

Promoting Your Public Report: A Hands-on Guide Contents

Purpose

The suggested approaches and template materials in this toolkit are intended for use with the media, both in traditional settings (printed newspapers, broadcasts on radio and television) and online avenues (news Web sites, bloggers and podcasters, social media). The materials have been compiled for modification and use by Chartered Value Exchanges and others who produce public reports comparing health care quality, cost, patient experience, and other aspects of value. The intent is to help communities increase awareness and use of their public reports by consumers and other important audiences in each local community.

Toolkit Resources

- 1a. Overall Communication Plan: Strategic Considerations
- 1b. Overall Coordinated Communication Plan Template
- 2a. Opportunities for Marketing
- 2b. Health Observances Calendar 2011
- 3a. Engaging Key Stakeholders in the Release of Your Public Report: Strategic Considerations
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- 3c. Newsletter Article Template for Use by Employers/Health Plans
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7. Using Social Media: Strategic Considerations
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- 9a. Evaluating the Impact of Coordinated Communication Activities: Strategic Considerations
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Overall Communication Plan: Strategic Considerations

Purpose

To increase the chances that people (e.g., consumers or key audiences such as pregnant women, people with diabetes, new employees, or newcomers to your community) know about your public report and use it for decisionmaking, your Collaborative will need to communicate key messages multiple times through multiple channels. The purpose of an Overall Communication Plan is to help your Collaborative clarify its communication goals and related strategies and activities, then implement that plan to effectively promote the public report.

Considerations

Communication Is Essential But Not Simple. There is no value in producing a public report comparing health care quality if no one knows about it and if they do not know that variation in health care quality is a problem they should be concerned about. People need to know about variation in care and why it matters and learn about your public report before they can use it to make more informed health care decisions. Thus, engaging in communication is an *essential* part of the public reporting process.

Challenges associated with coordinated communication to promote a public report typically include the following:

- **Community collaboratives often have ambitious goals with aggressive work plans, yet operate with limited financial resources and a small number of staff people.** A coordinated plan will help ensure that communication activities support important goals of the Collaborative, clarify who will engage in each activity, and help with prioritizing to ensure best use of limited time and money. This approach can extend your communication reach by working with and through members and allies of your Collaborative.
- **What, when, and how to communicate about a public report need to fit the unique circumstances in that local area.** Communication plans need to reflect your local market and Collaborative structure, stage of report development, public report content, opinion leaders' attitudes about performance measurement and reporting, and other current events and issues. Each region has many potential topics and angles for promoting a public report and weaving messages about that public report into communication about external events and activities. An effective coordinated communication plan should be customized to fit your Collaborative.
- **Reporters tend to look for controversy or conflict in news stories as a way to grab the audience's attention.** In contrast, the collaborative model to improving health care quality may be more successful with positive, inclusive messages (e.g., "Everyone can learn from this report" or "We all have room to improve" or "Each of us has a role in helping to improve health care quality"). Reporters may prefer divisive angles or approaches such as: "Look up who is below average" or "Use this report to avoid bad doctors or hospitals" or "Dr. Jones thinks this public report is wrong/harmful to patient care." Smart communication involves

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Resource 1a: Overall Communication Plan: Strategic Considerations

developing and using shared key messages about the public report, cultivating trusted leaders in your community to be credible spokespeople, and working with reporters to reveal interesting news angles that do not conflict with the goals of your Collaborative.

With careful planning, such communication challenges can be managed. You will need to think through your goals and objectives, as well as related strategies and specific activities. In other words, to reduce the risk associated with the challenges above, engage in coordinated communication planning, customize your approach, and collaborate on the message.

Opportunities To Promote Your Public Report Are Everywhere. As you consider ways to raise awareness of your public report, think of ways to use community activities and events to discuss the relevant content of your public report, key milestones associated with producing your public report that are worthy of announcing to show continued progress, and potential allies who can help spread the word about your public report. For example:

- Community activities and events present many opportunities to market your public report. Tap into the monthly national campaigns to raise awareness about certain health topics. If your report addresses heart disease or cardiac care, for example, work with the local chapter of the American Heart Association to ensure that their announcements or events in February mention your public report as an important resource to ensure that local patients get quality heart care. To spur your thinking about how to make the most of such opportunities, see the strategy for Opportunistic Marketing (Toolkit Resource 2a) and the list of national events and observances (Toolkit Resource 2b).
- Your Collaborative's work plan can be used to identify internal milestones that could be the topic of announcements to the media, other opinion leaders (e.g., your member organizations, elected officials), and your community via emailed newsletters and social media. Such announcements may not make the evening news but are important in showing the progress your Collaborative is making. Examples might include signing agreements with key partners, securing a major grant, completing validation of data or first-round results, starting quality improvement work that complements your public report and, publishing an updated version of your public report.
- Many professionals communicate about health in your region. Consider expanding the notion of media and reporters to include not only people associated with newspapers, radio, and TV, but also those who write for health-related Web sites and blogs, as well as communication staff within State medical associations, State hospital associations, large employers, health plans, and community groups. The partner organizations who support and participate in your Collaborative can also be a great resource for your communication activities. Many have Web sites, plus newsletters to employees and customers or members, in which they could share information about your public report. Some engage in activities, such as wellness fairs, that present a natural setting for promoting your public report.

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Resource 1a: Overall Communication Plan: Strategic Considerations

Review the resources in this Communication Toolkit for more ideas and templates to help you make the most of potential communication partners.

It's Never Too Soon To Start Your Coordinated Communication. Even if you do not yet publish a public report, there is value in building awareness about the need for performance measurement, accountability, and shared information about health care in your region. Too many people continue to be unaware of quality problems in health care. Communicating about the problem can:

- Expand awareness of the need for the products and services of your Collaborative.
- Build anticipation for the public report that your Collaborative is developing.
- Create opportunities for announcements from your Collaborative along the way: progress made, milestones accomplished, and discussion of tradeoffs and reasons behind decisions made in the process.
- Increase communitywide discussion about health care quality and the performance measurement and public reporting process, which can result in better mutual understanding and trust in the collaborative process (and eventually trust in your public report).

The Overall Coordinated Communication Plan template (Resource 1b) can help you think through effective ways to promote your public report, with particular emphasis on coordinated approaches to media relations.

NOTE: Based on the strategic considerations in Resource 1(a), this 12-month plan identifies internal and external milestones. This plan should be prepared in advance, then refined and augmented on an ongoing basis. To use this template, customize each of the elements to fit your local circumstances, priorities, or goals. The “example” content here is provided solely to illustrate how this tool could be used and spur ideas for your Collaborative’s plan. This template is not implying a one-size-fits-all approach.

Communication Goals and Objectives

(for example...)

1. Build awareness of the [*name of public report*] among [*target audiences, such as stakeholders/members, reporters, elected officials, specific patient groups*].
2. Increase understanding of problems in health care quality, cost, and efficiency in this region, and how the public report will help address the need.
3. Change organizational approaches and personal behavior to spur use of the public report to improve health care quality and cost in this region.

Communication Strategies

(for example...)

1. Establish and promote effective messages about the [*name of public report*] to enable clear and consistent use of those messages by Collaborative staff, stakeholders, and community opinion leaders.
2. Position the [*name of public report*] as the source of trusted information for everyone to make more informed decisions about quality, cost-effective health care in this region.
3. Establish and expand the ways the public report is promoted in the community, emphasizing organizations (and their newsletters, Web sites, and other communication methods) who can place the report in front of key audiences at the specific time when health care decisions are made (e.g., open enrollment).

Activities

(for example...)

