Guide to Communicating about Performance Improvement

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Guide to Communicating about Performance Improvement

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Introduction

What is Performance Improvement?

Performance improvement (PI) is demonstrated through positive changes in capacity, process, and outcomes of public health as practiced in government, private, and voluntary-sector organizations. PI in public health can happen systemwide as well as through individual organizations that are part of the public health system. PI involves strategic changes to address public health system (or organizational) weaknesses and uses evidence to inform decisionmaking.¹

Throughout this guide, we discuss quality improvement (QI) and PI and how these efforts are related to one another. We will show you how to leverage the results of your QI activities as a part of your organizational initiative on PI. We also discuss a number of QI approaches throughout the guide. To learn more about specific QI tools, see Appendix III for a list of resources.

Why Does PI Communications Matter?

Performance improvement is more than a concept. It is a fundamental way of doing business that incorporates the values of PI and QI in the everyday operation of your organization. Before asking staff to apply QI tactics to their own work, you first must educate them on what you are trying to accomplish through both QI activities and the overarching PI initiative. Why are you doing this? What is accreditation? To do so effectively, you must match the level of information to the audience. Some may find certain concepts complex or cumbersome. You will be more

¹ To learn more, go to the National Public Health Performance Standards Program at http://www.cdc.gov/stltpublichealth/performance/Definitions.html.
successful if you match the participant level of interest, expertise, and learning abilities to the appropriate content. One size does not fit all.

A misconception about PI is that it is yet another task that will get in the way of completing day-to-day objectives. It will be your mission to communicate that PI is not another job, but a means to demonstrate how you go about delivering public health services more efficiently and productively. Constant communication related to this theme will foster an acceptance and adoption of the concepts related to PI.

Like any major initiative, executive commitment is crucial to success. PI initiatives are meant to fundamentally change the way health departments do business for the better, and communication is a key strategy to build the foundation for this institutional change. For PI to be successful, you need to communicate this commitment from senior leadership and governing bodies to your

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The Operational Definition of a Functional Local Health Department defines what people in any community can reasonably expect from their local governmental public health presence. It sets forth a series of standards based on the 10 Essential Public Health Services and serves as a framework for the standards of the national voluntary accreditation program operated by the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB). The functions outlined in this framework are directly aligned with the PHAB Domains, Standards and Measures (v 1.0). PHAB identifies 12 domains; the first 10 domains address the 10 Essential Public Health Services. Domain 11 addresses management and administration, and Domain 12 addresses governance. Local health departments (LHDs) that assess the degree to which they fulfill the functions outlined in this framework and engage in capacity-building QI activities will likely be better prepared for national accreditation.

The PHAB Standards and Measures document serves as the official standards, measures, and required documentation for PHAB national public health department accreditation. (The full PHAB document can be downloaded from [http://www.phaboard.org/accreditation-process/public-health-department-standards-and-measures/].)
staff and the local community. As outlined in NACCHO’s Roadmap to a Culture of Quality Improvement (see Appendix III), leadership and employee empowerment is absolutely necessary to bring about institutional change. This guide will help you create a culture of transparency in communication as well as instill ownership of this initiative among your staff.

What’s in This Guide?

This Guide to Communicating about Performance Improvement is designed to provide local health departments (LHDs) with guidance and ready-to-use communication tactics and resources to build support for PI and accreditation efforts. The information in this guide is based on the Operational Definition of a Functional Local Health Department and the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) Standards and Measures, which are both derived from the 10 Essential Public Health Services. This guide can help you develop strategies and strengthen existing channels for communicating the concept of PI to staff and other stakeholders. It can also help you tell your stories of success related to PI and accreditation. No single solution or plan will meet the needs of every health department. Creativity, perseverance, and effective partnerships are needed to make PI and accreditation efforts successful.

Throughout this guide, we will provide case studies and outline tactics to help you overcome barriers to communication and share the value of PI. This includes helping staff understand that your PI initiative is not about adding work or placing blame but about improving how your health department serves your community.

Here’s how the guide is organized:
- The Introduction (pages 1–6) includes a brief overview of the communications guide and its purpose, and how to make it work for you.

• Chapters 1, 2, and 3 (pages 7–45) include case studies and stories from local health departments that have succeeded in communicating about PI to staff, community partners, and governing boards.
• In Appendixes I–III (pages 47–59), you will find worksheets and other resources to help you develop tactics for communicating with various stakeholders about PI.

Stories from the Field

Through a series of interviews with local health departments from across the United States, we uncovered areas of communication related to PI that successfully told the PI story to different audiences. Many of the case studies illustrate how the results of QI activities can be used to communicate important milestones related to your PI initiative.

This guide will also help you demonstrate how organizational improvements achieved through QI can help reinforce the value of your PI efforts to staff and other audiences. We gathered input from your peers who are in various stages of the PI process. These include those who have decided to pursue PHAB accreditation. They told us about their struggles to gain support from their own organizations, as well as from governing entities and the community at large. We also interviewed representatives from PHAB to learn about the importance of communicating PI for accreditation purposes.

Who Should Use This Guide?

Anyone who needs to communicate about the PI efforts of your health department will benefit from the tips and case studies outlined here. This may be senior leadership at a health department, PI staff, or an accreditation coordinator. This guide was written with the knowledge that many
public health staff may not currently have the capacity to create a campaign that communicates PI to a wider audience. The stories included illustrate the success that some LHDs have had with communicating with various stakeholders about PI using the tools and staff available.

How Do I Use This Guide?

Although each chapter builds on concepts presented in the chapters before it, each one has also been designed to stand on its own. You can use sections that are most relevant to you in the PI process at any time.

This guide and accompanying online resources are offered in print and online. The online resources include the Communications Worksheet found in Appendix I, as well as a number of other communications tools and references. Online references can be found on the NACCHO website at http://www.naccho.org/picommunications.

Throughout this guide, we outline a number of tools, platforms, and tactics to help you effectively communicate all of your PI efforts and accomplishments. The table on page 6 is a quick glance at how you can use this guide to incorporate PI messaging across a number of platforms you likely already have in place.

Tactics for Communicating About PI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Communication</th>
<th>Tactics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yearly Reports</td>
<td>Use this as an opportunity to educate and highlight areas of success related to performance improvement. During your annual report presentation, highlight a story from the field that showcases community impact related to one of your priority areas (increased STD testing, decreased clinic wait times, increased efficiencies in systems services, etc.). For a specific example, see Case Study I, “Educating and Communicating through Action,” from the Three Rivers District Health Department in Chapter 1, page 12.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Communication</td>
<td>Tactics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board Meetings</td>
<td>Insert a continuous agenda item for governing entities that tells your story about performance improvement. This item should be discussed at every board meeting. Examples may include steps you have taken related to PI; areas of success due to PI, such as less wait time at clinics; steps taken to achieve accreditation; and storyboards from successful QI initiative. For a specific example, see “Using Quality Improvement Tools” in Case Study II from the Bethlehem City Bureau of Health in Chapter 1, page 14.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail and Newsletters</td>
<td>Use e-mail and newsletters related to PI, highlighting areas of PI success, or sending alerts of upcoming changes. Communication disseminated electronically can be sent to a wide audience as a trickle-down communication tactic, which is effective with both staff and governing entities. For a specific example, see how the Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County leverages a newsletter focused strictly on performance improvement in Case Study IV, “Leveraging E-mail and Newsletters” in Chapter 1, page 18.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td>More and more localities are broadcasting monthly board meetings on local TV stations. TV can be used to advertise PI successes and to inform those unable to attend board meetings. This is an important point to remember for localities where local cable public access channels regularly broadcast government meetings and hearings, including health department meetings. For more on leveraging media, see Chapter 3, page 33.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media</td>
<td>Health Departments are using social media such as Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook to reach younger and more diverse audiences. For specific tactics and messaging for social media, see Chapter 3, page 33.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Building Your Internal Communications Strategy

After reviewing Chapter 1, local health departments (LHDs) will be able to identify tactics for communicating performance improvement (PI) with staff and governing entities. These same tactics will help build cooperation across teams in PI activities and will also communicate results. The first step is to identify key staff members who will help tell the PI “story,” including roles, expectations, and outcomes.

