SheaMoisture, NACCHO has established a webpage with project information, including how shops can contact their LHD to coordinate efforts, and, wherever feasible, support shops in serving as temporary vaccination sites. **Learn more and participate**.

AD Council and Joy Collective: Tool to Dispel the use of Tuskegee Study as a Barrier to Vaccinations

Below is a link to videos produced by the AD Council and Joy Collective of interviews conducted with the Tuskegee Study descendants families, who are themselves vaccinated and who resent the use of their ancestors as excuses for not participating in clinical trials or COVID vaccinations. There are four minute-long segments and a five-minute short documentary that encapsulates the material in the four shorter ones. Follow the link: https://getvaccineanswers.org/legacy

Fact Sheets, Graphics, and Messaging Guides

COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Text Messaging Strategies, June 8, 2021

This webinar focused on helping NACCHO members maximize the power of text messaging for both COVID-19 vaccine patient communication and additional clinical workflows. Access the call recording and slides.

World Health Organization's Infodemic Page

The WHO Infodemic page is an excellent resource to learn about handling misinformation/disinformation. WHO's latest Infodemic Management Conference, which focused on social listening for public health, was particularly good and this page has all of the videos to the speakers.

Messaging to Build Confidence in COVID19 Vaccines

The Ad Council and COVID Collaborative are leading a massive communications effort to educate the American public and build confidence around the COVID-19 vaccines. Guided by the leading minds in science and medicine and fueled by the best talent in the private sector, the COVID-19 Vaccine Education Initiative is designed to reach different audiences, including communities of color who have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19. Check out the toolkits:

Messaging recommendations: https://bit.ly/3sM3gki
Public health toolkit: https://adcouncilvaccinetoolkit.org/
Black community toolkit: https://vaccinetoolkitblackcommunity.org/
Hispanic community toolkit: https://vaccinetoolkithispaniccommunity.org/
Black faith community: https://vaccinetoolkitfaithcommunity.org/black-faith-community

Hispanic faith community: https://vaccinetoolkitfaithcommunity.org/hispanic-faith-community

Corporation and employer toolkit: https://www.healthaction.org/

National Resource Center for Refugees, Immigrants, and Migrants (NRC-RIM)

The Get Vaccinated campaign is based on feedback that we have gotten that indicates people from many different backgrounds connect with the theme of protecting their communities. Each set of materials includes translations in more than 30 languages as well as the ability for you to customize the logo, URL, photo and more. Local health departments can learn how to customize their campaign using the campaign's drag-and-drop templates with this video. Go to: https://nrcrim.org/vaccines/get-vaccinated-campaign

Get Vaccinated Campaign

About this campaign

The Get Vaccinated campaign is based on feedback that we have gotten that indicates people from many different backgrounds connect with the theme of protecting their communities.

Each set of materials includes translations in more than 30 languages as well as the ability for you to customize the logo, URL, photo and more. Learn how to customize your campaign using our drag-and-drop templates with this video ›

Vaccine Resource Center

- Key Resources and Promising Practices
- Fact Sheets
- Get Vaccinated Campaign ✱
- Get the Facts Campaign
- "Vaccination Is" Campaign
- Unpause of J&J Vaccine

Fact Sheets: Describing Public Health to Non-Public Health Audiences

These fact sheets describe the functions and activities of local health departments. Tailor this sample language whenever you need help explaining local public health to non-public health audiences, such as your community members or local elected officials.

- The Role of Local Health Departments
    - This fact sheet describes the function of LHDs (e.g., protect from health threats, educate community, provide services and solutions).

- What Does the Local Health Department Do in Your Community?
    - This fact sheet describes the various roles of LHDs (e.g., track and investigate threats; prepare for and respond to emergencies.

Berkeley Media Studies Group: Communicating about COVID-19

Berkeley Media Studies Group created and compiled resources to help public health advocates, staff in local health departments, and others communicate more effectively about COVID-19 and how it intersects with other important public health issues. Go to http://www.bmsg.org/about-us/our-projects/communicating-equity-coronavirus-covid-19/

BMSG also has excellent resources on message development for various audiences: http://www.bmsg.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/bmsg_message_development_worksheet.pdf

Resources to Improve Vaccine Confidence

As the COVID-19 vaccines make their way to more communities, government and health leaders are working to ensure their uptake — and that should start with using the right language. The de Beaumont Foundation has released the findings of a new nationwide poll, "The Language of Vaccine Acceptance," conducted Dec. 21-22, 2020 by the Foundation and pollster Frank Luntz in partnership with the American Public Health Association, the National Collaborative for Health Equity, and Resolve to Save Lives, an Initiative of Vital Strategies.