1. Engage Collaborative stakeholders to become partners in communication about the public report, through participation in the development of key messages and ongoing communication activities.
2. Develop shared messages regarding the public report and the need it addresses, and train staff and spokespeople from key stakeholder groups to use the messages.
3. Engage in a coordinated media campaign (**see pages X-X**) to earn frequent mentions of the public report in local print, broadcast, or online media.
4. Work with at least three local employers and one health plan to link the public report to their internal company Web site, open enrollment or benefits materials, and provider directory to enable easy use of the public report by employees, enrollees, and other consumers.

COORDINATED MEDIA CAMPAIGN

(The content in this template is for illustrative purposes only. To use this plan, first customize the content to fit your Collaborative.)

JANUARY 2011

Topic	Who, sources	Media – release	Media – individual pitches	Media – op-ed/letter to editor	Media – events	Media – other (video, photos, social)	Newsletter template article (for Alliance participants’ use)
<p>Internal Milestone: New data agreements signed with local health plans and self-insured employers, kudos to these partners, what it means for improved public reporting in the future</p>	<p>Bill Lauden (employer), Dr. Adams (Main St. Clinic) and Britt Hauser (BlueCross)</p>	<p>Send to members, media, elected officials</p> <p>Post on Web</p>	<p>Pitch to Business Journal reporter</p>	<p>(Op-Ed to Biz Journal if reporter pitch doesn’t result in an article)</p>	<p>none</p>	<p>Note on Twitter</p> <p>Note on Facebook</p>	<p>None, but mention in Collaborative’s monthly newsletter to the community</p>
<p>External Opportunity (1): Cervical Cancer Screening Month</p> <p>Highlight women’s health resources on Web site (one place for best info); go to public report for related ratings</p>	<p>Monthly “expert” column bylined by local M.D. or nurse</p> <p>(include video links in column)</p> <p>Consumer perspective (Jane Compton?)</p>	<p>none</p>	<p>Email to bloggers re using the public report to learn about women’s health</p>	<p>Send column to community papers who run it each month</p> <p>Link any published columns to Web site</p>	<p>none</p>	<p>Columnist photo</p> <p>Short videos on public report as resource: 1) columnist 2) consumer</p> <p>Post both on YouTube, Twitter, Facebook</p>	<p>500-word article template based on “expert” column</p> <p>100-word article template</p> <p>Both have link to: 1) public report 2) videos on YouTube</p> <p>Send to members’ communication staff</p>
<p>External Opportunity (2): Healthy Weight Week (January 16-22)</p> <p>Encourage sticking to New Year’s Resolutions</p>	<p>Op-ed from Collaborative exec director and local M.D.</p>	<p>none</p>	<p>Email to bloggers re obesity risk and report as resource</p>	<p>Op-ed (obesity risk, public report as heart care/ diabetes resource)</p>	<p>none</p>	<p>Note on Twitter</p> <p>Note on Facebook</p>	<p>None, but include in Collaborative monthly newsletter to the community</p>

FEBRUARY 2011

Topic	Who, sources	Media – release	Media – individual pitches	Media – op-ed/letter to editor	Media – event(s)	Media – other (video, photos, social)	Newsletter template article (for Alliance participants’ use)
<p>Internal Milestone: Kickoff of Informed Decision-Making pilot program in three medical groups</p> <p>Highlight how this gives patients a voice in their care, tie to public report content</p>	<p>CEOs of each medical group, plus consumer group leader</p>	<p>Send to members, media, elected officials</p> <p>Post on Web</p>	<p>Pitch to consumer issues editor of city newspaper</p>	<p>none</p>	<p>none</p>	<p>Note on Twitter</p> <p>Note on Facebook</p>	<p>None, but mention in Collaborative’s monthly newsletter to the community</p>
<p>External Opportunity (1): American Heart Month</p> <p>Highlight heart health resources on Web site (one place for best info); go to public report for ratings on heart disease care</p>	<p>Monthly “expert” column bylined by local M.D. or nurse</p> <p>(include video links in column)</p> <p>Consumer perspective (Bob Mann?)</p>	<p>none</p>	<p>Email to bloggers re using the public report to compare care for heart disease</p>	<p>Send column to community papers who run it each month</p> <p>Link published columns to Web site</p>	<p>none</p>	<p>Columnist photo</p> <p>Short videos on public report as resource: 1) columnist 2) consumer</p> <p>Post on YouTube, Twitter, Facebook</p>	<p>500-word article template</p> <p>100-word article template</p> <p>Both have link to: 1) public report 2) videos on YouTube</p> <p>Send to members’ communication staff</p>
<p>External Opportunity (2): Cardiovascular Professionals Week (February 13-19)</p> <p>Recognize clinics and hospitals that score well in heart care on public report</p>	<p>Collaborative exec director and local M.D. and hospital leader</p>	<p>Send to members, media, elected officials</p> <p>Post on Web</p>	<p>Engage clinics & hospitals in reaching out to media to get coverage</p>	<p>none</p>	<p>none</p>	<p>Note on Twitter</p> <p>Note on Facebook</p>	<p>None, but include in Collaborative monthly newsletter to the community</p>

MARCH 2011

TOPIC	Who, sources	Media – release	Media – individual pitches	Media – op-ed/letter to editor	Media – event(s)	Media – other (video, photos, social)	Newsletter template article (for Alliance participants’ use)
<p>Internal Milestone: Board decides to include results for 25 more clinics in the next public report</p>	<p>Board chair (Dr. Raytol), state medical assn leader, & collaborative exec director</p>	<p>Send to members, media, elected officials Post on Web</p>	<p>Work with medical societies to get articles in their newsletters</p>	<p>none</p>	<p>none</p>	<p>Note on Twitter Note on Facebook</p>	<p>None, but mention in Collaborative’s monthly newsletter to the community</p>
<p>External Opportunity (1): Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month Highlight colon cancer screening resources on Web site (one place for best info); go to public report for ratings on colon cancer screening</p>	<p>Monthly “expert” column bylined by local M.D. or nurse (include video links in column) Consumer perspective (Jill Lynd)</p>	<p>none</p>	<p>Email to bloggers re using the public report to compare colon cancer screening</p>	<p>Send column to community papers who run it each month Link published columns to Web site</p>	<p>none</p>	<p>Columnist photo Short videos on public report as resource: 1) columnist 2) consumer Post both on YouTube, Twitter, Facebook</p>	<p>500-word article template 100-word article template Both have link to: 1) public report 2) videos on YouTube Send to members’ communication staff</p>
<p>External Opportunity (2): One Year Anniversary of Health Reform -- “Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act” (PPACA) becoming federal law (March 23) Elements of greatest interest to local community, changes in progress, vision for future (with ties to public report)</p>	<p>Collaborative exec director & leader(s) from employer, health plan, provider and consumer group</p>	<p>Media advisory to announce public forum and speakers</p>	<p>Outreach to specific reporters (including public TV to film it) & bloggers to encourage their attendance</p>	<p>Op-ed to primary city newspaper</p>	<p>Community forum on status of changes due to PPACA, & tie to purpose of public report</p>	<p>Video feed of forum on Web site Note on Twitter Note on Facebook</p>	<p>500-word article template & 100-word article template (both with link to public report) Send to members’ communication staff Include in Collaborative monthly newsletter</p>

APRIL 2011

TOPIC	Who, sources	Media – release	Media – individual pitches	Media – op-ed/letter to editor	Media – event(s)	Media – other (video, photos, social)	Newsletter template article (for Alliance participants’ use)
<i>Internal Milestone:</i>							
<i>External Opportunity:</i>							

MAY 2011

TOPIC	Who, sources	Media – release	Media – individual pitches	Media – op-ed/letter to editor	Media – event(s)	Media – other (video, photos, social)	Newsletter template article (for Alliance participants’ use)
<i>Internal Milestone:</i>							
<i>External Opportunity:</i>							

