

Public Health Communications Awards

APPLICATION: MOST INNOVATIVE CAMPAIGN

CONTACT INFORMATION

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| Jurisdiction Name | ALPINE COUNTY |
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| Jurisdiction size (Please check one): | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Large (Population exceeds 700,000) <input type="checkbox"/> Medium (Population less than 700,000; more than 200,000) <input type="checkbox"/> Small (Population less than 200,000; more than 50,000) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Very Small (Population less than 50,000) | |

ABOUT THE COMMUNICATIONS CAMPAIGN

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| Name Of Communications Campaign | Alpine County Public Health Briefs |
| Brief Campaign Overview (200 Words Or Less) | <p>Produced by Alpine County's Health Officer, Richard O. Johnson, MD, MPH, this ongoing campaign highlights a current public health issue monthly or in a timely manner coinciding with news of a major public health threat. Each health brief provides a succinct overview of the topic and contains pertinent information about why people should be concerned about the subject matter. Briefs have provided information on numerous viruses such as Zika, West Nile, Hantavirus, Ebola, and Influenza, as well as information on childhood vaccinations, thyroid cancer, the health implications of wildfire smoke, and a number of other topics. Typically, briefs give an overview of the disease or topic, followed by information related to diagnosis, treatment, prevention, signs and symptoms, complications, etc. Then, the brief dives deeper</p> |

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| | into the subject matter providing relevant visual aids (maps, charts, and graphs) and other external resources that can be utilized to obtain additional information on each topic. Occasionally, the briefs stray from this format and follow a more narrative path. <i>Examples of different briefs are attached.</i> |
| Campaign Start Date | 10-1-2014 |
| Campaign End Date | n/a |

CAMPAIGN PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

What is the purpose of this campaign? Does it address an underlying community need? Please describe why the campaign was developed. You are encouraged to submit evidence of need (e.g., local news stories, internal reports, testimonials, data, community health assessments) as an addendum to this form.

The purpose of the campaign is to provide timely information related to public health issues that are or might be of concern to the county's residents, visitors, partners, and neighboring jurisdictions. It serves to dispel rumors and misinformation by providing vetted, accurate information about the topic.

The campaign absolutely addresses an underlying community need.

Alpine County lacks traditional media outlets- no local television, radio, or newspapers are produced within the county. However, sometimes stories from other media outlets make it to Alpine County. As an example, this story, produced by KCRA Television in Sacramento reported on a rising number of Thyroid Cancer cases in several counties- including Alpine- <http://www.kcra.com/news/thyroid-cancer-cases-rising-in-northern-california-communities/37902808>

Dr. Johnson quickly produced a health brief on the topic (attached with application) to provide clarification and more accurate information on the subject. This spread quickly through the community and served to reassure the county's residents that a Thyroid Cancer epidemic was not, in fact, imminent.

The campaign was developed in order to provide an accurate, timely, resource on health issues to members of our community in a brief, easy to digest format.

Does your campaign address an issue related to health equity? How?

While not specifically designed as a tool that addresses the concept of health equity, the topics presented and the reach of the briefs do so indirectly. Topics such as childhood vaccines and prevention of disease via non-pharmaceutical interventions provide information that might be overlooked due to cultural, generational, and socioeconomic factors.

What population was this campaign targeted to reach? How did you plan to reach them?

The target audience includes all residents of Alpine County including the tribal community, visitors to the county, other local and regional partners, and neighboring jurisdictions where the information is applicable. The briefs are disseminated using a variety of methods from e-mail distribution lists (actually the best and most used form of communication in Alpine County); social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook, and hand delivery/posting of hard copies.

Could this campaign be replicated or transferred to other jurisdictions? Please explain.

Yes. There is nothing technologically novel, nor is there anything proprietary contained within these health briefs. The only thing required is a knowledgeable health officer or other public health professional, and a means for dissemination of the briefs.

What partners did you work with in planning and implementing this campaign?

We continue to work with neighboring counties (including our bordering counties in NV) and other regional and local public entities (air quality districts, utility providers, etc.).

To what extent does the campaign leverage existing resources without creating new costs?

The only cost to producing and disseminating the Public Health brief is staff time. The briefs are produced by the county health officer and distributed electronically through a network of distribution lists and various social media platforms. Hard copies of the briefs are distributed/posted throughout the county so people without access to electronic communication may also receive the information.

OUTCOMES

Did you test or evaluate your campaign? If so, how?

Formal testing and evaluation has not been a part of the campaign thus far.

What were the outcomes of this campaign? To what extent were your objectives achieved?

The outcomes of the campaign are- a more informed community on important public health topics and increased collaboration between Alpine County Public Health and neighboring jurisdictions. While the success of the campaign can only be measured anecdotally at this point, its impact should not be overlooked. Despite its local focus, Dr. Johnson's Public Health Brief is frequently mentioned as a quality publication at the many regional and state level meetings and gatherings of public health professionals. In Alpine County (population ~1,200), word of mouth is still the most popular means of communication. A person would be hard pressed to speak to a community member who isn't aware of Dr. Johnson and his Public Health Briefs.

To what extent does the campaign shift thinking about health from individual medical care to community / public health / equity issues?

The topics presented in the Public Health Brief are typically inclusive of those which transcend individual health and could have a significant impact on the health of the whole community. The focus of the briefs is generally related to prevention and infection control rather than focusing solely on the treatment of the disease or condition. An intended outcome is to encourage community members to act in a way that promotes individual *and* community health.

To what extent were earned media articles, letters to the editor, and op-eds published about this project?

Again, Alpine County lacks traditional media outlets usually associated with this type of activity. Reception of this campaign based on word of mouth feedback has been highly favorable.

To what extent does the campaign inform and lead to personal and collective action to improve population health?

Simply put, it does so by providing *knowledge* to people who would otherwise have no information (at best) or misinformation (at worst).

“The greatest enemy of knowledge is not ignorance; it is the illusion of knowledge.”-Stephen Hawking

How have you used what you have learned from this experience? How will use what you have learned to improve your next communications campaign?

We have learned that, in Alpine County and our surrounding jurisdictions, there is a desire of the public to be well-informed. Dr. Johnson’s Public Health Brief has been exceptionally well-received by our community. Going forward we plan to increase our use of electronic media and develop podcasts and YouTube and or Periscope video content so that we may reach a broader audience locally and elsewhere.

INNOVATION

How were youth, disadvantaged populations, and other groups at high risk included in the development and public voice of the campaign?

This campaign is all-inclusive to the best of our ability. We intend to get the brief to *every* member of the community.

Were social media, mobile phones, and other technology utilized in the campaign?

Yes- Facebook, Twitter, e-mail distribution networks, and the Alpine County website.

Can we share this application with other local health officials who are interested in communications best practices?

YES

Please email your completed application by Friday, May 27, 2016 to:

Kat DeBurgh, Executive Director
Health Officers Association of California
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