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Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention (CDC)
Atlanta GA 30333

December 14, 2015

Via Email

This letter is in final response to your Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (CDC/ATSDR) Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request of August 18, 2014, for the most recent CDC Communications Plan.

Enclosed in a single PDF file are the records responsive to your request (22 pages).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Katherine Norris".

Handwritten initials in blue ink, possibly "KN".

Katherine Norris
CDC/ATSDR FOIA Officer
Office of the Chief Information Officer
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Enclosure

14-01005-FOIA

BUILDING ON SUCCESS

RAISING THE VISIBILITY OF CDC'S MISSION AND
VALUE TO THE NATION

CDC-WIDE COMMUNICATION PLAN
2011-2015



MAY 2011

PREPARED BY
OFFICE OF THE ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
FOR COMMUNICATION

2011-2015 CDC-WIDE COMMUNICATION PLAN

RAISING THE VISIBILITY OF CDC'S MISSION AND VALUE TO THE NATION

CDC staff are committed to a standard of excellence in apply to everything we do:, preventing disease, protecting the health and safety of people in the US and round the globe, and communicating the value of CDC's work.

This Communication Plan is designed to help CDC foster a working culture where we all do our best and are proud to tell people we work for the best. Strategies, plans, visions, missions, policies all have their role to play. They lay the foundation on which our quality work is built. But these need to be communicated to all of our stakeholders, including staff, public health leaders, partners, policymakers and segments of the public, in ways which they can understand and with which they can relate.

Communication is an essential part of good management and the effective delivery of our scientific and intervention services. This Communication Plan is one of the working tools which will help CDC to navigate through a planned program of greater visibility for what CDC does over the coming years.

Throughout this Communication Plan we set forth our intention to enhance what people know about the important and valuable work we do. CDC and its people will be judged on how well we fulfill this intention.

The responsibility is mine to make sure we communicate our mission and value effectively with everyone.

The responsibility is yours to make sure this has everyone's involvement.

Thomas R. Frieden
Director of CDC and ATSDR

SITUATION

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) must communicate about its overall mission, define its broad work and accomplishments, and explain its value to the nation. The American public needs to understand why they should care—and even how they should act—to safeguard CDC’s capacity to protect health. During the last decade, research has shown that CDC has a well-known, trusted brand – especially when it comes to controlling infectious disease. People have a good association of CDC as being “in the field” and “on the go” rather than working in the laboratory. This perception is reinforced by knowledge of our “disease detectives” tracking down outbreaks. However, less is known about CDC’s work in other health areas and accomplishments which touch our lives every day in the chronic disease, environmental, HIV, and injury areas.

Communicating to educate people about CDC’s important activities and the evidence-based tools available to them helps CDC reach its goal of protecting the health of people everywhere. An overall CDC-wide communication effort is important to everyone at CDC because many of its varied audiences are not aware or have enough information on the scope of CDC’s work and how much is done to protect the health of people around the world.

Several cross-cutting initiatives will help this along: agency initiatives such as Winnable Battles, Vital Signs, and national initiatives such as ACA, CTG, Partnership for Patients and the Prevention Fund. Other groups as well will be helping CDC including the CDC Foundation and CDC Washington Partners Group. However, these initiatives and messages need to be tied together to CDC’s overall communication goals for the agency.

This 2001-2015 CDC-Wide Communication Plan is a visibility initiative for the agency designed to inform and educate its audiences about the broader scope of its valuable work in prevention and is slated to begin in July 2011. Much of this Communication Plan can be implemented with existing resources.

The Strategic Communication Vision for CDC is to protect people’s health through proactive, comprehensive, integrated and evidence-based communication and marketing.

COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

- Educate constituencies on the need for and importance of all of CDC’s work for the nation.
- Reinforce CDC and public health’s value in preventing disease and health care cost savings among existing base of key partners and stakeholders.