JUNE 2011

TOPIC	Who, sources	Media – release	Media – individual pitches	Media – op-ed/letter to editor	Media – event(s)	Media – other (video, photos, social)	Newsletter template article (for Alliance participants’ use)
<i>Internal Milestone:</i>							
<i>External Opportunity:</i>							

JULY 2011

TOPIC	Who, sources	Media – release	Media – individual pitches	Media – op-ed/letter to editor	Media – event(s)	Media – other (video, photos, social)	Newsletter template article (for Alliance participants’ use)
<i>Internal Milestone:</i>							
<i>External Opportunity:</i>							

AUGUST 2011

TOPIC	Who, sources	Media – release	Media – individual pitches	Media – op-ed/letter to editor	Media – event(s)	Media – other (video, photos, social)	Newsletter template article (for Alliance participants’ use)
<i>Internal Milestone:</i>							
<i>External Opportunity:</i>							

SEPTEMBER 2011

TOPIC	Who, sources	Media – release	Media – Individual pitches	Media – op-ed/ Letter to Editor	Media – event(s)	Media – other (video, photos, social)	Newsletter template article (for Alliance participants’ use)
<i>Internal Milestone:</i>							
<i>External Opportunity:</i>							

OCTOBER 2011

TOPIC	Who, sources	Media – release	Media – Individual pitches	Media – op-ed/ Letter to Editor	Media – event(s)	Media – other (video, photos, social)	Newsletter template article (for Alliance participants’ use)
<i>Internal Milestone:</i>							
<i>External Opportunity:</i>							

NOVEMBER 2011

TOPIC	Who, sources	Media – release	Media – Individual pitches	Media – op-ed/ Letter to Editor	Media – event(s)	Media – other (video, photos, social)	Newsletter template article (for Alliance participants’ use)
<i>Internal Milestone:</i>							
<i>External Opportunity:</i>							

DECEMBER 2011

TOPIC	Who, sources	Media – release	Media – Individual pitches	Media – op-ed/ Letter to Editor	Media – event(s)	Media – other (video, photos, social)	Newsletter template article (for Alliance participants’ use)
<i>Internal Milestone:</i>							
<i>External Opportunity:</i>							

Other Possible Topics for “Expert” Columns:

- Finding health information online
- Quality of generics vs. name brand drugs
- Talking with your doctor/making the most of your visit
- Why the focus on health IT (re quality, safety, efficiency, value)?
- Return on investment of improving health equity for everyone
- Hospital-acquired infections, what local hospitals are doing about it

Opportunities for Marketing: Strategic Considerations

Purpose

Increase the opportunities in which your Collaborative can promote your public report and its contents to target audiences, including the media.

Considerations

Planned Events and Activities. The content of your public report and other elements of your Collaborative's work are relevant to a wide range of community events, activities, and communications that are initiated by organizations other than your Collaborative. Knowing about these opportunities in advance will enable your Collaborative to:

- Relate the content of your public report to topics of interest in your community to increase the likelihood of your report being mentioned by trusted sources such as media, health writers, and Collaborative members.
- Promote your public report in the context of these external events to reinforce the wide-ranging relevance of your public report.
- Plan for and implement a steady stream of communication activities throughout the year to keep messages about your public report front and center for reporters, health writers, and others.
- Avoid scheduling announcements, events, or campaigns that could be overshadowed or conflict with planned health-related activities of other community organizations.

To identify some opportunities (and avoid major communication conflicts), consider the health observances in Resource 2b. This resource lists many national health observances and national launches, such as important annual reports from AHRQ, including the National Healthcare Quality and Disparities Reports. Also consider promotions and activities planned by organizations involved with your Collaborative, in addition to other statewide or community events.

- *Example:* In 2010, the National Football League (NFL) used Breast Cancer Awareness Month as a springboard to participate in events across the country. While perhaps an unlikely partner in this cause, the NFL can be a powerful and popular way to get a message to the local community. The NFL's Web site includes a statement about the importance of breast cancer screening and lists activities team by team, community by community, to promote awareness (see <http://tineyurl.com/ycdbabm>). Similarly, a Collaborative that was one of the first Chartered Value Exchanges (CVEs) worked with their local NFL team to promote hypertension awareness and conduct blood pressure screenings before every home game.

Unexpected Events. Watch for opportunities to relate the content and relevance of your public report to national and local news events. This requires looking beyond the surface story to see the potential connections with the content, process, value, and other aspects of your Collaborative's public report and related activities.

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Resource 2a: Opportunities for Marketing: Strategic Considerations

- *Example:* In 2009, after the crash landing of a US Airways airplane into the Hudson River when all 150 passengers survived, the media was interested in covering many angles to keep this popular national news story alive. Tapping into the fact that airline pilots routinely use checklists, the Puget Sound Health Alliance (Washington State CVE) used the story as a lead in to a news release about promoting the use of surgical safety checklists in hospitals.

Tapping into unexpected events as part of your communications gives reporters, and others who are not well versed in health policy, real-world analogies to help them easily understand the importance of your Collaborative's work. While unexpected events regularly occur, you cannot plan on the timing of when such events will be relevant and appropriate. Therefore, you need to be able to move quickly to recognize and act on unexpected events as opportunities.

Not all events, whether or not they are planned, will be relevant to your Collaborative's public report or work plan content, target audiences, and communication style. Start by reviewing the list of health observances and events (Resource 2b), select those that are relevant to your Collaborative's public report and other products and activities, and add them to your Communication Plan (Resource 1b).

Health Observances Calendar 2011

Below is a partial list of health observance dates and national report launches in the United States promoted by one or more organizations. While based on the most complete information available as of September 2010, the specific observance dates are subject to change.

January 2011

Cervical Cancer Screening Month	AHRQ's Annual National Healthcare Quality and Disparities Reports
Cervical Health Awareness Month	Folic Acid Awareness Week (Jan 10-16)
Birth Defects Prevention Month	Women's Healthy Weight Day (Jan 20)
Blood Donor Month	Healthy Weight Week (Jan 16-22)
Glaucoma Awareness Month	Medical Group Management Week (Jan 24-28)
Thyroid Awareness Month	

February 2011

American Heart Month	Cardiovascular Professionals Week (Feb 13-19)
Children's Ear, Nose, Throat Month	Child Passenger Safety Week (Feb 13-19)
Children's Dental Health Month	Condom Week (Feb 13-19)
Low Vision Awareness Month	Muscular Dystrophy Awareness Week (Feb 13-19)
Girls and Women in Sports Day (Feb 2)	National Donor Day (Feb 14)
Wear Red Day/Heart Disease (Feb 4)	Women's Heart Health Day (Feb 18)
Give Kids a Smile Day/Dental Care (Feb 4)	Eating Disorders Awareness Week (Feb 27-Mar5)
Burn Awareness Week (Feb 6-12)	
Pride in Food Service Week (Feb 7-11)	
Cardiac Rehabilitation Week (Feb 13-19)	

March 2011

American Red Cross Month	Patient Safety Awareness Week (Mar 6-12)
Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Awareness Month	School Breakfast Week (Mar 7-11)
Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month	Sleep Awareness Week (Mar 3-9)
Eye Donor Month	Pulmonary Rehabilitation Week (Mar 14-18)
Hemophilia Month	Brain Awareness Week (Mar 14-20)
Kidney Month	American Diabetes Alert Day (Mar 22)
Multiple Sclerosis Education & Awareness Month	"Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act" became law in 2009 (Mar 23)
Nutrition Month	Doctors' Day (Mar 29)
Save Your Vision Month	
Workplace Eye Safety Month	

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Resource 2b: Health Observances Calendar 2011

April 2011

Alcohol Awareness Month
Autism Awareness Month
Cancer Control Month
Cesarean Awareness Month
Child Abuse Prevention Month
Donate Life Month
Humor Month
Irritable Bowel Syndrome Awareness
Month
Minority Health Awareness Month
STD Awareness Month
Women's Eye Health and Safety Month