The findings identified people who are most concerned about vaccine safety, including rural Americans, Republicans age 18-49, Black Americans 18-49, and women 18-49. This poll highlights the urgent need to change our vaccine lexicon in order to help rally Americans across the country toward vaccine acceptance.

Follow these five tips:

- **Tailor your message for your audience:** Americans' perceptions about vaccines and their safety differ by political ideology, gender, race, age, and geography.

- **Explain the benefits of getting vaccinated, not just the consequences of not doing it.**

- **Talk about the people behind the vaccines:** Refer to the scientists, the health and medical experts, and the researchers — not the science, health, and pharmaceutical companies.

- **Avoid judgmental language when talking about or to people who are concerned:** Acknowledge their concern or skepticism and offer answer their questions directly and honestly.

- **Use (and repeat) the word "every" to explain the vaccine development process:** For example: "Every study, every phase, and every trial was reviewed by the FDA and a safety board."

Download the full 2-page **Communications Cheat Sheet** below for more language that can build confidence in COVID-19 vaccines: https://www.debeaumont.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/VaccineToolkit_1pger.pdf

LANGUAGE THAT WORKS TO IMPROVE VACCINE ACCEPTANCE
Communications Cheat Sheet

TIPS

TAILOR YOUR MESSAGE FOR YOUR AUDIENCE. *Americans' perceptions about vaccines and their safety differ by political party, race, age, and geography.*

EXPLAIN THE BENEFITS OF GETTING VACCINATED, NOT JUST THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT DOING IT. *Say, "Getting the vaccine will keep you and your family safe," rather than calling it "the right thing to do." Focus on the need to return to normal and reopen the economy.*

TALK ABOUT THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE VACCINE. *Refer to the scientists, the health and medical experts, and the researchers – not the science, health, and pharmaceutical companies.*

AVOID JUDGMENTAL LANGUAGE WHEN TALKING ABOUT OR TO PEOPLE WHO ARE CONCERNED. *Acknowledge their concern or skepticism and offer to answer their questions.*

USE (AND REPEAT) THE WORD "EVERY" TO EXPLAIN THE VACCINE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS. *For example: "Every study, every phase, and every trial was reviewed by the FDA and a safety board."*

| Use These Words MORE:	Use These Words LESS:
The benefits of taking it	The consequences of not taking it
Getting the vaccine will keep you safe	Getting the vaccine is the right thing to do
A return to normal	Predictability/ certainty
Your family	Your community
Medical experts	Scientists/health experts
Research	Discover/create/ invent
Medical researchers	Drug companies
Damage from lockdowns	Inability to travel easily and safely
A transparent, rigorous process	The dollars spent; number of participants
Safety	Security
Pharmaceutical companies	Drug companies
Advanced/ groundbreaking	Historic
Vaccination	Injection/ inoculation
America's leading experts	The world's leading experts
Skeptical/concerned about the vaccine	Misled/confused about the vaccine

www.changingthecovidconversation.org

Vaccine Misinformation Management Field Guide

From Tamer Hadi, Senior Director of Technology, Data and Communications at NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, comes this excellent, concise guide for public health practitioners to rapidly counter vaccine misinformation and build demand for vaccinations that are informed by social listening. Check it out at **https://vaccinemisinformation.guide/**
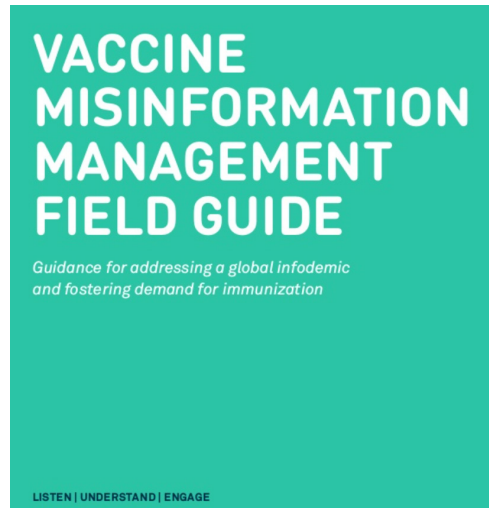
#ThisIsOurShot's COVID Vaccine Conversation Guide

#ThisIsOurShot is sharing its simple, two-page, COVID Vaccine Conversation Guide (below), using the latest evidenced-based messaging research. The goal is to arm trusted messengers with plain-language messages, so they can utilize them in daily conversations with patients, family, friends, and community members. They share effective ways to respond to the five most common questions people have about the vaccine, along with specific language tips.