- Increase awareness and visibility by using unifying communication themes to better inform audiences of CDC's overall efforts with all audiences.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

1. Use unifying communication themes and messages of:
 - Longer, healthier lives (through prevention and protection of health and safety)
 - Empowering people to make healthy choices (supports personal responsibility and health choices).
 - Saves money, good value for the investment (data-driven prevention efforts save dollars on medical care)
2. Engage all staff as public ambassadors for broader CDC messages, especially leaders and managers.
3. Initiate a media relations effort for agency-level messages with a steady flow of CDC public health-related story proposals and developments that can convey its broader work to a targeted list of mainstream news media.
4. Engage fully all communication channels (e.g. social media) and third-party endorsers where opportunities exist to convey important CDC messages matched to key audience groups.
5. Identify opportunities for CDC leadership and management to become involved with, present to, and be supportive of key groups and organizations relevant to the broader CDC base of audiences.

AUDIENCES

- CDC leaders and managers
- CDC employees (ambassadors)
- Other public health leaders (national, state and local levels)
- Partners (key national organizations, key sector organizations, HHS)
- Funders (elected policy-makers, taxpayers)
- Influencers (thought leaders, news media)
- Targeted US public and global stakeholders
- Families who make health choices

COMMUNICATION PROGRAM

MESSAGING

Strategy 1: Use unifying communication themes of empowering people to live longer, healthier lives, putting science into action to protect health and safety, and that CDC and public health are best buys that can save our children from being less healthy than their parents.

Only by speaking with one “voice” can CDC harness the enormous power of our collective communication capabilities. Solid, well-considered messages, presented in “clear communication” language, are essential for any successful proactive strategic communication program.

CDC’s brand is not important because we want to be famous. When CDC issues a health warning we want—we need—people to listen and act based on the weight of our words. The impressions and messages CDC presents really do matter. So does making sure they get to the right people. That’s why communication efforts are so necessary and why, coordinated together, will have added impact.

Messages are a few carefully prepared, concise, and memorable thoughts that align with CDC objectives and differentiate CDC from others. They are the thoughts CDC most wants its audiences to remember. Health topic-specific messages often miss opportunities to bring attention to the importance of CDC’s work overall. Agency-level messages about CDC delivered alongside health messages will increase our impact.

In order to be credible, good messages are supported by evidence that includes statistics, trend lines, quantifications, and trusted third-party endorsements. Evidence should be adjusted as new data are received. Still, the core agency-level messages remain constant. The repetition that naturally arises from such consistency is the source of genuine impact for any successful communication program.

Tactically, good messages are:

- Provable statements of truth
- Few in number - typically less than four
- Constructed of simple, everyday language that everyone can understand
- Able to engage, educate and inspire action

Strategy 1: CDC-Wide Messages

- **CDC protects your health and safety so people can lead longer, healthier and more productive lives.**

- *CDC helps people take personal responsibility for their lives and the health of their families by providing the information they need to choose health.*
- *Natural disasters and deadly disease outbreaks can affect any of us. Chronic diseases kill tens of millions per year in every community, including yours.*
- *CDC is your public health 911 warning and response system. It must be there when you need it.*
- **CDC prevents disease by putting science into action-we move beyond research to protect people's health and safety.**
 - *CDC attacks emerging threats, supports state, tribal and local health do their work, and provides information for guidance and policy decision making.*
 - *CDC learns and passes on what works (science and intervention, programs and practices).*
 - *CDC informs, you decide, we act together.*
- **CDC and public health are best buys and can save our children from a health debt. (Theme: save money, good value for investment)**
 - *Money saved on health care costs can be invested in business and communities, creating jobs and building the global economy.*
 - *Investing in prevention can cut health care costs.*
 - *Prevention is cheaper than treatment. Savings from reducing chronic and infectious diseases can save our children from being the first generation to be less healthy than their parents.*

NEEDS FOR COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY

- Knowledge –broad awareness of agency-level messages and develop new ones as opportunities arise
- Skill building – communication training and practice for leaders and managers
- Opportunity – outreach/engagement strategy, preparation for defense, and include CDC agency-level messages at all opportunities
- Leadership reinforcement – announcing and making part of CDC culture the incorporation of agency-level public health mission language at every opportunity (in the community, at work assignments, in the field, talking to key audiences formally or informally, etc.)
- Constantly enlisting CDC staff to become “ambassadors” for the larger mission from reinforcement by leaders and managers at all levels to all levels of staff.
- Standard CDC-wide message language – incorporated and used consistently in all publications, speeches, staff orientation, EIS training, campaign launches, performance evaluation, on internal materials and in other communication.