Identifying Obstacles

Before talking to board members or health department staff about PI, you must first identify any obstacles that may hinder communication. Once these obstacles have been identified, you can use a targeted approach in communicating most effectively about PI. Issues for you to consider when thinking about which tactics would be most effective with staff and governing entities may include any of the following:

- **Staff roles** (i.e., nurses, epidemiologists, practice managers, sanitarians, etc.). Think about what background knowledge they have as well as their level of involvement in QI activities that will affect your PI goals.

- **Categories of staff**, such as management, frontline staff, administrative/support staff, as well as other departments such as finance and HR. The further removed these departments are from the delivery of services or QI activities, the more effort it will require to create a sense of ownership in your overall PI initiative.
• **Location of staff** (onsite or offsite), and the level of cross-program communication currently in place. Fragmented communication often results when attempting to maintain contact staff at multiple health department sites. You’ll need to create ways to facilitate communication with these groups.

• **Limited resources.** Very few LHDs have the staff or budget to dedicate to communication activities. You’ll need to consider how to incorporate your PI campaign into existing efforts and roles without creating greater burdens or expense.

**Forging a United Front**

LHDs struggle to meet the obligations of day-to-day public health service under dwindling budgets and staff reductions. We realize that under these circumstances, not all departments can dedicate a full-time employee solely to communications activities. Think about how current staff responsibilities could be adjusted to incorporate communications activities about PI.

For example, in the process of completing QI activities, team members are tracking project milestones and results for internal reporting. But these results summaries can also be the starting point for PI messaging to both internal and external audiences. (See the Communications Worksheet in Appendix I.) Or you can create a QI/PI message board on an intranet such as SharePoint, where ideas and QI project results and initiatives can be shared and consolidated for inclusion in a newsletter or e-mail to partners or at a board meeting. (See the example on page 20.) By making it everyone’s responsibility to share results and milestones related to your improvement efforts, you are better able to spread the burden evenly throughout your organization. By compiling all of these potential stories in one place, you also reduce the burden and time required to share PI messages with a target audience.

In addition to leveraging staff, you may also want to consider how community volunteers or interns may help with your communications efforts.
This table has short descriptions of other opportunities and tactics that you can use to discuss PI with staff members.

**Opportunities to Communicate PI to Staff**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of Communication</th>
<th>Tactics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff Meetings</td>
<td>Introduce and reinforce concepts and expectations with staff. See Case Study I, page 12, “Educating and Communicating through Action.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Contests</td>
<td>Engage staff participation through healthy competition. See Case Study VI, page 26, “Communicating through Healthy Competition.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Appraisals</td>
<td>Engage staff, manage expectations, and measure employee understanding. See Institutionalizing PI Activities, page 17.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail and Newsletters</td>
<td>Communicate projects and results with staff, promote contests and post relevant information. See Case Study IV, page 18, “Leveraging E-mail and Newsletters.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Employee Orientation</td>
<td>Introduce performance improvement concepts. See Institutionalizing PI Activities, page 17.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Creating a Sense of Ownership**

Creating a sense of ownership is essential to building and sustaining productive staff and improving performance. Activities that foster this ownership offer a platform for reinforcing a culture of PI.

Help staff see how their performance contributes to overall organizational PI. You can use many of the QI activities undertaken by your team to help staffers understand how their efforts link to helping the agency achieve overall strategic and accreditation goals. In the end, QI projects and the PI initiative should make their jobs easier and more effective. This message will resonate with those who expect that the PI initiative will be just another task for an already overburdened staff. A good PI model engages and empowers staff, creating an environment of open
communication so that vital feedback and insight are brought to the table. When frontline staff have some input in changing their work environment, job satisfaction and staff retention increase, and customer service improves.

It’s important to remember that most individuals choose to work in public health because they are passionate about it and they want to do good for the community. Appeal to this altruistic drive by framing PI as a means to do public good. By doing this, you can connect your staff’s passion to their work. Tapping into the inner drive of your most motivated team members will truly help you realize the goal of offering the best in public health services.

**Setting Expectations**

You can begin to make the case for PI by setting expectations for staff resources and time. Your team will gain an understanding of the role each member will play in PI while developing a sense of ownership in the initiative.

Create a culture that encourages open communication, mutual respect, and concern for the interests of others. Being able to develop this culture depends on LHD leaders establishing standards of conduct that include the following:

- Share information openly;
- Discover and explore diverse perspectives;
- Develop trust and cooperation;
- Work through differences; and
- Promote perceptions that the process is enjoyable and productive.

**Educating and Empowering Staff**

For many LHDs, one of the first struggles with PI initiation is ensuring that everyone understands what you are trying to accomplish and how to get there. One health department accomplished this by hiring a consultant to introduce the theory and concepts of performance improvement to staff members before ever asking them to
apply this to their specific jobs. The consultant adjusted content for the course based on staff roles, and instruction was tailored to varying levels of experience, education, and job responsibilities. In other words, the level of instruction was tailored to match levels that would apply to individual jobs, whatever workplace team the staff member was on.

After your team has been introduced to the concept of PI, then you can begin to show them how their work fits in with the PI initiative. Once you can show a few examples that help staff identify how PI fits in with their daily activities, they can begin to use the tools of QI to reach your PI goals. In the beginning, if you can show how this process applies to their work and is not meant to be punitive, they will be empowered to promote PI in their individual work areas. For relevant examples, see the following case studies.

**Case Studies—Tactics in Detail**

Case Studies I, II, and III illustrate how improving performance does not have to be complicated. These case studies also show how engaging staff in the process offers opportunities to create PI stories.

I. Educating and Communicating through Action

* A Hands-On Approach
* Three Rivers District Health Department, KY

The Home Health Agency work area of the Three Rivers District Health Department was disorganized and inefficient. As with many health departments faced with decreased state and local funding, managers at Three Rivers were looking for ways to increase efficiency in accounts receivable. Reducing the cycle between actual service delivery, billing, and receipt of payment became the focus of a QI activity. The solution resulted in rearranging furniture and desk assignments to match the actual workflow of the office.

In this hands-on exercise, the team was able to see how QI activities could improve their productivity as well as contribute to overall PI goals. The resulting outcomes
were then crafted into a PI story that communicates the benefits of PI to other departments.

The outcomes outlined in this case study illustrate how activities in your PI initiative can be translated into tangible messages that will resonate with staff as well as governing entities. Your communications strategy for these activities will require you to do the following to consistently create opportunities to tell your PI story:

- Monitor progress of each project;
- Identify milestones to report; and
- Communicate improvements in efficiencies, cost savings, readiness, response, etc.

Example of Messaging:
Improving Workflow and Response to Patient

**Lead Message:** Improvements in how the Home Health Agency organized its team resulted in organizational designs that match the actual flow of work.