Youth Sports Safety Month
Kick Butts Day (Apr 2)
National Alcohol Screening Day (Apr 3)
World Health Day (Apr 7)
Public Health Week (Apr 7-13)
Health Information Privacy & Security
Week (Apr 10-16)
Minority Cancer Awareness Week
(Apr 18-22)
Infant Immunization Week (Apr 19-26)
Parkinson's Awareness Week (Apr 20-26)
Earth Day (Apr 22)

May 2011

American Stroke Month
Arthritis Awareness Month
Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month
Better Hearing and Speech Month
Better Sleep Month
Bike Month
Breathe Easy Month
Cancer Research Month
Healthy Vision Month
Hepatitis Awareness Month
Lupus Awareness Month
Lyme Disease Awareness Month
Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection and
Prevention Month
High Blood Pressure Education Month
Mental Health Month
Older Americans Month
Osteoporosis Awareness and Prevention
Month
Physical Fitness and Sports Month
Skin Cancer Awareness Month
Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month
Trauma Awareness Month
AHRQ's Annual State Snapshots Reports

North American Occupational Safety and
Health Week (May 1-7)
Mental Health Counseling Week (May 1-7)
Cover the Uninsured Week (May 2-6)
Childhood Depression Awareness Day
(May 4)
Asthma Day (May 6)
Nurses Week (May 6-12)
Nursing Home Week (May 8-14)
Women's Health Week (May 8-13)
Women's Check-up Day (May 9)
Hospital Week (May 9-13)
School Nurses Day (May 11)
Fibromyalgia Awareness Day (May 12)
Neuropathy Week (May 15-21)
Bike to Work Week (May 16-20)
HIV Vaccine Awareness Day (May 18)
World Hepatitis Day (May 19)
Running and Fitness Week (May 22-28)
Older Americans Mental Health Week
(May 22-28)
National Senior Health & Fitness Day
(May 25)
World No Tobacco Day (May 31)

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June 2011

Clean Air Month
Fireworks Safety Month
Home Safety Month
Men's Health Week (Jun 13-20)
Blood Donor Day (Jun 14)

Headache Awareness Week (Jun 5-11)
HIV Testing Day (Jun 27)
Eye Safety Awareness Week
(Jun 27-Jul 5)

July 2011

Eye Injury Prevention Month
International Group B Strep Awareness
Month

UV Safety Month
Childhood Obesity Week (Jul 5-11)
Alzheimer's Awareness Week (Jul 6-12)

August 2011

Cataract Awareness Month
Immunization Awareness Month
Pain Awareness Month
Psoriasis Awareness Month

Spinal Muscular Atrophy Awareness Month
Minority Donor Awareness Day (Aug 1)
National Health Center Week (Aug 8-14)

September 2011

Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery
Month
Cholesterol Education Month
Fruit and Veggies Month (5-a Day)
Healthy Aging Month
Leukemia & Lymphoma Awareness Month
Muscular Dystrophy Month
Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month
Prostate Cancer Awareness Month
Sickle Cell Awareness Month
Sports and Home Eye Safety Month

Suicide Prevention Week (Sept 4-10)
Suicide Prevention Day (Sept 10)
Rehabilitation Awareness Week
(Sept 19-24)
World Alzheimer's Day (Sept 21)
Family Health & Fitness Day USA
(Sept 24)
Adult Immunization Week (Sept 25-30)
Women's Health & Fitness Day (Sept 28)
World Heart Day (Sept 29)

October 2011

Halloween Safety Month
Brain Injury Awareness Month
Breast Cancer Awareness Month
Campaign for Healthier Babies
Celiac Disease Awareness Month
Children's Health Month
Cold and Flu Campaign
Dental Hygiene Month
Depression & Mental Health Month
Family Health Month
Health Literacy Month
Healthy Living Month
Physical Therapy Month
Spinal Health Month
Talk About Prescriptions Month

American Heart Walk (dates vary)
National Child Health Day (Oct 3)
Mental Illness Awareness Week (Oct 4-10)
National Depression Screening Day
(Oct 6)
Health Care Quality Week (Oct 9-15)
World Mental Health Day (Oct 10)
National School Lunch Week (Oct 10-14)
Bone and Joint Decade National
Awareness Week (Oct 12-20)
Infection Control Week (Oct 17-21)
Pharmacy Week (Oct 17-21)
Primary Care Week (Oct 17-21)
National Mammography Day (Oct 21)
Respiratory Care Week (Oct 25-28)

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November 2011

American Diabetes Month
COPD Awareness Month
Diabetic Eye Disease Month
Epilepsy Awareness Month
Flu and Pneumonia Campaign
Great American Smokeout
Hospice Month
Lung Cancer Awareness Month

Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month
Pulmonary Hypertension Awareness Month
Health Information and Technology Week
(Nov 11-19)
Diabetes Day (Nov 13)
Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease
Awareness Week (Nov 20-26)

December 2011

Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention
Month
Safe Toys and Gifts Month

World AIDS Day (Dec 1)
National Handwashing Awareness Week
(Dec 4-10)

Engaging Key Stakeholders in the Release of Your Public Report: Strategic Considerations

Purpose

When preparing to release your public report, working with organizations and individuals involved in your Collaborative can extend your communication reach to important audiences. This is essential when releasing your first public report, as you only have one chance to make a good first impression.

Considerations

- **Remember that not all sources of information are equal.** Hard as it might be to admit, some local audiences may be more familiar with and trust certain stakeholders more than they know or trust your Collaborative. Hearing about the upcoming report from a trusted source can be particularly important for those who may be wary about the potential impact of the release of a public report.
- **Connect the dots.** Who appears to be worried about your report being released to the public and how it might be interpreted? For example, if physicians (or other clinicians) have expressed concern about the upcoming report, work with trusted physician leaders, associations, or leaders of hospitals or clinics in your Collaborative. Invite these stakeholders directly into your communication planning and work with them as partners as you plan the public report release.
- **Reduce the element of surprise.** By working in advance with stakeholders who have a finger on the pulse of important audiences, you will reduce the likelihood of surprise. Unfortunately, being caught off guard or feeling left out of the process can be an underlying reason for a stakeholder to react negatively to the public report. As you include key stakeholders in your communication planning, you will likely discover new questions or perspectives from them. This improves your ability to be ready to address such issues either before or after your report is released to the public.
- **Treat organizations like partners.** An organization that is treated like a partner is more likely to act like a partner. This is especially important when members of the media contact community leaders to get their views on the public report. By involving the most likely targets of reporters' calls in the communication planning process before the report is released, your efforts at coordinated messaging and approaches will more likely result in favorable media coverage. Providing template materials that they can customize will ease their workload while improving the chances of your partners using your messages. *Note: Any materials you provide to stakeholders, even for internal use, might become public. Only include content that would be acceptable to see in the newspaper.*

Coordinated communication activities with targeted stakeholders might include:

- Including communication experts from a range of stakeholders in your communication planning.

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- Sharing draft key messages about the report rollout with representatives of key stakeholder groups to get their reactions and ideas, then providing the final key messages for stakeholder partners to use as they communicate about the report. (See Toolkit Resource 4b).
- Providing template materials such as a short article they can include in their newsletter just before the report is rolled out to the public (see Toolkit Resources 3c, 3d, and 3e).
- Gathering a list of supportive quotes from key organizations in the community, with the name of the person being quoted, the organization, and contact information. Then include that list with your media release about the public report (see Toolkit Resources 5a and 5b). Depending on whose quote is used, this list can show support by all types of stakeholders from all points along the political spectrum.