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Strategy 2: Engage all staff as public ambassadors for broader CDC messages, especially leaders and managers.

Every employee is a potential goodwill ambassador for CDC. If they each tell a few people something good about the agency first, and then about the importance of their work and those people pass the word on to others, many different and important types of people will receive CDC's broader messages.

This requires top-level commitment from leaders and managers to engage in making this happen. It also requires providing the necessary flow of ongoing communication through meetings, spoken and written word, and through employee communication vehicles.

Leaders and managers must make time for activities that help staff understand that it is everyone's responsibility to spread these messages for CDC and why this is relevant to their individual work and affects the continued support of it.

Our staff has to know they are valued and have a valuable role to play, and this needs to be conveyed to all levels of staff. Clear, concise and relevant communication is needed by managers to keep staff interested and motivated. CDC's broader agency-level messages need to be present in every project of the agency, and every partner communication, and every encounter with targeted audiences.

Staff needs to have the tools and reminders to become involved and stay involved with spreading broader agency-level messages and CDC leaders have to be open about why this is so important.

Strategy 2: Employee Engagement Tactics

What are we going to do?	Why are we doing it?	When?	Who will be responsible?	Who is our target?	What is the cost/ what is needed?
Announce at CDC Employee Apprec & Honor Awards. (Dr. Frieden)	Staff is aware of what is going on and relay accurately to others.	June 30, 2011	OADC, CoS	CDC Staff	Existing resources/Dr. F speech
CDC Connects articles	Reach more staff to kickoff initiative, keep staff informed and involved	July 1, 2011, then periodic	OADC	CDC Staff	Existing resources/Writing and scheduling
Develop "What you can do" guide	To explain what staff need to do	July 11, 2011	OADC	CDC Staff	Existing resources/Writing and GovD.
CIO and Div. Dirs tap a champion to determine practice opportunities	Train staff to convey messages within most activities	July, 2011	CIO and Div. Directors	CDC Staff	Existing resources/CIO and Div Dir meet and assign champion. Champion activities identified, implemented and reported.
Present at Mgt Council, ADPs, ADCSs and Excellence in Science	Increase awareness and enlist support	July-Sept. 2011	OADC, CoS, CDC leaders	CDC leaders and managers	Existing resources/presentation, scheduling and speaker
Incorporate into 65 th anniversary activities	Reinforce importance and messages	July 2011, throughout year	OADC, CoS	CDC Staff	Existing resources/presentations and talking points in activities.
Online calendar of what's happening	Reinforce importance of initiative	Develop 8/11, Ongoing	CoS, OADC, CIO leaders, ADCSs	CDC Staff	Existing resources/coordination of information and routine dissemination through email and link on CDC Connects
Push out screen saver with messages/ put posters in buildings	Awareness of messages	July 2011	OADC	CDC Staff	TBD/create and distribution through CDC.
Include in agency orientation, EIS training	Reinforce importance of initiative	Jan 2012, ongoing	HR, Workforce and Career Dev	CDC Staff	Existing resources/scheduling annually

DISTINCT EARNED MEDIA PROGRAM

Strategy 3: Initiate a media relations effort for agency-level messages with a steady flow of CDC public health-related story proposals and developments that can convey its unique work to a targeted list of mainstream news media.

The value of earned media, while only a part of this plan, cannot be overestimated because it cannot be purchased. As a result, earned media or publicity bears the implicit approval of the media in which it appears. CDC research indicates that readers and viewers still attach more credibility to news columns or on news programs because it is not paid advertising.