**Supporting Message:** By organizing files and personnel to match how documents, requests, and patient contacts flow through the agency, the Home Health Agency was able to improve customer service and enhance patient care through more coordinated and timely response to patient needs.
These tactics reinforce the investment in time and resources for the PI effort that will resonate with a number of audiences. The Communications Worksheet in Appendix I is a guided lesson in how to develop your own hands-on messaging.

**Fostering Collaborative Communication**

Often, the root cause of inefficiency and one of the biggest obstacles to seamless operation of services within an organization is the lack of coordinated efforts between departments. Within an LHD, this results in fragmentation where different programs work independently of each other, often duplicating effort because each is unaware of what the other is doing. This is both inefficient and ineffective. But it presents the perfect opportunity to deploy a QI activity that could lead to a PI success story by developing a culture of collaborative communication between programs.

Case Studies II and III show how your PI efforts can open communication pipelines between various levels of your organization. Using these case studies, you will see how other health departments successfully and seamlessly integrated their organizations to foster PI.

**Case Studies—Tactics in Detail**

**II. Using Quality Improvement Tools**

*Putting it All Together*
*Bethlehem City Bureau of Health, PA*

Bethlehem City Bureau of Health regularly uses a cause-and-effect diagram or the “fishbone” technique for analyzing complex problems that appear to have many interrelated causes. This technique helps to uncover the root cause of an issue and to identify where or why a process isn’t working. Managers tracked specific issues for a month and were

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3 To learn more about the Fishbone technique and other QI tools cited in this guide, see the resources listed in Appendix III.
able to identify areas to create continuous improvement goals. Among those identified were issues related to the department’s process of issuing citations to restaurants and other health policy violators. Other QI tools were used to examine specific issues that arose during a given month and then identify two for improvement. As a result, a value stream map was drafted to help the department create a more seamless and integrated call center for use in a public emergency. (See graphic below.)

Bureau of Health—Quality Improvement Planning, Call Center Event, Citation Process Event

Using a number of QI tools allowed department staff to identify issues and target areas of improvement that will result in more efficient delivery of services to the community. The department then summarized these results in a storyboard/fact sheet that was presented to their governing entity. This same fact sheet could also be presented to community partners and other stakeholders to communicate progress made toward PI goals.

This example illustrates that in addition to creating measurable results for external audiences, incremental
milestones achieved through your QI activities create opportunities to connect QI to PI in various ways:

- Creating a more collaborative environment;
- Educating staff about PI; and
- Empowering staff.

By spotlighting issues found, staff work together to identify possible solutions and actively participate in closing gaps to create a more efficient system. Collaborative activities like this help to motivate and educate staff, and they also create an environment of healthy competition.

III. Using Root Cause Analysis

**Contact Log Analysis**

*Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission, NJ*

Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission conducted an analysis of how public contacts (calls, e-mails, walk-ins, etc.) were handled and tracked by the department. By examining the steps and people involved, the health commission discovered that they had a disorganized and fragmented system in place. Each individual was following his or her own process, which did not coincide with what others were doing.

Mapping activities, such as a process map, can be used as a starting point to graphically display results and spark conversation on next steps. This particular exercise produced the following results that could then be transformed into key messages related to PI:

- The health commission shrank their process of handling contacts for greater consistency and better recordkeeping, which increased efficiency.
- Employees learned about PI in meaningful ways.
- As employees with different roles worked together from beginning to end, identifying the problem and implementing a solution, communication among staff members improved.
Team members recommended creating an electronic database to maintain intake data, cut down on wait times, and improve client service.

Current Process Map for MBRHC—Handling Contacts

Not only are these outcomes to tout to a governing board, but as a result of these activities, health commission members will have access to data related to customer and client service to present to their board members at a moment’s notice. This helps promote several PI goals:

- Fostering collaboration among staff members;
- Applying the concepts of PI to actual work processes;
- Improving the organization’s response to client needs; and
- Improving delivery of health services and population health outcomes.

Institutionalizing PI Activities

PI can occur at the individual level, such as through yearly performance reviews. But it should also be made part of all that you do in your organization. Once PI planning is
under way, plans to foster it should be institutionalized. Establishing PI as part of the norm in your organization assures that the PI continues at all levels. (See “Turning Data Points and Milestones into Stories” on page 18.)

For example, Bethlehem City Bureau of Health is in a constant state of PI. PI has become engrained in the bureau’s culture. They used their “fishbone” technique to help redefine staff roles after funding cuts forced downsizing, and they also implemented a management system for supply closets. The bureau has also incorporated it into employee performance reviews. By using these reviews as a tactic to incorporate PI, you have a “scheduled appointment” with each of your employees that enables you to keep the PI conversation going every month, quarter, and year.

In Miami-Dade County, the introduction to PI begins before Day One for new employees. In the interview process, an administrator talks with candidates about the health department’s accreditation journey and discusses their approach to performance management and continuous improvement efforts. During new employee orientation, staff are given an introduction to performance management concepts such as the Sterling Management Model, based on the Baldridge Criteria for Performance Excellence.4

As you track and monitor progress of your performance management and quality improvement projects, think about how you can use these data points as an opportunity to share milestones with staff as well as outside entities. (See text box on page 18 for a specific example.) In Case Study IV, we’ll also show you an example of how to share what you learn and accomplish along the path to performance improvement.

Case Studies IV and V illustrate more tactics for making PI part of the culture in your LHD.

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Turning Data Points and Milestones into Stories

**Lead internal message:** Staff at all levels should be involved in determining and tracking indicators used for Performance Management.

**Tactic 1:** Develop a regular cycle to report on key indicators to promote the culture of continuous performance improvement to staff.

**Tactic 2:** Report results broadly to governing entities and other stakeholders to maintain a constant level of awareness about your performance improvement initiative.

**Example Indicator:** By June 2015, 80% of area patients 19 to 36 months old will be up to date in immunization coverage. In 2009, 52% of 19- to 36-month-old children were up to date on immunizations.

**Message or Progress Report #1:** In 2011, 67% of 19- to 36-month-old children were up to date on immunizations.

**Message or Progress Report #2:** In 2012, 77% of 19- to 36-month-old children were up to date on immunizations.

**Message or Progress Report #3:** By June 30, 2015, 90% of the childhood immunization data entered will be accurate and timely. Currently, 85% of these data are entered correctly.

Case Studies: Tactics in Detail

IV. Leveraging E-mail and Newsletters

**Newsletters**

*Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County, FL*

This newsletter is an example of combining accreditation activities with PI activities. E-mail and newsletters are tools readily available to you as you communicate activities and results to board members, staff, and other internal and external partners. With just the push of a button, you can quickly and effectively distribute the results of your PI activities to a larger audience.

The Miami newsletter is an example of how you can highlight a number of topics and resources related to PI and accreditation activities in one publication readily available to staff and partners. The newsletter format is a great way to reinforce concepts pertaining to PI; note milestones...
reached on the road to accreditation; and highlight QI accomplishments that are part of your overall PI initiative. The newsletter can be distributed electronically to a number of different audiences, including staff, boards, community partners, and targeted media outlets. You’ll also want to make it available for download from your website or Facebook page to widen your audience. You can also include teaser tweets on your Twitter feed as a way to drive audiences back to your website and monitor your progress. As you will see in the example included in this guide, a newsletter allows you to convey a number of different messages across numerous platforms and audiences while saving you time and money. (See Appendix II.)