With some planning and preparation of materials useful to your stakeholders, your Collaborative staff can make it easy for stakeholder organizations to be effective partners in the release of your public report. Working with partners in your community should start early in the process of report development. Then, before the public report is released, remember to remind stakeholders of actions they can take to help increase awareness and use of the public report across the community. See Toolkit Resource 3b for template text for an email to customize and send to stakeholder partners before the rollout of your public report.

NOTE: Customize this email text to fit your local circumstances, priorities, or perspective of the stakeholder to whom it will be sent, and helpful materials that you might develop (e.g., list of questions and suggested answers). See Toolkit Resources 3c, 3d, 3e, and 4b for templates for newsletter articles and possible key messages.

Email Template for Use With Stakeholder Partners Soon Before the Release of Your Public Report

Dear [name],

On [date], the [collaborative name] will publicly release the [public report name]. This email is to assist you, as our partner in coordinated communication, to promote the report to your audiences at the right time. Below is a timeline and six suggested steps to take. Also in this email are a few template materials to help make this process as easy as possible for you or your communication team.

Timing and Suggested Steps (leading up to and including when the report becomes public)

1. [DATE RANGE]. Use the key messages (*attached*) as the basis for your communication.
2. [DATE RANGE]. Include articles in internal newsletter(s) to your board/clinical staff/employees about your involvement in creating the [public report name] as part of your commitment to improving health care quality in the region. Pull from the list of Questions & Answers (*attached*) for content. Don't forget to mention the report release date, which will be Month ##.
3. [DATE RANGE]. Include articles in external newsletter(s) to your patients/members/community about your involvement in creating the [public report name] as part of your commitment to improving health and health care quality in the region. Include the report release date of Month ##, plus the [collaborative name]'s Web address (add URL here) for questions.
4. [X days before report release] Share the list of Questions & Answers with internal clinical staff /employee leaders so that they can respond to questions about the report. Refer questions to the [collaborative name] by emailing EMAIL ADDRESS HERE or calling (###) ###-####.
5. [DAY of REPORT RELEASE] Email an announcement (*attached*) to your board/clinical staff/employees about the report along with the link to the report, which will be URL here.
6. [DAY OF REPORT RELEASE] Link the report Web site to your intranet and public Web site.

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Resource 3b: Email Template for Use With Stakeholder Partners
Soon Before the Release of Your Public Report

Materials for Your Use (each is attached to this email)

1. **Key Messages.** (*Document is intended as a resource for internal use.*) These messages were refined by communication experts from many stakeholders, and approved by the [collaborative name] Board, as a foundation for coordinated communication about the report.
2. **Questions & Answers.** (*Document is intended as a resource for internal use.*) This list was refined by a multistakeholder team of communication experts. Pull from the content for your communication efforts.
3. **Text for Email or Newsletter Announcement.** (*Customize text before sending it.*) Use this to announce by email, newsletters, intranet, and Web that the report is available to the public.

By all of us taking a coordinated approach, we will increase the number of people who are aware of the report, which is the first step toward using it for more informed health care decision making. Thank you for your willingness to do your part in promoting the report. Please let us know if you have any questions.

NOTE: Customize this newsletter article template to fit your public report and local situation. Provide the revised version to your employer stakeholders so that they can adapt, finalize, and use it in their internal or external newsletters. Some will prefer an even shorter article.

Word Count: ~425 words

[Public Report Name]: Now You Can Compare Local Clinics and Hospitals

When you make health care decisions, whether choosing a doctor or knowing what kind of care is best for you, where do you get information? Many people ask friends and family, while some cross their fingers and guess. Just going to a doctor does not guarantee that you get the best care to keep you as healthy as possible.

Starting [DATE of report release], everyone in [community name] can look up comparisons of local clinics / hospitals to see who is doing a better job and to make more informed health decisions.

The report is called [public report name – *hyperlink this to the online report*]. It is published by the nonprofit [Collaborative name], supported by [employer/health plan name], along with many others in the community.

The quality of health care differs from clinic to clinic, hospital to hospital, across the country, and even here in [community name]. When you and your family go to the doctor or hospital, you deserve care that is safe and effective—health care that cures what ails you or helps you stay as healthy as possible.

But now we know for sure that we all have room to improve here in [community name]. For example, the [public report name] shows that, while doctors agree that people with diabetes should be checked for dangerous cholesterol levels, # out of # (about ##%) patients in this region don't get their cholesterol tested at least yearly. This is basic but important: without this test result, there is no way to know if the patient's cholesterol level is under control.

How do we fix these gaps in care? Your doctor has a role and so do you. But [employer/health plan name] also takes our role in your health and health care seriously. That's why we support the [Collaborative name] and we work to ensure that your benefits cover the services recommended in the report. What can you do? Take a look at the [public report name] and use it when you make your health care decisions. Talk with your doctor about staying as healthy as possible, and follow your doctor's advice.

The next [public report name] is expected to include [describe to show that your reports will evolve and improve over time]. The [public report name] can be found online at [Report URL]. It is also linked to the [employer/health plan name] intranet at [http:// employer/health plan intranet page address]. To find out more about the nonprofit [Collaborative name], go to Collaborative URL.

NOTE: Customize this newsletter article template to fit your public report and local situation. Provide the revised version to your medical group stakeholders so that they can adapt, finalize, and use it on their Web site or newsletter to patients. Some will prefer an even shorter article.

Word Count: ~490 words

[Public Report Name]: Now You Can Compare Local Clinics and Hospitals

When you make health care decisions, such as knowing what kind of care is best for you, where do you get information? Talking with your doctor is the best approach, but some people ask friends, while others cross their fingers and guess. We want you to get the care that is right for you.

To help you get and stay as healthy as possible, we are pleased to announce that starting [DATE of report release], everyone in [community name] can look up comparisons of local clinics / hospitals to see who is doing a better job and to make more informed health decisions. And yes, our clinic/medical group is rated in the report.

The report is called [public report name – *hyperlink to online report*]. It is published by the nonprofit [Collaborative name], supported by [medical group name], along with many others in the community.

You and your family deserve care that is safe and effective—health care that cures what ails you or helps you stay as healthy as possible. The team at [medical group name] is committed to providing high-quality health care for all of our patients. Yet we know that quality isn't the same in every clinic or hospital across the country and even here in [community name].

The report shows that everyone has room to improve. For example, the [public report name] shows that, while doctors agree that people with diabetes should be checked for dangerous cholesterol levels, # out of # (about ##%) patients on average in this region don't get their cholesterol tested at least yearly. This is basic but important: without this test, there is no way to know if the patient's cholesterol is under control.

How can we close the gaps in care? It's a team effort. [Medical group name] has been a pioneer in improving health care quality locally and will continue to work with you and all of our patients to keep you as healthy as possible. You have a role, too. Be a partner to your doctor. Ask questions, make sure you understand the answers, and follow your doctor's advice. Look at the [public report name] to help inform decisions you make about your health and health care.

Others have a role too. Does your employer support the [Collaborative name] and ensure that your benefits cover the services recommended in the report? Does your health plan or insurer do this too? If you aren't sure, show them the [public report name] and ask.

The next [public report name] is expected to include [describe to show that your reports will evolve and improve over time]. The [public report name] can be found online at [Report URL]. It is also linked to the [medical group name] Web site at [http://medical group website address]. To find out more about the nonprofit [Collaborative name], go to Collaborative URL.

NOTE: Customize this template newsletter article to fit your public report and local situation. Provide the revised version to community group stakeholders so that they can adapt, finalize and use it on their Web site or newsletter to their members. Some will prefer a shorter article.

Word Count: ~420 words

[Public Report Name]: Now You Can Compare Local Clinics and Hospitals

When you make health care decisions, such as knowing what kind of care is best for you, where do you get information? Some check our Web site for information, some talk with their doctor, many ask friends and family, and others cross their fingers and guess.