#THIS IS OUR SHOT

COVID Vaccine Conversation Guide

1) SAFETY: The vaccine will help protect you from getting sick from COVID. Millions of Americans have been safely vaccinated and are now protected against COVID.

2) SIDE EFFECTS: After vaccination, many people feel: 1) Sore arm (near site of shot), 2) Tired or fatigue, 3) Headache, 4) Muscle pain, 5) Joint pain for a few days. Side effects are common and a sign your body is activating to protect you.

3) EFFECTIVENESS AND CHOICE: The best vaccine of them all? The one you can get first! Each vaccine is 100% effective in saving your life from COVID! It will allow us to get back to the things we love and miss. (Avoid mentioning "normal").

4) SPEED: Health experts took all the necessary steps to produce a safe vaccine. It was built on 20 years of research and science.

5) QUESTIONS? It's good to be careful when new things come along. We are glad you want to know more. Ultimately, the choice is yours to get it now, later, or not at all. Talk with your doctor or healthcare provider to discuss if it is right for you. Visit www.getvaccineanswers.org and The Conversation Series for more information.

LANGUAGE DO'S & DONT'S

Do Say	Don't Say
Vaccination	Injection or shot
A safe and effectve vaccine	A vaccine developed quickly
Authorized by FDA based on clinical testing	Approved by FDA, Operation Warp Speed; Emergency Use Authorization[1]
Get the latest information	There are things we still don't know
Keep your family safe; keep those most vulnerable safe	Keep your country safe
Public Health	Government
Health / medical experts and doctors	Scientists
People who have questions	People who are hesitant, skeptical, resistant, or "anti-vaxxers"

1. The perceived speed of vaccine development is a current barrier among many audiences

These recommendations are based partly on research conducted by the de Beaumont Foundation.

MESSAGING ELEMENTS THAT RESONATE

Validate Concerns & Answer Questions	Moments Missed	Protection	Positive Tone
Acknowledge people's hesitancy rather than challenge it. Provide scientifically-based, plain language answers.	Reference things the people miss most. With many feeling COVID-19 fatigue, missed moments (especially human connections that we took for granted like visiting family and friends) serve as a powerful reminder of the ultimate end goal: vaccination as a pathway to the possibility of regaining these moments.	Emphasize "protecting myself, loved ones and those in my community" (rather than "coming together as a nation").	Be inviting and respectful as opposed to demanding. Acknowledge that the "choice is yours to make," which connects with the deeply rooted American value of liberty.

MESSAGING ELEMENTS THAT DON'T RESONATE

Negativity & Fear	Guilt	Overpromising	"Back to Normal"
People push back when reminded of how difficult a year it's been—it tends to put them in a pessimistic, hopeless or frustrated frame of mind. Fear tactics are likely to backfire because this does little to generate trust or answer people's questions about vaccines.	References to "many people already stepping up" can come off as pushy or accusatory. Those who are hesitant do not see themselves as "free riders" letting others take risks first; rather, they are worried about being "guinea pigs" for new COVID-19 vaccines.	Avoid claims that are unproven. Being overly rosy may cause concern. Be clear about the facts without any sugarcoating. Most people understand that mass vaccination is a long-term process. Avoid messages that inadvertently imply that vaccine availability will "flip the switch."	Some just want things to "get back to normal," but for others, post-pandemic life will never be "the way it was." It's more about getting back to life rather than back to normal. Messages that focus on economic recovery—rather than public health—do not perform well.

Research, insights, & content from Kaiser Family Foundation, AdCouncil, COVID Collaborative, and de Beaumont Foundation.

Graphics on Vaccines and How They Work

THE SCIENCE
COVID-19 vaccines cannot give you the virus. They contain a synthetic version of the virus, not a live one.

COVID-19 vaccines will not alter your DNA.

VACCINES ARE SAFE
The vaccines available have been deemed safe and effective by the FDA. They continue to be monitored for safety as more individuals receive the vaccine.

COVID-19 vaccines are being held to the same rigorous safety and effectiveness standards as all other vaccines in the U.S.

COVER YOUR BASES
While an effective vaccine will help reduce the spread of COVID-19, we must still wear masks, socially distance, and follow other infection control measures.