V. Leveraging Your Intranet

Using SharePoint for Internal Communications
Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County, FL

The Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County uses SharePoint as a communication pipeline for the entire county health department. Their SharePoint site on Performance Improvement and Quality Improvement is used to store all documents, tools, and resources for PI and QI management used by the department. The page is used to communicate with their top audience: senior leadership and other staff.

The SharePoint site is used in the following ways:
• Stores newsletters sent by e-mail to all staff;
• Offers links to outside resources, such as State resources, CDC resources, and accreditation resources;
• Provides links to recommended QI tools;
• Features organization Plan Trackers, which track items such as Strategic Plans, QI Plans, etc.;
• Captures all committee work geared toward PI;
• Stores instructions and tools used to complete QI projects required of all senior leaders; and
• Stores all messaging, press releases, and media coverage related to PI communications activities for easy reference.

All the tactics and activities in this guide can also be tracked and discussed using SharePoint. The screen capture below is an example of what one health department’s internal SharePoint site looks like.

Credit: Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County, FL
Communicating with Staff: A Recap

Not only will you need to make a convincing case for PI to your staff, you also need your staff to make the case with external audiences on your behalf. That’s why the tactics and approach outlined in this chapter are critical first steps in your efforts to generate support and momentum for these efforts. The goal of Chapter 1 was to show you how to turn awareness of your PI initiative into action that produces results you can begin to share with key stakeholders.

Now let’s review some of the key points related to building your internal communications strategy.

**Educate and Empower Staff**
You must communicate PI in one voice. That means everyone must speak from the same script. That begins with making sure that your staff has a fundamental understanding of what the concepts and tools of QI are and how the results tie into your overall PI goals.

**Identify Key Roles and Departments**
Early on, you want to identify which departments or staff members can take the lead in setting goals, monitoring achievements in milestones, and reporting results.

**Track Milestones**
You may want to consider using SharePoint or creating a free Google document that allows you to collaborate and coordinate communications efforts with your team from anywhere.5

**Create the Story**
You can upload the Communications Worksheet in Appendix I to a Google drive or shared workspace to begin creating your messages noting important milestones. For health departments with fewer staff, you may want to

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5 Google documents are online documents, spreadsheets, and presentations that you can create and share with staff. To learn more, go to [http://www.google.com/drive/apps.html](http://www.google.com/drive/apps.html).
recruit a community volunteer or intern to help coordinate these efforts.

In Chapter 2, you’ll learn more about how the outcomes highlighted in Chapter 1 can also be tailored to share with a number of external audiences.
In Chapter 2, we will help local health departments (LHDs) develop messaging to educate local policymakers such as county commissioners, Board of Health members, mayors, and other officials about performance improvement (PI). We will use case examples based on community health assessments and other health improvement initiatives at the local level. Using real-world examples from the field, LHDs will be better equipped to adapt their own experiences to stories and messaging that will engage elected officials and governing bodies in their PI efforts.

Communicating with Governing Bodies and Other Stakeholders

Performance improvement activities create a natural opportunity for LHDs and governing boards to work together. These are challenging times, but they also are exciting ones for LHDs and governing entities. When communicating the results of PI, keep in mind that your goal is to gain your Board’s support in maintaining the integrity of the LHD mission. Your accreditation and PI process creates an excellent opportunity for your governing entity to broaden and enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of services provided by your department.

Performance improvement is not a “diet.” In other words, it is not temporary. Changing your workplace culture as it relates to PI is no small task, but with dedication and perseverance, and support from your Board, it will get done. The governing entity may be legally responsible for the work of the LHD or serve in an advisory capacity. Either way, they need to understand and support your PI efforts.
Achieving buy-in from your governing board (including explicit backing for your PI initiative) will give you the essential support needed to successfully introduce and communicate the value of PI to your staff.

It’s possible that the impact of an LHD and its contribution to overall community health is not fully appreciated by even those who govern its work. While governing bodies and other elected and appointed officials may be directly invested in public safety and public works, it’s your job to show how the LHD contributes to community well-being. Communicating about PI reframes public health as an essential contributor to public good by demonstrating both its relevance and its value. The fact that this is not a separate task from other priorities is a key message for stakeholders and of keen interest to mayors, county commissioners, and City councils. Think of ways you can communicate how PI is integrated into priorities already established by the department and governing entity. Exercises and case studies in this section will help LHDs craft value statements to demonstrate the effective and efficient use of public resources as a result of their PI activities.

Communicating with your Board does not have to be complicated or even time consuming. If you think of your Board as an extension of your department, or your department as an extension of your Board, you can create organizational momentum for real and lasting change.

For example, reducing infant mortality and improving child health is often cited

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**Example of Messaging:**

**Reducing Infant Mortality**

**Lead Message:** Improvements in our maternal and child health programs have resulted in reductions in infant mortality.

**Supporting Message 1:** Targeted education campaigns and more appointment slots increased the number of expectant mothers who receive prenatal care.

**Supporting Message 2:** Effective outreach to expectant mothers and home visits for new moms resulted in increased vaccination rates among newborns.
as a priority goal for civic leaders. An LHD may therefore choose to highlight improvements in the delivery of immunization education and vaccination campaigns to effectively communicate the connection to larger stakeholder and community health goals. (See sidebar on page 24.) This technique of breaking PI concepts into “pieces” tied to larger civic goals will be used to illustrate how LHDs can showcase PI and QI in terms relevant to governing bodies, elected officials, and other community stakeholders. This section will highlight specific PI examples to help LHDs craft messaging tailored to their PI strategy and stakeholder audiences.

**Breaking Down Obstacles with Decisionmakers**

It’s possible that LHDs may encounter barriers when informing officials about PI efforts. This section discusses how to break down these obstacles while communicating value and responsibility to external stakeholders.

For a number of local health departments, the concepts of PI, accreditation, and QI have become intertwined with objections to health care reform. Case Studies VI and VII address these obstacles and offer real-world messaging to help LHDs turn the conversation around four key talking points:

- Increased efficiency;
- Increased effectiveness;
- Better community health outcomes; and
- Responsible use of public dollars.

**Communicating Value and Responsibility**

Consistent and persistent messaging from LHDs about the efforts aimed at improving the health status of the community not only resonates with leaders and governing bodies, but also galvanizes support throughout the community. Using real-world examples from the field, LHDs will be in a better position to engage elected
officials and governing bodies in their PI initiatives. Data points that support your efforts to improve population health through greater efficiencies in service delivery and responsiveness to community needs offer hard evidence for skeptical audiences.

For instance, the *2013 County Health Rankings*, published by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, placed many of the counties in the Central Michigan Health District in the lower third percentile statewide for overall health. In particular, five of the six counties in the district have rates of low birthweights well above the national benchmark (6.0%). While there is room for improvement, Central Michigan has made strides toward maintaining a low infant mortality rate by focusing on its maternal and infant health program. To help accomplish this, they hosted a public health summit to begin generating ideas for improving the health of Clare County and the other five counties served by the department. The popular summit led quickly to the creation of the “Together We Can” Health Improvement Council to implement health improvement strategies. As a result, in its first year the council received the 2010 Michigan Department of Community Health’s Director’s Award for successful collaboration.

By reducing the rate of infant deaths through improved nutrition for pregnant women, increased awareness of immunization schedules, and efficient vaccination programs, Central Michigan has garnered political support for these prevention efforts. Developing powerful messages about the value of these and other public health programs and their connection to overall population health reinforces the imperative that governing bodies and other civic leaders continue to invest in public health.