To help you get and stay as healthy as possible, we are pleased to announce that starting [DATE of report release], everyone in [community name] can look up comparisons of local clinics / hospitals to see who is doing a better job and to make more informed health decisions.

The report is called [public report name – *hyperlink to online report*]. It is published by the nonprofit [Collaborative name], supported by [community group name], along with many others in the community.

You and your family deserve care that is safe and effective—health care that cures what ails you or helps you stay as healthy as possible. Yet we all know that quality isn't the same in every clinic or hospital across the country and even here in [community name].

The report shows that everyone has room to improve. For example, the [public report name] shows that, while doctors agree that people with diabetes should be checked for dangerous cholesterol levels, # out of # (about ##%) patients on average in this region don't get their cholesterol tested at least yearly. This is basic but important: without this test, there is no way to know if the patient's cholesterol is under control.

How do we fix these gaps in care? Your doctor has a role and so do you. What can you do? Take a look at the [public report name] and use it when you make your health care decisions. Talk with your doctor about staying as healthy as possible, and follow your doctor's advice.

Your employer and your health plan or insurer also have a role: Do they support the [Collaborative name] and ensure that your benefits cover the services recommended in the report? If you aren't sure, show them the [public report name] and ask.

The next [public report name] is expected to include [describe to show that your reports will evolve and improve over time]. The [public report name] can be found online at [Report URL]. It is also linked to the [community group name] Web site at [http://community group website address]. To find out more about the nonprofit [Collaborative name], go to Collaborative URL.

Developing and Using Key Messages About Your Public Report: Strategic Considerations

Purpose

You can approach discussions about your public report in a number of ways when it is released to the community. But building agreement before the report is public regarding the best way to talk about the report will yield several benefits. Using agreed-upon key messages will clarify and reduce the white noise of different and potentially conflicting messages. This is essential when releasing your first public report, as you only have one chance to make a good first impression.

Considerations

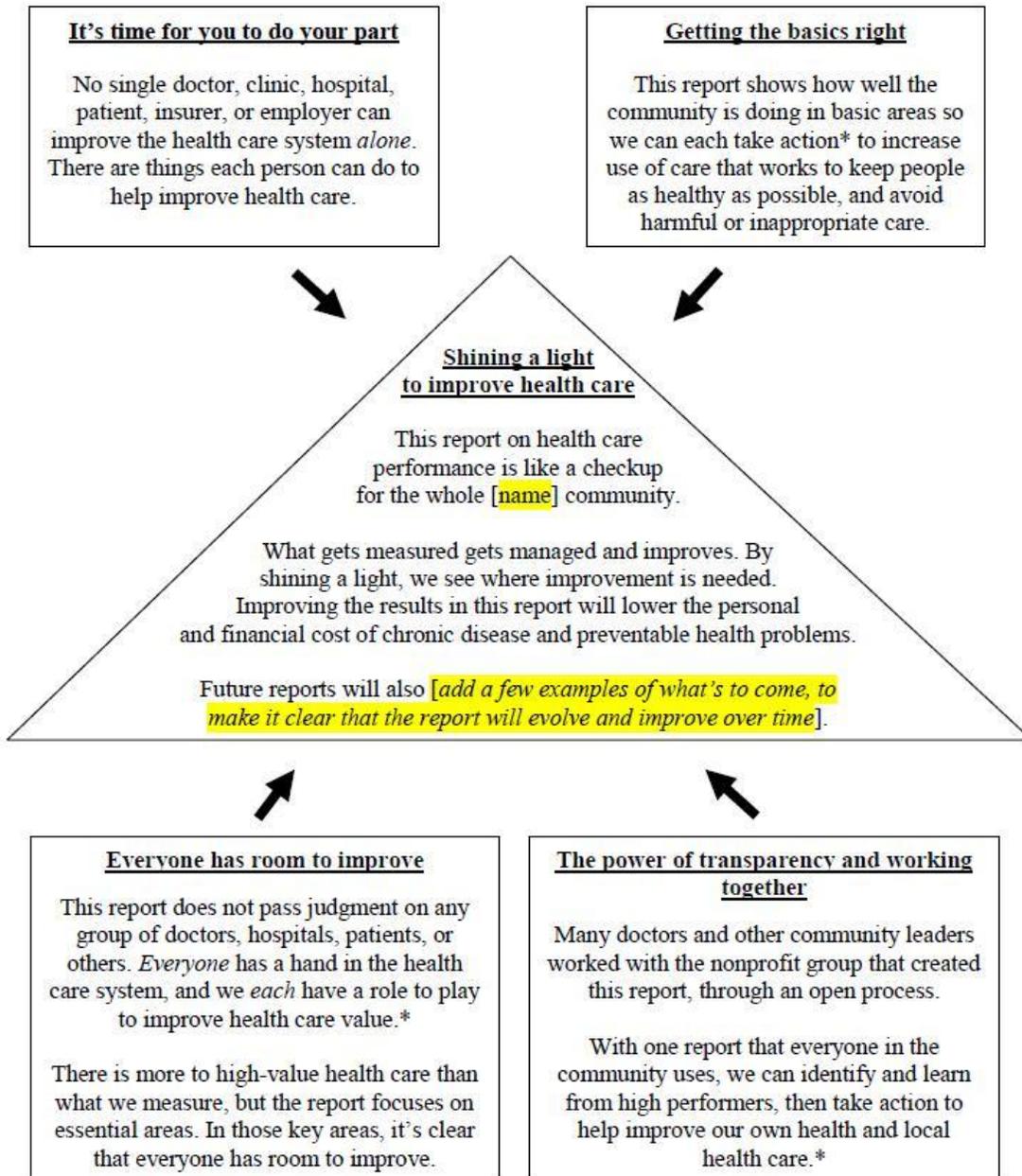
- **Clarify important issues by developing key messages.** Without a specific discussion, leaders in your Collaborative will likely have different answers to basic questions such as “*why* are we producing this report?” and “*how exactly* do we expect this report to be used once it is public?” These questions will be asked when your report is public, so developing simple, straightforward, and honest answers to these questions is important. Your Collaborative has one chance to make a good first impression, so this discussion is best done with stakeholder leaders *before* the report is public. When developing key messages, consider your long-term vision, but focus primarily on a realistic assessment of the report content as it stands now.
- **Reduce white noise.** With key messages developed or approved by a multistakeholder group of communication experts and other leaders within your Collaborative, you and your stakeholder partners can be more consistent in the content of the various communications from each organization (see Toolkit Resource 3a). Without key messages, the likelihood of conflicting messages increases and the resulting “white noise” will confuse the public or cause them to miss the entire event.
- **Avoid unnecessary controversy.** Without shared key messages, stakeholder groups will avoid saying anything or will develop their own ways to talk about the report. The different and possibly conflicting perspectives about the purpose, value, and use of the report could be used by reporters looking for controversy and conflict for their stories. You are more likely to have a smooth and effective rollout of your report if you take the time to develop clear, agreed-upon key messages in advance.
- **Keep key messages simple.** Key messages make communication easier. If people have three or four simple points to focus on—whether in media interviews, press releases, newsletter articles, or presentations—they are far more likely to get the main points across when communicating about the public report. Key messages will help a wide range of people become better and more effective communicators about the public report.

With some advance work done by stakeholder leaders and communication experts along with your Collaborative, you can create a path forward with key messages that makes a wide range of communication efforts more effective and, as a side benefit, much easier. See Toolkit Resource 4b for a potential template for your key messages, based on work done by the Puget Sound Health Alliance for their first public report in 2009.

NOTE: This example of key messages for releasing a first-time public report is based on the work of the Puget Sound Health Alliance. Customize this by considering the report's purpose and expected uses initially.

KEY MESSAGES FOR [NAME OF REPORT]

HOW TO USE THIS MESSAGE BOX: Familiarize yourself with these messages to easily talk with anyone about the public report. Where you start your comments depends on how the question is framed. Use your first comment to bridge to the points in the center and the messages in the other boxes.



