



Public Health
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Canton City Public Health

Canton City Public Health
All Staff
FINAL

POLICY AND PROCEDURE	
SUBJECT/TITLE:	Health Promotion Communications Development Strategy Guide
APPLICABILITY:	All Staff
CONTACT PERSON & DIVISION:	Public Information Officer
ORIGINAL DATE ADOPTED:	08/02/2018
LATEST EFFECTIVE DATE:	08/02/2018
REVIEW FREQUENCY:	5 years
BOARD APPROVAL DATE:	N/A
REFERENCE NUMBER:	800-048-P

A. PURPOSE

The intent of this document is to define a framework for the development of health promotion messages and planned approach to distribution to the community.

B. POLICY

Canton City Public Health recognizes that an effective communications development strategy is an essential tool for the department’s goal of a better, healthier and more equitable future for the community it serves.

C. BACKGROUND

Canton City Public Health has adopted a communication strategy based on the World Health Organization’s “Framework for Effective Communications” guide. This document supports PHAB accreditation measure 3.1.2.

D. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Audience

- **Individuals** who make decisions about their own health and that of their families.
- **Health Care Providers** who make decisions about screening, diagnostics, treatment and recommendations for patients.
- **Policy-makers** at the local and state level with responsibilities for their residents’ health.
- **Communities** who make decisions about shared environments, activities and services with health consequences.
- **Organizations and stakeholders** who make decisions about funding and implementing health programs.

Communications materials these are materials designed for health promotions in the community that will be distributed via the channels defined in the policy in term E.1.b

Health Promotions are activities, materials or other messages designed to promote strategies to mitigate preventable health conditions.

E. PROCEDURES & STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

Staff who are considering the development of communications materials should consult their supervisor and then use this guide during the process to ensure that the department’s messages are **accessible, actionable, credible, timely and understandable**. These principles should be included in all department messages, materials and activities for health promotion.



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1. Accessible

- a. Start the planning process by considering how key audiences receive health information and where they might seek health advice.
 - i. What channels does the audience have access to?
 - ii. What channels does the audience prefer?
 - iii. Does Canton City Public Health have partner channels that are used by hard-to-reach audiences?
 - iv. Can channels be used that encourage interactions with the audience?
 - v. What channels best support the communications objectives for the project?
- b. Channels
 - i. Mass media – newspaper, television, radio, direct advertisement, outdoor advertisement, web sites and social media are able to reach mass audiences.
 - ii. Organizations and communities – these channels reach specific groups based on location or common interests, faith or other common factors. Channels may include health fairs, community organization meetings or other community-based meetings.
 - iii. Interpersonal – these channels include people seeking advice or sharing information and might include care providers, members of faith-based communities and other community leaders.

2. Actionable

- a. Consider if the audience is ready and able to take action based on your message. Consider the following
 - i. What behavior or action do you want to encourage the audience to take? What actions do you want to discourage?
 - ii. Does the audience understand the health risks, recommended behaviors and policies?
 - iii. Does the audience perceive the issue as relevant to them? Are they personally engaged?
 - iv. What barriers might prevent the audience from adopting the recommended behaviors or policies?
 - v. Are policy makers able to confidently endorse the message?
- b. Strategies to consider include
 - i. Create a level of awareness regarding health risks or benefits;
 - ii. Encourage feelings of personal relevance;
 - iii. Promote knowledge of appropriate behaviors or policies to mitigate risks and promote health;
 - iv. Provide confidence that the audience can take the recommended actions;
 - v. Promote a sense that the recommendations are endorsed by the community, community leaders and care providers;
 - vi. Promote the belief that the benefits outweigh the costs.

3. Credible

- a. Consider the following questions with aim of building and maintaining credibility
 - i. What is the role of Canton City Public Health in this health issue?