COVID-19 vaccines alone won't stop the pandemic. Continue all infection control measures even after you get the vaccine to help stop the spread.

WHAT'S NEXT
A small percentage of people will experience side effects after being vaccinated. The side effects are a sign that your immune system is working with the vaccine as intended.

The vaccine requires two shots, 3-4 weeks apart. Be sure to get both.

WHAT ARE RNA VACCINES AND HOW DO THEY WORK?

WHAT ARE RNA VACCINES?

SARS-CoV-2

Viral RNA
The virus's genetic material. Contains instructions for making proteins.

Spike protein
Protein which helps the virus penetrate cells and initiates an infection.

The genetic code of the SARS-CoV-2 virus is made up of RNA. Scientists isolated the part of this genetic code that contains the instructions for making the virus's spike protein.

LIPID NANOPARTICLES

RNA INSTRUCTIONS → **VACCINE SHOT**
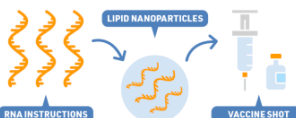
Synthetic RNA which codes for the virus spike protein is packed in lipid nanoparticles (very small fat droplets). This stops our bodies' enzymes breaking it down and helps our cells take it in.

Human cell → **Synthetic RNA** → **Viral protein** → **Immune response**
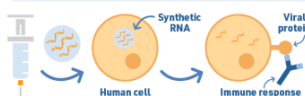
Once the synthetic RNA is inside one of our cells, the cell follows the RNA instructions to produce the virus spike protein. Its production then triggers an immune response in our bodies.

RNA VACCINES: BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES

VACCINE PRODUCTION
RNA is easy to make in a lab, so RNA vaccines can be developed quicker than other vaccines.

SAFETY OF THE VACCINES
RNA can't cause infection and is broken down by normal processes in our cells. An RNA vaccine hasn't been licensed for use in humans before but they've been under development for several years for other viruses, including influenza, HIV, and Zika.

STORAGE AND TRANSPORT
Some RNA vaccines must be stored at low temperatures to remain stable, which makes storage and transport more challenging.

RNA VACCINES FOR COVID-19

Several proposed vaccines for COVID-19 are RNA vaccines. They can be based on two different types of RNA.
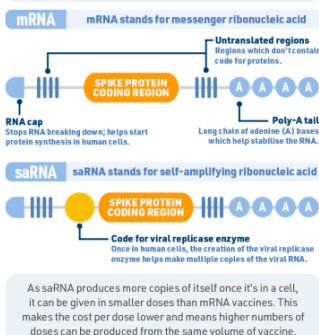
mRNA vaccines
Moderna
Pfizer & BioNTech
CureVac

saRNA vaccine
Imperial College
Arcturus

mRNA AND saRNA: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?
The structures of mRNA and saRNA are similar but have a key difference, as the diagrams below show.

mRNA — mRNA stands for messenger ribonucleic acid

Untranslated regions
Regions which don't contain code for proteins.

SPIKE PROTEIN CODING REGION

RNA cap
Stops RNA breaking down; helps start protein synthesis in human cells.

Poly-A tail
Long chain of adenine (A) bases which help stabilise the RNA.

saRNA — saRNA stands for self-amplifying ribonucleic acid

SPIKE PROTEIN CODING REGION

Code for viral replicase enzyme
Once in human cells, the creation of the viral replicase enzyme helps make multiple copies of the viral RNA.

As saRNA produces more copies of itself once it's in a cell, it can be given in smaller doses than mRNA vaccines. This makes the cost per dose lower and means higher numbers of doses can be produced from the same volume of vaccine.

Graphics from Baltimore City Health Department

Here's an excellent example of simple, informative graphics from the Baltimore City Health Department:

Public Health Communications Collaborative's Answers to Tough Questions about Public Health

The PHCC has a continually updated compilation of tough questions related to COVID-19, with suggested answers. Many of these topics are sensitive and often politicized. The document is designed to provide message guidance and framing for public health officials and others, and it is regularly updated to reflect new developments and emerging issues. Find the latest Q&A here: https://publichealthcollaborative.org/faq/

Messaging Based on Local Vaccination Rates

The Public Health Communications Collaborative has a messaging resource to support health department COVID-19 communications, based on your local vaccination rates—whether the vaccination rate in your jurisdiction is high, varying among population groups, or below target rates. As progress toward benchmarks for U.S. vaccination rates comes into focus, it continues to be important for the media, policymakers, and the public to understand the relevance and critical role that local vaccination rates play in ensuring a safe return to social and economic activities in your community.