**Case Studies—Tactics in Detail**

**VI. Communicating through Healthy Competition**

*Best Practices Showcase*

*Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County, FL*
The DOH-Miami-Dade used a hands-on approach to communicate the principles of PI by engaging employees in a competition using the 5S approach (Sorting, Straightening, Systematic cleaning, Standardizing, and Sustaining). The health department shared results with all employees to promote healthy competition among departments and demonstrate how PI can apply at all organizational levels. The health department then took this interdepartmental competition a step further, showcasing the PI results in a much larger forum with governing boards and the community.

For an entire day, the health department put on a showcase to share best practices with community partners. Through this presentation, the health department illustrated the triumphs and growing pains as the department grew, showing strengths and areas for improvement, and noting how those areas were addressed from one year to the next. Through this visual storytelling exercise, they demonstrated how performance management was applied to their day-to-day work. This forum also gave them the opportunity to show the progress they are making in the PHAB accreditation process, by sharing the results of completed QI activities with a wide audience, including community organizations such as hospitals, the Department of Parks & Recreation, media, and local governing bodies.
Specifically this presentation allowed them to highlight increased efficiency and effectiveness and better community health outcomes.

VII. Recruiting a Public Health Champion

*The Wheel: Public Health as One of the Three Pillars of Public Good*

*Sedgwick County Health Department, KS*

A tool used by County Commissioner Tim Norton in Sedgwick County, Kansas, was successfully used to communicate to other commissioners and public officials the value of PI in public health. “The Wheel”, as it is known, was developed to show that public health is one of the three pillars of public good, along with public safety and public works. It’s hard to argue against the need for public safety. Police officers, fire departments, and emergency response teams are necessary to ensure the health and safety of citizens. Public works functions are also vital to the community to ensure safe roads; provide viable sources of drinking water; and maintain a city’s infrastructure, such as bridges, sewers, and traffic control systems. Similarly, public health is the third pillar of any well-run and vital community, providing leadership in matters critical to health. Public health coordinates activities of first responders as well as public works in emergency preparedness activities to ensure an effective response in times of disaster—both natural and man-made.

The Wheel demonstrates how a simple tool presented by an influential champion

Credits:
Randall Allen, Exec. Director, Kansas Association of Counties
Kathleen Harnish McKune, TeamTech, Inc.
Tim Norton, Sedgwick County Commissioner
can effectively communicate the role of public health while at the same time promoting PI to other public entities and the community at large.

Tailoring the Message

As the Wheel effectively demonstrates, the framework and model for accreditation and PI boil down to simple messages about good government, transparency, accountability, forging stronger ties with the community, and greater community engagement. These are messages that should resonate with all political interests. The Communications Worksheet in Appendix I will walk you through how to tailor your messages to specific stakeholder audiences. See the example below for a specific example.

Example of Messaging:
Targeting a Specific Audience Who Have a Specific Agenda

Key Issue: Childhood Obesity
Stakeholder: Governing Board and the Military Veteran Community
Interest: Military Readiness and Childhood Fitness
Key Message: Obese children are not fit children. Young recruits out of high school need to be fit and healthy enough to pass military fitness tests. But the rate of obesity and lack of exercise threatens to diminish the pool of eligible recruits. If a robust military is a goal of the veteran community, it is in our best interest to join together in combating childhood obesity in our community. Otherwise, potential military recruits in the future will fail before they even have an opportunity to volunteer.

Using Public Investment Responsibly

Think of your health department as a small business. Are you sharing your successes? A good story can tip the scales in your favor and make the customers (i.e., your governing board and community partners) want to do business with you. In reading the success story, your prospect gains trust in your ability to help with their own problems. A compelling success story gives you much more credibility and has much more staying power in your prospect’s mind.
than a list of clients served or degrees earned. If you can show how your community is benefitting most from the funds given to your department, you will be more likely to get more.

Communicating with External Stakeholders: A Recap

To really connect with policymakers, governing entities, and other community stakeholders, LHDs need to communicate how PI efforts connect to improvements in service delivery and ultimately public health. People in the community make not always see the work LHDs do, but they are safer and healthier for it. Your stories and the champions who help spread the word will be key in increasing public understanding and support for your work. Let’s recap a few of the tactics discussed in this chapter.

Promote Strategic Messaging. How do specific PI efforts tie into overall strategic goals for the community (either those set by the governing body or by other community planning organizations)? Have you cut the number of missed clinic appointments by implementing a texting program that reminds patients of their next appointment? Can you relate your improvements to goals that will directly impact service delivery or health outcomes that will resonate with political leaders?

Recruit a Health Champion. Identify a public health champion who may help to breakdown obstacles/barriers with decisionmakers. This may be a member of the governing entity who has influence with other members or another influential public official. Recruit this person to champion your cause and “arm” them with data points and a constant flow of summaries that he or she can share with colleagues and other officials to help garner support for your efforts.
**Focus on Key Messages.** All messages should map back to three goals at the center of PI:

- Increased efficiency and effectiveness in public health services;
- Responsible use of public dollars and resources; and
- Better community health outcomes.
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Chapter 3

Communicating with the Public and the Media

Taking the performance improvement (PI) message to a broader audience will not only strengthen community ties to your local health department (LHD), but also offer the community at large an opportunity to become involved and invested in your PI efforts and accreditation journey. We have shown how to leverage the stories of your successes and PI efforts to help instill excitement and awareness among staff and governing bodies. These same efforts can communicate how these initiatives relate to community health to a much larger audience. In this chapter, we will discuss how LHDs can leverage community-level relationships with local media, including television, radio, print, Internet, and social media, to help tell the story of PI.

Telling the Performance Improvement Story

Borrowing from the effective national campaign known as “This is Public Health”, LHDs can develop messaging that connects PI to better provide essential public health services. Examples might include shorter wait times at clinics, higher County Health rankings, or upgraded ambulance protocols developed as part of your PI initiative.

Before you dive in, you want to develop a clear plan to help define your audience, your message, and the tactics you will use to launch a successful awareness campaign to help support your efforts. Dealing with media and organizations outside of your department and governing body requires a much more coordinated effort from your team. This can be particularly challenging, since most LHDs do not have dedicated communications staff. As we discussed in
Chapter 1, you will need to identify early on who will be assisting and coordinating your communications efforts. You will want to empower individuals and departments to take the lead on portions of your story while coordinating these efforts through an internal point of contact. This may include generating story ideas, developing key messages, and even promoting outreach to key media and community contacts. Use the Communications Worksheet in Appendix I to help you focus your efforts to have maximum impact on your audience.

**Tactic: Developing Stories That Resonate**

The most effective way to connect practice with the public is to show how your department’s work is relevant in your community. Many times you will want to communicate to audiences only vaguely familiar with the role of public health organizations. This means it will be extremely important to communicate up front why they should care. This is especially true when dealing with reporters on tight deadlines, who are often only concerned about today’s story.

Keenly aware of this constraint, the Kansas City Health Department (KCHD) in Missouri realized that to garner attention for their efforts, they had to talk about PI in ways that make Kansas City pay attention. As a result, KCHD has been effective in gaining media attention by discussing reductions in patient wait times for clinic visits, and improvements in cardiac arrest survival rates following a change in ambulance protocols. Efficiencies in service delivery that also have a direct impact on community health are effective messages to communicate the value of public health to your community.

**Identifying Topics and Messaging**

Using the example of Kansas City’s improvement in the cardiac survival rates following a change in ambulance protocol, let’s look at the steps necessary to identify topics and messaging that will help you be most effective with
audiences outside of your department and governing agencies.