Simply put, earned media or publicity is news -- whether it is in print, online or on radio and television. Positive publicity has a positive impact on CDC audiences. Over time, a proactive publicity program can meaningfully enhance the public profile of an organization by presenting key messages. Increasing an already favorable profile has numerous benefits, ranging from broad public understanding, the need for continued funding of critical activities, to providing public acceptance and support for recommendations in times of crisis.

PROACTIVE MEDIA RELATIONS

Following a review of current media relations efforts, CDC will develop and build additional relationships with key reporters and aggressively pitch agency-level stories. These stories would illustrate one or more of the CDC messages and be supported by program-level proofs.

It is important to note that the object of effective, proactive media relations is not about media *coverage*. It's about delivering messages: a disciplined, message-based strategic media program that can be measured for effectiveness based on message pull-through rather than just volume of coverage. In addition to the robust topic-specific media relations work that is done daily throughout CDC, a commitment to aggressively pitching stories focused on the agency-level messages will be the engine that drives this program.

Strategy 3: Earned Media Relations Tactics

What are we going to do?	Why are we doing it?	When?	Who will be responsible?	Who is our target?	What is the cost/what's needed?
Develop targeted media list and series of "pitches" (Appendices A & B)	Push out agency level messages we need people to know	Calendar by July 2011. Calendar to be developed each year.	OADC	All audiences	Existing resources/Develop calendar, source stories and make pitches
Target media for interviews that CDC wants to be in. Focus on reporters of key national media for the CDC story.	Reach audiences in media they see	Calendar and rollout starting July 2011. Calendar to be developed each year.	OADC	All audiences	Existing resources/Develop hit list, calendar, source stories and make pitches (samples: Appendix A)
Leverage current events and breaking news as openings for telling CDC's broader story.	Tie into news and issues getting attention.	When these occur	OADC	All audiences	Existing resources/Develop schedule of pitches to current events
Tie CDC messages/stories to others' media activities: Prevention Fund, CDC Foundation, CDC W	Consistency of messages, amplify messages	When these occur	OADC	All audiences	Existing resources/Coordinate with current activities
Enhance relationships with key media and CDC leaders	Higher visibility and presentation of messages	Calendar for approaches	OADC, ADCSs	Media	Existing resources/Prepare schedule and make approaches for leadership
Develop E-media effort to staff, media and other targets	Reach audiences in media they see	Begin July 2011, calendar to be developed each year	OADC	All audiences	Existing resources/CDC.gov, podcasts, blogger webinars, 2-way comm. opps., target list of social media sites to send to.

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS AND THIRD-PARTY ENDORSERS

Strategy 4: Engage fully all communication channels (e.g. social media) and third-party endorsers where opportunities exist to convey important CDC messages matched to key audience groups.

Communication links all of our activities; from the time we conceive a plan or intervention to the time when we deliver information to those who need it. Simply making information available can be easier with many new communication channels to reach CDC's target audiences for this initiative – but only if CDC uses them effectively. The importance of communicating CDC's agency-level messages is in reaching across traditional boundaries, internal and external, to include usual and new partners and stakeholders.

Effective communication channels allow the rapid and broad spread of agency-level messages along with topic-specific work. The importance of raising the visibility of CDC's mission and value to the nation should be recognized by everyone at the agency. There will always be people who are missed, or who don't take the opportunities offered. However, the Internet, social media and our broad partner and media networks allow us to reach more people than ever before.

There are many public health, business and governmental supporters who want to help CDC communicate the value of its work. Identifying and offering opportunities to communicate with CDC will add greater amplification of CDC messages. These ambassadors have a wider opportunity in some ways for communicating CDC messages and passing on relevant information.