Public Health Communications COLLABORATIVE

Messaging Based On Local Vaccination Rates

Millions of Americans are now protected from COVID-19, thanks to safe and effective vaccines. However, even in communities with high average rates of vaccination, there are geographic areas and population groups with much lower vaccination uptake. Across the country, communities and population groups with low vaccination rates are now experiencing the highest levels of COVID infections. It is critical to everyone's health that every person who can be vaccinated is vaccinated.

Our Vaccination Rate is High
Together, we have come so far—let's keep going.

Together, our community has made tremendous progress in protecting ourselves and our loved ones from COVID-19 *[cite local data]*. The vaccines are extremely effective and safe, and we're starting to experience the benefits: seeing friends and family members, reopening local businesses, and enjoying summer. But we have more work to do to increase vaccination rates in areas of *[state/city/county]* where vaccination uptake is low. We are monitoring the potential impact of variants, and the best way for us to keep our community safe and healthy is to ensure that every eligible adult and child is vaccinated. Communities that are currently experiencing high rates of COVID infections are the ones with low vaccination rates.

Our Vaccination Rates are Mixed, with Variations Among Population Groups
We're getting there, but we want everyone in our community to be safe and healthy.

We are making progress in putting COVID-19 behind us, and we've achieved high vaccination rates among *[cite local data]*. However, vaccination rates in some areas of *[state/county/city]* are lagging. We have more work to do to improve rates among *[cite local data]*. We all want to continue to experience the benefits of reduced community spread: seeing loved ones, reopening local businesses, enjoying summer, and safely getting kids back to school this fall. The vaccines are extremely effective and safe, and the best way to keep us on the right track is for every eligible adult and child to get vaccinated. Communities that are experiencing high rates of COVID infections today are the ones with low vaccination rates.

Our Vaccination Rates are Far Below Our Targets
Let's make our community safer and healthier, one vaccine at a time.

As communities around the country begin to open, we are witnessing the effectiveness of the COVID-19 vaccine. We are all eager to see loved ones, travel, visit local businesses, and safely get kids back to school this fall. Communities with low vaccination rates are experiencing the highest rates of COVID infections. With new and potentially dangerous strains, such as the Delta variant, it's more important than ever for eligible adults and children to get vaccinated.

If you are unvaccinated, continue to wear a mask, social distance, and make a plan to get vaccinated. If you've been vaccinated and know neighbors, colleagues, or loved ones who aren't, encourage them to get vaccinated as soon as they can to help protect themselves and our community.

For more COVID-19 communications resources and vaccine messaging tips, visit **publichealthcollaborative.org**

Washtenaw County Health Department Social Media Graphics

Message Libraries

National Rural Health Association's Resource Library

In an effort to improve vaccination rates in rural communities to help mitigate the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Rural Health Association (NRHA) launched a new resource library that includes curated tools to assist rural stakeholders with immediate, easy to distribute, and co-brand materials to support any organization's vaccine uptake efforts. Although many resources are currently available, we know materials focused for rural audiences will be most effective in reaching our communities. This resource library includes conversation starters and public service announcements developed in partnership with the COVID Collaborative, Health Action Alliance, and the Ad Council that can help rural employers, small business owners and public sector employers share vaccine facts and improve vaccination access for employees and families. The resource library can be accessed at: COVID-19 Vaccine Resources - NRHA https://www.ruralhealthweb.org/programs/covid-19-pandemic/covid-19-vaccine-resources

A wealth of information can also be found on NHRA's COVID-19 page: https://www.ruralhealthweb.org/programs/covid-19-pandemic/covid-19-resources

Social Media Message Library

Drexel University's Dornsife School of Public Health has a Social Media Message Library, a web-based resource developed by the Center for Public Health Readiness and Communication for agencies that use social media platforms to communicate with stakeholders during public health emergencies. This resource features message templates for Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, and includes content relevant to the preparedness, response, and recovery phases of 23 different public health disaster scenarios. Check it out at https://drexel.edu/dornsife/research/centers-programs-projects/center-for-public-health-readiness-communication/social-media-library/

VI. Additional Resources for Social Media Managers

The following resources provide examples of successful social media campaigns, policies and pre-created message templates as well as how-to guides. Social media information, references and online links change rapidly. The information below was accurate and true at the time this document was created (March 2019).