*Choose a topic that will highlight a success that is a direct result of PI activities.*

*Choose the audience who will find this topic most relevant.* In the Kansas City example, that includes local health reporters, city reporters, local hospitals, the local chapter of the American Heart Association, first responders, and even cardiac specialty care centers. You want to target those individuals and organizations that have a vested interest in these results.

*How will you reach this audience?* Once you have determined who you want to reach, you will need to figure out how to get this story in front of them. For the community, you can reach out to local media with highly targeted messaging. (See the next section for more on developing your message.) But to reach organizations, it may be more effective to spread the news through an e-mail or online newsletter. Leverage your website and social media channels (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, etc.) to tout the impact of this improvement.

*Develop your messages.* Once you have identified your audience and how you want to reach them, you can begin to tailor messages that fit both the audience and communication mode. For example, if you want to reach the public through a media story about increased survival rates among cardiac arrest patients, it’s important to remember that all news must have a local angle. So do your homework. How does your data compare across the state, the county, or with neighboring cities? If you can show the difference in survival rates between regions, you have helped the reporter set some kind of context to your results.

*When targeting local organizations with a vested interest in your story, include why this improvement is important to their stakeholders.* This is essential! For instance, the American Heart Association (AHA) would be interested in telling a
story that shows overall directions in death rates due to cardiac arrest. What other data can you supply to help AHA promote their message with your story? Does your announcement coincide with a public campaign that AHA is currently launching or a community awareness event they’ll be hosting? Think about how your efforts may help to strengthen partnerships between your organizations to promote your story.

*Practice, practice; then share, share.* Before using these messages or reaching out to media, make sure that your story is clear and easy for the general public to understand. Data are important, but remember to always tell people why they should care. Tell the story behind the numbers, and run your draft past several different levels of staff for feedback. Tell personal stories. The best stories are told in the first person, by someone who has benefitted from the improvement. In the Kansas City example, if the announcement of the results coincides with a major event (such as Mother’s Day), reach out to the individual or family who can enjoy this time because of the improvements in ambulance protocols. This further demonstrates the personal impact of organizational PI.

*Be prepared to answer follow-up questions from both the media as well as the public.* For larger announcements, consider preparing key staff as well as frontline staff so they can handle inquiries from clients and community partners. Before any story or campaign runs in the media, staff should be alerted about content and venue so that they can become familiar with the topic and direct interested parties to the proper spokesperson. Consider using your intranet or an e-mail alert to share press releases and key messages so that all staff can read from the same script regarding your PI efforts.

**Tactic: Become a Reliable Resource for Local Media**

Local health departments are on the front lines of public health. While most members of your community may not always see the work that you do, they are healthier and safer because of it. In the day-to-day news cycle, this
fact does not readily equate to headline news. But there have been many instances where public health does make national news and where your public health expertise could be an important resource for reporters and the community.

In early 2013, people in 20 states were sickened by a Salmonella outbreak traced to a restaurant in Las Vegas, Nevada. Tracking food-borne illness is often a primary function of local health departments. When there is an outbreak in your jurisdiction, the media are sure to line up for status updates and information to help explain to a concerned public what the means of transmission are and what is being done to contain the threat. Beyond the immediate threat, there is a larger story for your department and your PI activities that would be of great interest to the community.

- Why do these events seem to be happening more often?
- How can I protect myself?
- What is being done to prevent the incidence of food-borne illness?
- Who is inspecting restaurants and food handling practices to ensure public safety?

While the 2013 outbreak may have originated in Nevada, these questions remain relevant to communities across the country. Many LHDs are addressing processes in their PI plans that directly relate to these issues. These questions and the stories that can be developed in answering them offer an opportunity for LHDs to highlight the science behind a public health threat. You can show how your improvement efforts reduce risk in a way that audiences and reporters can understand.

By positioning your department as a reliable source for health information that the media can use to inform the public, LHDs can develop relationships with the media that will go a long way in telling your PI story to a larger audience. In Kansas City, by positioning themselves as a
resource for answers to topical health stories, KCHD has been able to get reporters interested and engaged in their PI activities that can be developed into stories for print and broadcast. In this age of shrinking newsrooms and news budgets, reporters at the local level are less likely to be assigned to specific beats such as health and more likely to be assigned to stories as they come in. Consequently, reporters are generalists. They are less likely to know your story in depth and more likely to only be familiar with information announced in a press release or reported by national outlets.

This makes your department the expert. You become an important resource to not only help the media frame the story with facts and context, but also to point out your connections in the health community are important background to today’s health news. By becoming a “connector” to outside resources, whether they are other providers or even within the academic community, you are more likely to be a critical resource for media. Fostering this relationship increases the likelihood that media contacts will listen to your story pitch about PI or other important milestones in community health.

The New Media Communications Toolbox

In this chapter, we discussed a number of strategies you can use to help break down barriers in communicating performance improvement with the media and the community at large. We showed how you can do this using a wide range of communications tools. This section includes a few practical examples of how to leverage social media in your communications campaign.

Just as you’d share information through an intranet site, using the Internet and social media is a good way to leverage communications efforts across generations, reaching various and multiple audiences in one single campaign. These communication channels also allow you to customize messages for specific audiences with greater
flexibility than more traditional outlets. As the workforce gets younger, these are the types of resources that will have the most impact in communicating to staff and partners. It’s also a unique way to show your governing body how you respond to emerging health threats. And these websites are free—an added bonus!

Case Studies—Tactics in Detail

VIII. Using the Internet and Social Media

K2 Zombie DC
District of Columbia Department of Health, DC

In response to the prevalence of fake marijuana being used among youth in Washington, DC, the DC Department of Health’s Addiction Prevention & Recovery Administration launched the comprehensive social marketing campaign called K2 Zombie DC. This public campaign hosts an Internet site offering content related to the campaign, such as data and resources. There is also a social media component that includes Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. The department uses these sites to announce campaign events and activities happening in Washington, and to alert the public about the youth leadership corps at these events or in the community who provide information or distribute materials about the campaign.

This campaign communicates accurate and reliable health information about how people can protect themselves against a dangerous substance. It is done in formats that the target audience can understand and relate to. By using social media, the campaign allows for a continuous flow of information to the public. These social media sites also invite dialogue with the target population to assure that the message is relevant, culturally sensitive, and linguistically appropriate. They also offer an opportunity to demonstrate to governing bodies and the community at large that PI initiatives are not just focused on the organization initiating them, but also create improvements in responding to developing threats to public health.
Although this particular campaign is a communication tactic to reach the general public, these types of sites can be used in the same way to broadcast your efforts related to PI or accreditation. Send links to the sites to your staff, partners, and governing boards. Encourage their use through e-mails, newsletters, and meetings. Ask these audiences to “Like” or “Follow” your LHD’s campaign on these sites. Make announcements about milestones reached or other such accomplishments by posting messages or photos.

**YouTube**

YouTube can be a highly effective tool to show off your expertise, share knowledge, and publicize your department’s accomplishments. The Orange County Health Department created a YouTube video in both English and Spanish to highlight the work they are doing to improve health in North Carolina (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GY2S9SSFqT4). By communicating on this larger platform in several languages, the department is effectively
reaching audiences across cultures in their community. YouTube videos narrated in languages that reflect the diverse groups in your community can be an effective way of reaching vulnerable populations.

The following are just a few topic ideas that take advantage of materials you may have created for other purposes.