Strategy 4: Communication Channels and Endorsers Tactics

What are we going to do?	Why are we doing it?	When?	Who will be responsible?	Who is our target?	What is the cost/what's needed?
Tie in agency level messages to CDC and CIO public facing pages	To present messages consistently	September 2011, updated annually	OADC, CIO web masters	Publics	Existing resources/Determine opportunities and placement onto sites
Work with key partners to incorporate CDC messages into their work	To present messages broadly and consistently	Ongoing	OSTLTS, CoS, CIO leaders	Agency partners	Existing resources/
Work with CDC Foundation and CDC W on efforts to reach influencers	To coordinate efforts to present value messages from influencers to other influencers	Started May 2011, Ongoing	OADC, CoS, CDC leadership, CDC Foundation, CDC W	Key influencers in business, policymakers and legislators	Resources of CDC Foundation/ Plan and implement program
Establish E-communication network with key partners and influentials	Set up effective 2-way communication and raise awareness of needs	August 2011, then ongoing	OSTLTS, CoS, CDC leadership, OADC, CDC Foundation, CDC W	Key influencers	TBD/Plan and implement 2-way communication opportunities
CDC ads on Google pages targeted to key audiences	Greater delivery of agency-level messages to key audience targets	August 2011, then quarterly	CoS, OADC, CDC Foundation	Key influencers	\$60,000/year/TBD/ Schedule and implement
Incorporate messages into all CDC GovD quarterly	To present messages broadly and consistently	8/11, then 2 weeks every quarter	OADC	Key partner audiences	Existing resources
Online Calendar of activities	To coordinate efforts and avoid duplication.	August 2011, ongoing updates	CoS, OADC	CDC leaders, CDC Foundation, CDC W	Existing resources

GREATER LEADER AND MANAGER VISIBILITY

Strategy 5: Identify opportunities for CDC leadership and management to become involved with, present to, and be supportive of key groups and organizations relevant to the broader CDC base of audiences.

Communication is not something that is done *to* people; it should involve meaningful dialogue with important audiences. It is the opportunity by which these audiences understand the full commitment of CDC leaders and managers to its work and the value of that work. Many leaders and managers are good communicators, but all will need additional skill-based training if this Communication Plan is to work. Identifying and offering this training will be part of this Communication Plan.

CDC cannot underestimate the additional impact that its leaders and managers can have when they are out in the field, responding to requests, or giving professional or scientific presentations. These opportunities can be amplified to deliver CDC-wide messages through some additional planned communication efforts.

As current and future leaders for CDC, it is essential that leaders and managers play a greater role in representing the agency overall, not just their individual CIOs or program. There are hundreds of encounters that occur every year and these are opportunities to be certain agency-level messages are communicated.

Strategy 5: Leaders and Managers Visibility Tactics

What are we going to do?	Why are we doing it?	When?	Who will be responsible?	Who is our target?	What is the cost/what's needed?
Train leader and managers to work in agency-level messages to speeches, communiqués and articles	Target audiences will be exposed to agency-level level and topic-specific messages about CDC's work	When these occur	OADC, ADCSs	Leaders and managers	Existing resources
Develop a "stump speech" with presentation for CDC leaders and managers at OD, center and division levels	Consistency of messages	July 2011, refreshed every 6 months	CoS, OADC	Leaders and managers	Existing resources
Provide Communication Resilience Executive Development Training ("CRED"). Also media training.	Higher visibility and presentation of messages	Schedule select leaders, refresh yearly	OADC, CoS, ADCSs	Leaders and managers	CRED training in-house, outside cost TBD/ Schedule and train
Enhance relationships with key media and CDC leaders	Higher visibility and presentation of messages	Calendar for approaches	OADC	Media	Existing resources/Make approaches for leadership
In-market desk-side media briefing with business, health and economics and features editors	Familiarize media with broader CDC work, push out agency level messages we need people to know	Calendar coordinated with leader/manager trips	OADC, CoS, CIO ADCS	Media	Existing resources/Schedule around trip calendar with in-market media
Conversion of speeches into guest op-eds	Higher visibility and presentation of messages	Calendar coordinated with leader/manager speeches	ADCSs, OADC	Media	Existing resources/Make approaches for leadership
Pitches to media can be done that indicate what experts CDC has available to present its story	Incorporate into opportunities for comment/interviews by acknowledged scientific experts	Pitch availability of experts to media quarterly each year.	OADC, ADCSs	Media	Existing resources/Pitch availability opportunities to media no less than

and to comment with agency-level messages.					quarterly.
Schedule CDC leaders and managers to speak at organizational and national venues that may not be normal ones for public health to convey the CDC story directly to business audiences and other influencers	Reach key business, economic and policymaker platforms to educate and inform about CDC's work	Calendar of appropriate venues. (Appendix B)	CoS, OADC, ADCSs	Key influencers	Travel resources/Develop and make approaches for speaking engagements.