Social Media Strategy

The Health Communicator's Social Media Toolkit (CDC): https://www.cdc.gov/socialmedia/tools/guidelines/pdf/socialmediatoolkit_bm.pdf

Social Media Strategy Development – A guide to using social media for public health communication (European Centre for Disease Control and Prevention): http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/social-media-strategy-guide-for-public-health-communication.pdf

Another resource we could add that we've found to be really beneficial is: http://healthystartepic.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/HS2016CommunicationOutreachToolkit-1.pdf

Livestreaming

Examples

- Mosquito Testing at the Fairfax County Health Department, Fairfax, Virginia
- Mumps Update Press Conference, Public Health – Seattle & King County

Resources:

- Kerry Shearer, the livestream expert. Kerry offers tips, training and tools for shooting, editing and promoting videos for social media sites. He also used to work as a local health department PIO, so he understands the context in which we work. http://kerryshearer.com/

- Tips for using Facebook Live from Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/facebookmedia/best-practices/live

Social Media Monitoring Case Study

Tamer Hadi of New York City Department of Health & Mental Hygiene has developed an approach for integrating social media monitoring into the Incident Command System at a public health department. He developed an excellent slideset for the NACCHO Preparedness Summit and also a journal article in Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness, "Integrating social media monitoring into public health emergency response operations."

Webinar: Social Media Monitoring in Public Health Emergencies

This webinar will help participants learn how to use social media to monitor and respond to the spread of (mis)information during public health emergencies. Presenters will describe the importance of being aware of public sentiment during a public health emergency; identify how to use social media bidirectionally to both provide updates and collect public feedback; and share scalable approaches for managing social media monitoring regardless of organizational budget. **View slides**

Pre-Created Messaging

- CDC's Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication Resources
- Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication Manual (2014 Edition)
- CDC's Emergency Preparedness and Response Social Media
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration – Social Media and Disasters
- National Public Health & Information Coalition
- Using Social Media in a Disaster (Drexel University)

Social Media Policies

- CDC Social Media Toolkit: https://www.cdc.gov/socialmedia/tools/guidelines/
- Web 2.0 Governance Policies and Best Practices: http://bit.ly/2XVfCf8
- NACCHO's Social Media for Risk Communications policy statement: http://bit.ly/2LAwqRY

Photo Editing

- http://www.ripl.com/ – iphone only app = bit adds animated text to photos easily.
- Pixlr.com – photo editing app.
- http://ezgif.com/ – with the questionable legal standing of pop culture gifs, we sometimes use this to make our own GIFs out of video. (also this one: http://giphy.com/create/gifmaker)
- ProCam – app for greater control over phone camera settings.
- Imovie &/or AdobeClip – great for easy phone video editing. Clip allows you to start a project on your phone, save it to the cloud & finish it on your desktop with Adobe CC.
- https://sproutsocial.com/landscape/ – Photo resizing tool. Works best with plain (no text) images. You upload the photo and select which platforms/ways you want to post the photo and it automatically resizes it for you and gives you a zip file to download.

New and Emerging Trends

Keeping up with the changing social media landscape can seem like a full-time job. Just when you think you've mastered one platform, a new one comes along. Not every new platform or app is going to be useful to your organization. The following resources can help you decide if what's hot right now can help you achieve your communication and marketing goals while staying within your budget.

Mashable

Search Engine Journal

Hootsuite

Digital Trends

GovDelivery Blog/Granicus

DigitalGov

Social Media at CDC

American Public Health Association

CDC HealthComm Works

Miscellaneous

Social Media News and Information:

- Government Social Media Organization – top resource for all things government social media.
- socialmediaexaminer.com – for information.
- feedly.com – app for finding interesting things to post.
- getpocket.com – app for saving articles etc.
- theskimm.com – app for daily news summary.

Easy Design/Layout:

- Canva.com – app for easy designing.
- Picmonkey.com – app for easy designing.

Other:

- https://developers.facebook.com/tools/debug/ – We post a lot of our e-newsletters as web pages, and Facebook hasn't had time to craw the page to pull the page info and images, so it sometimes comes up looking wonky. We put the page URL into this tool and it makes Facebook manually crawl the page so that it pulls up the preview looking right.

Appendix

Examples of social media policies from local health departments:

- Cambridge Public Health Department, Cambridge, MA
- Ottawa County Department of Health, Ottawa County, MI
- Shelby County Public Health Department, Memphis, TN

Storytelling is the best marketing.