- ii. What does Canton City Public Health know about the issue and what questions still need to be answered?
- iii. Do at-risk communities and decision-makers consider Canton City Public Health as a credible resource on this specific health issue?
- iv. What other organizations might be perceived as credible on this health issue?
- v. Are Canton City Public Health's partners' messages aligned on this issue?
- vi. Who is the best spokesperson for this issue?
- b. Strategies to consider include
 - i. Demonstrating that Canton City Public Health has technical expertise on this issue and its information is accurate and consistent with other experts and trusted organizations;
 - ii. Demonstrate openness and honesty by being transparent in our work, what Canton City Public Health knows and what it does not;
 - iii. Demonstrate dependability that Canton City Public Health does what it says it will do;
 - iv. Demonstrate that Canton City Public Health is committed to its mission and cares about the health of all people.

4. Relevant

- a. Ensure that communications are relevant to the audience by considering the following questions in the planning phase.
 - i. What are the demographics of the audience?
 - ii. If sharing information about a health risks, does the audience perceive that they are at risk?
 - iii. Does the audience have previous experience with this, or similar, issue?
 - iv. Does the audience feel they are able to take steps to reduce their risk?
 - v. What might the audience hear about this issue from other sources? How might that affect their understanding of the issue?
- b. Strategies for creating relevant messages might include
 - i. Understanding the target audience;
 - ii. Creating messages and materials that include examples from, or references to, the target audience's community;
 - iii. Listen to the audience, or stakeholders that work with the audience, to determine how to address the audience's concerns;
 - iv. Tailor content and messages to meet the needs of the audience.

5. Timely

- a. Ensure that communications are timely by considering the following:
 - i. When threats are urgent, what are the best methods to reach the audience quickly?
 - ii. When are audiences likely to be faced with decisions about this health issue?
 - iii. How can messages be delivered in order to give audiences time to understand and act on this issue?
 - iv. How can Canton City Public Health best engage the media in order to get messages to the audience?

- v. Are there times when the message might be competing for the audience's attention with other issues?
- vi. How can Canton City Public Health best support its partners, so they can deliver timely and consistent information and advice?
- b. Strategies to ensure the timeliness of a message might include
 - i. Make sure that the information is available to decision-makers as quickly as possible;
 - ii. Timing communications to ensure that decision-makers have time to understand and take action;
 - iii. Deliver messages in a sequence to build the conversation over time.

6. Understandable

- a. Ensure that messages are understandable by considering the following
 - i. How familiar is the audience with the topic? Do they have prior experience with this or a similar issue?
 - ii. What is the most important message? How can you highlight it?
 - iii. Does the message clearly state the action you want the audience to take?
 - iv. Can you use photos or illustrations to visually reinforce the message?
 - v. Is the language appropriate for the target audience?
 - vi. Can you test the message with audience members to ensure the meaning is clear?
- b. Strategies to ensure that messages are understandable might include
 - i. Using clear and concise language to explain issues and guidance;
 - ii. Telling stories with a human component to make the issue relatable to those at risk;
 - iii. Communicate in multiple languages, including those most spoken in the community;
 - iv. Including pictures and diagrams;
 - v. Be clear about the desired outcome and get to the point quickly.

7. Evaluation

- a. Canton City Public Health must regularly assess messages and materials to measure outcomes
 - i. Measure the impact of messages.
 - 1. Has awareness increased?
 - 2. Have behaviors changes?
 - ii. Act on the evaluations to improve future outcomes.
 - 1. Plan and determine the most effective methods to inform future decision-making.

8. Distribution

- a. Distribution of messages should be initiated by consulting with the Division Leader, Division Leadership Team and/or the Public Information Officer.

F. CITATIONS & REFERENCES

World Health Organization, WHO Strategic Communications Framework for effective communications.



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G. CONTRIBUTORS

The following staff contributed to the authorship of this document:

1. Robert Knight, Executive Assistant

H. APPENDICIES & ATTACHMENTS

N/A

I. REFERENCE FORMS

Include a list of forms needed for this policy/procedure. If none, list as N/A.

J. REVISION & REVIEW HISTORY

Revision Date	Review Date	Author	Notes

K. APPROVAL

This document has been approved in accordance with the “800-001-P Standards for Writing and Approving PPSOGFs” procedure as of the effective date listed above.