- Put together a creative video highlighting milestones achieved. This video can also be used to present in town hall or council meetings.
- Share slides from presentations that weren’t recorded that highlight achievements and/or your strategic plan related to PI.
- Include links to your YouTube videos on your department website, newsletters, and e-mails.

**Facebook**

Facebook isn’t just for connecting with long-lost friends. Many local health departments are using it to connect with community members of all ages. It’s a great venue to promote from your website as well as in all of your correspondence, particularly in your PI newsletters and presentations. (See the Public Health Seattle and King County page for an example: https://www.facebook.com/KCPubHealth?fref=ts.) As we illustrated in the example from the Washington, DC, health department, Facebook can be an important tool in communicating about health campaigns as well as PI. For maximum impact, keep the following goals in mind when using a Facebook page to communicate:
• Connect and engage with your local community.
• Create a sense of community around your health department’s activities.
• Use your Facebook page to promote other content you create, including webinars, blog articles, or other resources.

**Twitter**

Share your success stories, 140 characters at a time. While Twitter does not allow you to go into great depth, it is useful in driving followers to your website, YouTube channel, or Facebook page. The Lake County Health Department in Illinois uses their Twitter feed to send timely updates and useful links to promote health and well-being in their community. (See their Twitter feed at [https://twitter.com/LakeCoHealth](https://twitter.com/LakeCoHealth)). Twitter can also be leveraged in a public emergency or natural disaster to share important updates to the community. The following are four important goals to consider when deploying a Twitter feed for your department:
• Establish expertise and thought leadership around important public health and community health concerns.
• Provide links to information that promote community health and wellness.
• Serve as an important line of communication for advisories and information in the event of a public emergency.
• Leverage to market and publicize important milestones and accomplishments in community health improvements.

Messaging: A Recap

Now let’s review some of the overarching topics related to PI that should guide your messaging.

Fostering Accountability
An essential part of PI accountability is developing messaging about creating a public health and community partnership through greater community buy-in. These messages will help reaffirm that PI is not limited to internal process management. It’s fundamentally changing how LHDs do business. Example: Process changes in environmental, health, and safety inspections initiated by your department produce a demonstrable benefit to the community.

Building and Enhancing Capacity
As you work on PI with your organization, develop case studies and success stories that demonstrate how PI increases capacity to respond to changing community health needs and to anticipate demand. Example: Extended appointment times and clinic hours are the result of your department’s increasing responsiveness to community needs.

Demonstrating Benefit and Value
LHDs can create messaging about the return on investing in public health by demonstrating good stewardship of
public funds. The results of your PI efforts should help you demonstrate cost savings related to greater efficiencies in service delivery, processes, and program design. *Example:* Through PI, you can demonstrate that increases in childhood vaccinations are tied to improved outreach and patient follow-up practices that ensure timely delivery of care (i.e., patient reminders, home nurse visits, etc.).

You can use the Communications Worksheet in Appendix I to help walk you through your own messaging exercise. But please remember that to reach your audience, you will need partners to increase your reach.

You have successfully completed performance improvement activities that are making a significant difference in how you deliver public health services in your community. Now it’s time to connect with the public, policymakers, the media, community advocates, and stakeholders to tell your story. Local stories about local improvements and local impact will be most interesting to your audience. Turning your performance improvement milestones and data into facts and stories that come alive will make all of your efforts more memorable and meaningful to local stakeholders.

The first step is to identify your audience. In this guide, we have shown you how to translate performance improvement activities into stories that will resonate with various audiences. Those audiences include staff, governing bodies, policymakers, the media, and members of your community. A large number of these groups and individuals support the work that you do—prevention, protection, and safeguarding of public health. But they do not necessarily understand the day-to-day role that the public health department plays in maintaining those services. Use your performance improvement activities to highlight those good works. To get started, go to the Communications Worksheet in Appendix I.

*Good Luck!*
Communications Worksheet

How to Use This Worksheet

The following steps will help you use the worksheet to develop messaging for a campaign to target stories that will resonate with specific audiences.

• **Audience.** Who do you want to reach?

• **Approach.** What type of campaign will you use to reach your audience? You can use a number of tactics ranging from e-mails and meeting presentations to news outlets, social media, or newsletters.

• **Key Interests and Issues.** Identify issues that you know are important to this audience. For staff, it may be issues about collaboration. For a governing entity, it may be issues about budget and improved systems efficiencies.

• **Desired Outcome of Contact.** What is the goal of this contact? How will you measure the success of this contact? For instance, are you looking to create consensus for a PI initiative? Are you seeking political support of your governing entity? Are you looking for a call to action from the community?

• **Messaging Needed.** Now that you have identified your audience, the issues important to them, and what you want to communicate and the desired outcome, you are in a better position to determine what type of messaging will be most effective. Select a lead message to introduce the topic. Be sure to choose one that will resonate with your audience.

• **Action/Communication Mode.** How are you going to reach your audience? Choose the venue or platform where you think you can be most effective. You may
need more than one opportunity to reach the same audience. You may also have to reach several audiences through multiple venues.

Review the Examples Worksheet on how to apply these areas to specific examples. Then use the blank worksheet to begin your own PI communication campaign. Good luck!
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<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Key Interests &amp; Issues</th>
<th>Desired Outcome of Contact</th>
<th>Messaging Needed</th>
<th>Action/Communication Mode</th>
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<td>Support for PI Efforts</td>
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<td>Improved Health Outcomes</td>
<td>Community Engagement</td>
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<td>Social Media (Twitter, Facebook, etc.)</td>
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<td>Topic Relevant to Community Concerns</td>
<td>Leverage traditional media around “Pillar of Public Good” messaging</td>
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<td>Call to Action</td>
<td>Position as a resource for all (e.g., highlight a public information line or online resource to answer all public health needs and questions from the community).</td>
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<td>Outreach</td>
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<td>Positioning as a reliable source for health information to local media</td>
<td>1) Trustworthy 2) Reliable 3) Public Steward 4) Vital Member of the Community</td>
<td>Develop relationships with local television, radio, print, and internet media as a source of reliable health information to support their day-to-day reporting needs.</td>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
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**KEY MESSAGES:**
- Demonstrating value
- Eliminating waste

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**MDCHD GOES LEAN**

Made a big splash at the 2012 Annual Employee Conference, performing a skit that visually demonstrated the 5S Lean concept. The purpose of the skit was to educate all MDCHD employees on the benefits of implementing the 5S process and incorporating Lean methodology into the organization. As an agency that is always looking for ways to improve and become more efficient, Administrator, Dr. Lillian Rivera, felt that Lean would be a perfect fit for the MDCHD. Although the management principles of Lean were first applied in the manufacturing industry, several healthcare entities are singing praise to the benefits it has provided for their organizations. Miami Children’s Hospital (MCH) reports having saved approximately $5 million dollars since the implementation of Lean, only four years ago and predicts many more process improvements and waste elimination that will result in even greater savings. Like MCH, the MDCHD hopes that Lean will be a catalyst for process, service and quality improvement and that its utilization by MDCHD employees will be widespread. It is important for all team members to learn the concepts, how to implement them and the benefits the implementation will bring to the MDCHD.