* **HOW TO USE THE REPORT TO IMPROVE HEALTH CARE?** (See page 2)

How to Use the [Name of Report] To Improve Health Care

No single doctor, clinic, hospital, patient, insurer, employer, or union can fix the health care system alone. The [Collaborative name] understands that and encourages all of us to do our part by using the [public report name]. If each of us did the things in the following list, we could all help ensure that local health care is as effective, safe, and affordable as possible:

Patients and Other Individuals

1. Use the report to see what you should talk about with your doctor.
2. Then have that discussion with your doctor and be sure to follow the advice.
3. Everyday, make good decisions that keep you as healthy as possible.

Doctors and Other Health Care Professionals

1. Use the report to see how your clinic or hospital compares with others, and work with your peers on improving overall approaches to patient care.
2. Continue to talk with patients about effective care that is best for them and tell the community about your results in the [public report name].
3. Review your organization's results in the [public report name] during contract discussions with health plans and other payers.

Employers, Union Trusts, and Insurers

1. Use the [public report name] to ensure that the benefits you offer cover all of the categories of effective care described in the report, without benefit, coverage, or other insurance barriers that prevent people from getting the care they need to stay as healthy as possible.
2. Inform your members or employees about the [public report name] and the resources on the report Web site to support healthier decisions.
3. Review the comparison results in the [public report name] during contract discussions with health care providers and others.

Using News Releases To Promote Your Public Report: Strategic Considerations

Purpose

News releases are a standard element in traditional media relations. While historic notions about the media are changing (see the considerations in Resource 1a), it is still a good idea to produce a conventional news release each time your Collaborative unveils a new or updated public report or has other announcements to make.

Considerations

- **Your news release has more than one purpose.** Ideally, you may want print (hardcopy, online) and broadcast (radio, TV) reporters to pick up the news release and use it verbatim for their coverage of your public report, but this rarely happens. That being said, a news release does increase the chances that reporters and health writers have a common understanding of the main points you want to communicate about your public report. When you produce your news release, email it with the title of the release in the subject line. Also post it as a page on your Web site. You may want to consider low-cost email services such as Constant Contact® (www.constantcontact.com.) to more easily send mass emails and newsletters to audiences interested in receiving your news. By distributing your news release far and wide, you can achieve several goals:
 - **Announce your news to reporters and other health writers.** This is the primary purpose of any news release. Some reporters will do their own research to develop a story based on your news release. Busy writers who work for community newspapers or smaller publications may simply take the content of your news release, if it is written in a way that fits with their publication style, and reprint it nearly verbatim. Keep a list of email addresses of health care writers from places such as local daily newspapers, community newspapers, TV and radio stations, national publications (e.g., *Modern Healthcare*), and partner organizations such as associations, employers, and health plans. Email your news releases to this list.
 - **Announce your news to community partners.** Be sure to email your news releases to your board of directors, Collaborative partners, committee members, and elected officials (city, township, county, State, and Federal congressional delegation) to keep them informed of your Collaborative's activities and progress. Maintain an email list of these contacts for easy communication.
 - **Create an archive of progress made by your Collaborative.** People providing support or funding to your Collaborative want to know that their effort results in progress to improve health care quality. The path forward involves many milestones, large and small. Creating news releases about big steps (e.g., publishing a public report) and interim steps (e.g., reaching consensus over data sharing or quality improvement) and posting them to your Web site documents your Collaborative's progress. For interim news, sometimes the value of a news release is to add to the archive, rather than expecting reporters to pick up the story.

- **Increase the search engine ranking of your Web site.** Create a new page on your Web site that has the text of your news release in html format. Don't just link it as a PDF or other document. Hyperlink any mentions of the public report or organizations named in the news release. This will increase the likelihood that someone typing certain terms into a search engine will come across your news release and Web site. It may also improve your ranking in search engines such as Bing, Google, and Yahoo.
- **Think of reporters as meta-consumers.** Many reporters and health writers are consumers who happen to be professional communicators to the general public. If your report is interesting to consumers, it will likely be interesting to these reporters. If your report or materials are confusing or not relevant to the general public, it will be harder to get reporters interested. Before you write your news release, realistically assess how your report is relevant to what consumers care about (not what *you* think they *should* care about). Ask questions such as: Based on the content of the report, how will consumers use it? Will the report make their lives easier or solve a problem for them? One way to get reporters' attention is to take a human interest approach to your media pitch by showing how the report makes a difference to a person in your local community (see below).
- **Make an individual "pitch" to a specific reporter or publication.** Some reporters have an area of expertise or angle (e.g., human interest or stories about people) and some publications have a specific type of audience (e.g., business journals). To increase the likelihood that they will write a story about your report, identify in advance the reason that reporter's particular audience will find your public report interesting. For example:
 - **A business-oriented publication** may be interested in issues such as the rising cost of health care; the economic imperative and promise from improving health care quality; the value of having a productive and healthy workforce; the public-private partnership surrounding the creation of the public report; or the collaboration among groups who might otherwise be at odds (e.g., large employers at the table working with union leaders, providers with health plans, everyone together).
 - A reporter who writes **human interest stories** may be interested in issues such as the effect on patients or consumers of not having useful information comparing the quality of care in the community; or the "before and after" experiences of a particular patient or consumer as he or she chooses to get care from a clinic that has quality improvement efforts in place. This is also a great way to help a clinic showcase how they've improved patient engagement and attention to providing care that is recommended in the public report.
- **Consider content carefully.** A news release is intended to translate the work of the Collaborative into language that is easily understood by people who have no medical training and who do not work in health care quality improvement. Use plain language (see www.plainlanguage.gov). Avoid jargon, acronyms, and insider phrases such as referring to the report content or results as "measures"; to most consumers, that is a verb, not a noun. Talk about quality improvement in ways that consumers understand.
- **Stick to standard format structure.** While the media is changing, some conventions are easy to follow and will make your news release straightforward and effective. Most

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important is to come up with a title or subject that is clear and a first paragraph that is short and describes the meat of the news. These two things are often the only elements a reporter skims before deciding whether to read or toss your news release. If possible, keep the release to no more than two pages: put technical information on your Web site and link to it in the news release. Use a standard format: contact information at the top, hyperlink to the name of the report and any organizations mentioned. Put “– more –” at the bottom when there is another page and “###” at the end of the release.

See Toolkit Resource 5b for a news release template to announce the public release of a report comparing various aspects of local health care quality. Even if you change the content, the template will give you a good idea of the standard format of a standard news release.

NOTE: Customize the text to fit your public report and local situation. Special thanks to the Puget Sound Health Alliance for the original content upon which this example is based. This template uses Associated Press style, since that is what most media organizations use.

INSERT COLLABORATIVE LOGO

Media Contact
[name of media contact] [phone number]
[email address]

[Public Report Name]: *We Need to “Get the Basics Right”*
Public report finds clinics, hospitals -- everyone -- has room to improve local health care quality

[CITY NAME], [Date] -- Doctors agree that people with heart disease and those with diabetes should be checked for dangerous cholesterol levels. Yet the new report from the [Collaborative name] shows that many of these patients in [community name] don’t get cholesterol tests and other basic services.

The report concludes that everyone has a role in helping to make sure that patients, especially those with chronic conditions, get the basic care that doctors agree is most effective. “Too many people are not getting needed basic care, even if they have insurance. This is a problem for patients, doctors, hospitals, insurers and employers who buy health benefits. Working together, we can fix this problem,” said [local physician leader].

Release of the [report] has been widely anticipated locally and nationally. The non-profit [Collaborative name] includes more than ## organizations and ... [insert more on your Collaborative].