USE OF CDC'S PRODUCTS AND MATERIALS

- Incorporate the agency-level messages into:
 - CDC scientific publications (MMWR, EID, PCD)
 - Social media products (websites, podcasts, videos, Facebook, Tweets, etc)
 - CDC Connects articles
 - Campaign materials (print, posters, trainings, meetings, PowerPoint, etc.)
- Provide agency-level messages to all CDC staff in multiple ways multiple times (e.g. screen savers, posters, on business cards, announcements, reminders, etc).

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Prevention successes
- Employee commitment (awareness and engagement)
- Reputation (internal and external awareness of value, trust and satisfaction)
- Message penetration (media and partner uptake)
- Target media successes

APPENDIX

A. MEDIA RELATIONS

Target media list includes, but not limited to:

- CBS, ABC, NBC News
- Today Show
- The View
- Congressional Quarterly
- US Federal News
- Huffington Post
- Washington Post
- USA Today
- New York Times
- Wall Street Journal
- Major market newspapers, e.g. Atlanta, Chicago, New York City, Baltimore, Los Angeles, Dallas/Houston, Miami
- American City Business Journals in key market
- Parade Magazine
- Nation's Health

(Media relations branch to add to this)

B. POTENTIAL TARGETED STORIES AND PITCHES

Media relations will develop media “pitches” that specifically tell the broader CDC story to pull through agency-level messages important to the communication plan. Such stories could build on the public desire for health care savings and more access, promoting trend data, stories of what CDC is doing globally and in other areas besides infectious disease, stories that concretely discuss prevention and the need for this investment. The list of media would contain key influential bloggers as well as important traditional media. A grid for pitches may include:

MESSAGE	STORY PROPOSAL/ANGLE	TARGET(S)
CDC and public health are best buys and can save our children from a	Today's youth may be the first generation to be less healthy than their parents. What are the generations to come facing in	<i>Parade magazine</i> or other large circulation media

health debt.	terms of health and how could prevention today help them tomorrow and save health care dollars.	
CDC puts science into action.	What types of information has CDC provided in the last few years that give new direction for people to be healthier. Identify people who have done something different because of CDC information.	<i>New York Times or other major newspaper.</i>
CDC protects your health and safety so people can live longer, healthier lives	Top 10 worries that keep Dr. Frieden up at night and what we know can be done about it.	<i>David Letterman Show Matt story Pitch to Today Show</i>

C. SELECTED SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Target speaking engagements includes, but not limited to:

- The Washington Business Group on Health
- The National Press Club
- The National Council of State Legislators
- American Public Health Association
- Rotary and other business groups in major markets
- The Goizetta Business School Dean's Speakers Series at Emory University
- "Third Thursday" Speaker Series at Georgia State University's Terry School of Business in Atlanta and other prominent university business venues.
- Any opportunity where major media are present

(List and calendar to be developed each year.)

D. STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION MATRIX 2011-2015

(Attach Leadership and Management through Strategic Communication CDC: 2011-2015 matrix).

(Expand and turn landscape and make it the size of page.)



Grid legend:

- Unifying themes –How we communicate our vision (prevention, leadership, value)
- Key rationale –Why we care about prevention, leadership & value
- Mandates –Benchmark to the best; our quality performance standards
- Needs—What CDC needs to carry out mandates (knowledge, skills, & opportunities to deliver communication)
- Key audiences –Reaching those who need the information for decision making (influencers, individuals, funders, media, partners, employees)

- Key messages –Overarching CDC messages, included in issue message
- Products –Mix of traditional science and new communication marketing
- Performance measures –Short term and long term benefits to the agency