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**PHABulous Update**

In an effort to ensure the improvement of all county health departments in Florida and under the leadership of the State Surgeon General, Dr. John Armstrong, the State Health Office (SHO) has decided to pursue accreditation as a single entity (state). As a result, the MDCHD will follow the timeline created by the SHO to ensure alignment with all of its peers. As a leader in the process, the MDCHD will assist other CIDs and guide them through the endeavor. For more information about our accreditation process stay tuned for the next Quality Focus issue or contact your Accreditation Coordinator @ Ximena_Lopez@doh.state.fl.us.
KEY TACTIC: Improving customer service through QI initiative

As the face of Public Health in the community, the Miami-Dade County Health Department is tasked with acting as a model for exemplary customer centered service. With a growing emphasis on the importance of high quality service in every organization, the MDCHD's Customer Focus Workgroup created an initiative to evaluate and improve the current customer service standards and processes for the organization. The group has already started work on redefining the standards set for MDCHD employees, identifying additional sources for customer service, and expanding the current customer complaint/feedback system. Training needs have also been identified and an agency-wide training module is underway. The workgroup has been working diligently to ensure that the MDCHD embraces the customer centered service approach and receives high recognition for its delivery of outstanding customer service. An agency-wide customer service improvement plan was created to guide the group in its initiative and to establish goals and responsibilities to be met.

KEY MESSAGE: Demonstrating results through QI

For more information on the initiatives of the Customer Service Workgroup, please contact: MDCHDQuality@don.state.fl.us

KEY TACTIC: Increasing knowledge

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KEY MESSAGE: Demonstrating results through QI

For more information on the initiatives of the Customer Service Workgroup, please contact: MDCHDQuality@don.state.fl.us

LEARN IMPLEMENTATION

5S Competition

Taking five simple steps to organize a workspace is a great way to start the year. The Lean team kicked off their agency-wide implementation by creating a contest in which any individual or group at the MDCHD could easily participate. The 5S competition was meant to get all employees to start thinking Lean and to begin cultivating a culture of waste elimination and efficiency. Competition submissions were accepted through the end of January and two winners will be selected. Several great examples were submitted and many work spaces were improved. Stay tuned for the winners of the 5S competition (to be announced mid-February) and for upcoming Lean contents and activities. For more about your Lean Team you can visit their intranet SharePoint site by clicking HERE.
KEY TACTIC:
Sharing QI tools

Defining Quality Improvement in Public Health

"The underlying premise—and premise—behind improving the performance of a public health department is that doing so results in healthier people and communities." - Riley et al.

The Accreditation Coalition, a group of organizations supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, has recognized the need for a common, clear, and concise definition of Quality Improvement (QI) to promote public health accreditation and quality improvement. In response, a subcommittee was charged with drafting a definition of quality improvement for public health departments and practitioners. In early 2009, after reviewing the appropriate literature and existing definitions, the subcommittee proposed the following definition of QI: Quality improvement in public health is the use of a deliberate and defined improvement process, such as Plan-Do-Check-Act, which is focused on activities that are responsive to community needs and improving population health. It refers to a continuous and ongoing effort to achieve measurable improvements in the efficiency, effectiveness, performance, accountability, outcomes, and other indicators of quality in services or processes which achieve equity and improve the health of the community. (R. Bialik, L. M. Beitzch, A. Cofsky et al., unpublished data, 2009)

Defined this way, QI is a distinct management process and set of tools and techniques that are coordinated to ensure that departments consistently meet their communities' health needs and strive to improve the health status of their populations. This definition builds on the Department of Health and Human Services' recent effort to define quality in public health. A decade ago, the Institute of Medicine proposed a definition of quality that has since been broadly applied in the acute-care sector. A health system's quality improves when significant change is necessary for hospitals, physicians, researchers, and policy makers. Recognizing the importance of similar efforts, a quality improvement field approach that is common to all definitions of quality, the Department of Health and Human Services led an effort to develop what is now known as the Consensus Statement of Quality in the Public Health System. This statement defines quality in public health as "the degree to which policies, programs, services, and research for the improvement of health outcomes and conditions in which the population can be healthy. It also identifies a set of goals that will foster increased quality improvement activities and help achieve quality in public health."

KEY TACTIC:
Defining QI

Quality Learning Corner

Learn more about quality tools you can use! Click below!

- **Control Chart**: More commonly known as Statistical Process Control (SPC), this method is based on the understanding of variation and how it affects the output of any process. It allows you to continuously monitor, analyze, and understand a process. Once you understand the process, you can control and attempt to reduce the process variation.

- **Flow Chart**: Flowcharts describe a process in such detail as possible by graphically displaying the steps in proper sequence. A good flowchart should show all process steps under analysis by the performance improvement team, identify critical process points for control, help explain a problem, and suggest areas for future improvement.

For more information and Quality Improvement Training opportunities, please contact your Performance Management and Quality Improvement Committee at: MDCHQI@mdch.state.mi.us

KEY TACTIC:
Getting "Buy-in"

What QI Training would you be interested in?

In effort to ensure that you have the necessary tools to effectively participate in quality improvement activities, we would like to learn more about the topics you are interested in. Please click on the link below to participate in the survey.

Click HERE to enter survey

Thank you for your participation!
An Integrated Agency

67 County Health Departments come together as one

It takes much more than words to convey an image of an unified agency. Under the leadership of the Surgeon General, Dr. John Armstrong, the state office has a strong focus on ensuring that all county health departments in Florida are working together toward a common vision: To be the healthiest state in the nation.

In an effort to create a path that will lead to accomplishing that vision, the state office has begun to make several changes that will help guide the organization to act as one.

One of the first items on Dr. Armstrong's agenda was to adopt new mission, vision and values (MVV's) that would be relevant and a guiding force for all county health departments in Florida. Although the change in the MVV's was a step toward a more cohesive agency, the state office also believed that it was essential to create a single symbol that would embody the core functions of the FDOH, thus a new statewide logo was created (pictured below). The logo is meant to replace the current FDOH logo and to be used in place of other logos created independently by any county health departments.

Although it takes much more than new MVV's and a common logo to create an integrated agency, the State Office believes the steps taken will help align our agency and promote integration. Several new initiatives such as applying for Public Health Accreditation as a state, creating a State Health Improvement Plan, and an Agency-wide Strategic Plan are all ways in which the State is striving to act as one and to ensure superior service for all people in Florida.

State Office Improvement Initiatives

New MVV's

Mission: To protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated, state, county and community efforts.

Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation.

Values:
- Innovation
- Collaboration
- Accountability
- Responsiveness
- Excellence

Applying for Public Health Accreditation as a State

Statewide Strategic Plan

State Health Improvement Plan

Click HERE to see your SHIP

Quality Resources

American Public Health Association
Public Health Foundation
NACCHO's Quality Improvement Toolkit
Public Health Accreditation Board
Public Health Quality Improvement Exchange

We want your input!

Submit a brief description of a quality improvement tool or initiative that you or your team has implemented in the last month, or an idea for a QI activity you would like to share.

Email Submissions to: NQCEIQuality@doh.state.fl.us, for a chance to be highlighted in the next Quality Focus issue.

We would also like to hear what you think about the Quality newsletter or any story ideas you may have. Please submit all feedback to the email address above.

References


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Appendix III

Resources

Online Resources for Communication
www.naccho.org/picommunications
www.naccho.org/communications

QI Tool Websites:
NACCHO’s Roadmap to a Culture of Quality Improvement
www.qiroadmap.org

NACCHO’s QI Toolkit
www.naccho.org/accreditation

The Public Health Foundation
www.phf.org/qualityimprovement

Public Health Quality Improvement Exchange (PHQIX)
www.phqix.org

Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships
www.naccho.org/mapp
The mission of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) is to be a leader, partner, catalyst, and voice for local health departments in order to ensure the conditions that promote health and equity, combat disease, and improve the quality and length of all lives.