“This first report includes results for [describe number of locations or organizations]. We applaud the [doctors / clinics / hospitals] as leaders in quality improvement. Their participation has been vital to developing the most comprehensive report of its kind for this region,” said [Collaborative executive director]. For a list of the participating organizations, go to [link to Collaborative website to this list].

“Many community leaders, doctors and others have been involved in creating this report. The result is a report we trust and will use to improve health care quality,” said [prominent physician or health leader].

- more -

[Collaborative name] Releases Report Comparing Local Health Care, Page Two

The report looks at ## types of care provided to patients, in the areas of [list categories of measures here]. It is based on data from [list sources]. The data reflects care provided to about ## percent of the population in this region, between [date] and [date]. The data used to create the report does not include patients' personally identifiable information, such as name or birthdate.

[Include a quote from community leader such as Governor, consumer group or business CEO]

The first report creates a baseline about local health care and it shows that everyone has room to improve. In this region, for example: *[draw specific examples from results in your public report]*

- About XX% of patients with [condition] did not get [care or test] at least once during the year.
- Only about xx% of patients
- On the upside, more than XX% of patients ...

[Collaborative name] leaders stressed that everyone has a role in making improvements, as decisions by many people can influence a given result in the [name of report]. For example:

- Doctors and other health professionals can learn from each other and make sure that they provide health care that is proven to work for patients;
- Insurers and clinic leaders can share ideas on how to make, and support, quality improvement;
- Employers can ensure that benefits they purchase cover the basics of effective health care; and
- Patients can talk with their doctors about what they need to do to stay healthy.

[Briefly describe the source of report results and/or data, with a link to detailed technical information.]

[Collaborative name] officials said they expect to release the next report in [date]. Future reports will include [describe to show that your reports will evolve and improve over time]. "Knowing how well we are doing now is essential for doing better in the future. And with each additional report, we will be better able to identify trends and improve health care quality in our region," said [Collaborative leader].

The non-profit [Collaborative name] is made up of those who provide, pay for and use health care, working together to improve quality of care at a price more people can afford. See [collaborative website link] and [public report website link].

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Engaging Bloggers: Strategic Considerations

Purpose

Tap into the communication reach of bloggers and other people who write about your public report. This can increase the number of instances in which your public report, and other products or priorities of your Collaborative, are mentioned in Web sites and online publications.

Considerations

1. **Blogs are an important part of media.** Online culture is now a routine part of mass media and related communication, as technology enables nearly anyone to contribute opinions and ideas to the community discourse. Print and online newspapers, for example, have fewer traditional reporters. Many online newspapers include blogs as a regular feature, either by paying a person (often a reporter who used to be an employee of the newspaper) to write original blogs or by pulling content from external sources, including independent blogs. Some independent blogs may be popular enough to consider them as viable channels for getting information to target audiences and the public. Two ideas for identifying which blogs might be important communication channels for your Collaborative are:
 - Read your local online papers to identify the authors of the regularly featured blogs.
 - Search <http://technorati.com/blogs/top100> to identify the most popular blogs in health care or in your region.
2. **Bloggers are independent reporters.** Anyone can write a blog, but some bloggers can get more attention to their writing than others. A number of newspapers have hired reporters who are former employees to write a blog for the publication; however, many bloggers do not come from a traditional media background. Some are medical professionals with a knack for writing; others are community writers with a strong interest in health care. Some have had bad experiences with health care and hold a grudge. While in the past there were generally understood rules for professional relationships between organizations and traditional reporters, the range of types of bloggers is large, so the rules for working with bloggers are less standardized.
3. **Real communication is important to engage bloggers.** Given the independent nature of most bloggers, building a constructive relationship is likely to involve less structure and more personalized, direct communication. For example:
 - **Approach.** Sending a news release to some bloggers is acceptable, but likely insufficient, as traditional media relations can seem overly structured or seem like “spin.” Send the news release, but then take time to follow up with a personalized email or phone call to explain the key messages and discuss the blogger’s reactions or questions. There is great value in meeting in person to begin building the relationship and it is best to do this early, rather than waiting until you are pitching an important story.
 - **Be real.** Being willing to engage in real discussions is likely to be interpreted by bloggers as a sign of respect and trust. Don’t be afraid to admit what is challenging or where compromises have been needed to make progress with the public report. Trust is a two-way street: just as the blogger wants honest information from you, you will hope the blogger writes about the news in a way that is true, includes some (or all) of your key messages and isn’t exaggerated or sensationalized.

See Toolkit Resource 6b for an email template to connect with one or more bloggers to discuss the upcoming release of your public report.

NOTE: Customize this email template to fit your public report and local situation. This can be used to connect with one blogger or sent to a group of bloggers, with the suggestion that you all meet in one setting to have a group discussion about the upcoming release of your public report.

Blogger Email Template

Dear [name],

Because you follow health care activities in [community name] and cover them in your blog, I want to be sure that you have the latest information from [Collaborative name]. We are a local non-profit – supported by employers, health plans, doctors, hospitals, government agencies, community groups and others – who came together to take a shared approach to evaluating the quality of local health care, then report to the community over time to motivate improvement. The first public report comparing clinics and hospitals in the region is expected to be released on [date].

Would you be interested in meeting with me to discuss this vision, our work thus far, and the status and challenges of creating this kind of public report? I'd be happy to answer your questions and explore what kind of information sharing from us would work best for you and your blog.

On [date] at [time], I'm planning to be at [social location: coffee house, local pub or restaurant] to have a group discussion with several local bloggers. I hope you can be there as it would be great to meet you. If another time works better for you, let me know and we can meet then. Thanks so much.

Using Social Media: Strategic Considerations

Purpose

Communication via social media Web sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) is rapidly expanding in both the personal and professional realms. With careful planning, it can be a cost- and time-effective way to help promote your public report.

Stay focused on *why* you are using social media and have a plan for the types of information you want to share. With your strategy in hand, it's easier to limit your time commitment while maximizing the value you can get from using social media.

Considerations

1. **Social media is a part of mass communication: ignore it at your peril.** From afar, social media may seem like a tool for teenagers to socialize or workers to waste time. But a closer examination reveals a wide array of companies and organizations successfully incorporating social media into their marketing communication activities. For example, in a list of 2009 media trends, the World Editors Forum said it is “verging on inconceivable” that a reporter would not use Twitter. And, while the advantages of Twitter are more clear-cut, a wider range of people regularly use Facebook.
2. **There are many forms of social media.** From the popular Facebook to the leading-edge program that we haven't heard of yet (but is destined to be the next hot item), the multitude of ways to quickly communicate using online services can be overwhelming. There are literally hundreds of social media Web sites, applications or “apps,” and tools at your disposal. The activity on social media sites can seem random and voluminous, so it's easy to assume that it would be too time consuming to pursue. Fortunately, like most strategic activities, the best approach is to be clear about your goals and focus only on the social media tools and activities that will help you achieve them.
3. **Choose your social media activities carefully.** Think through your communication goals and practical steps using social media to help you reach them. For example, assuming that one of your goals is to increase awareness and use of your public report, it is likely that one of your key audiences is consumers. Where do they go for information? The answer likely includes newspapers (print or online) and Facebook (the most popular social media Web site). If this is the case, consider starting by using Twitter to connect with reporters (see item #1 above for rationale) and Facebook to connect with local consumers.
4. **Start slowly with social media.** If this arena is new to you, pick one of the popular social media sites and use it yourself for awhile to learn how it works in an informal, less public way. You'll learn that the process is pretty straightforward and you control how much time you spend on it. You will also learn that it's different from “old school” media relations or communications in which the corporate or organizational voice was acceptable. Today, such formality is often viewed as “spin.” Get ready to use a more conversational style when posting information or comments using social media.

When you are ready to have your Collaborative or public report represented on social media, consider these steps:

- **Make sure that you (or your report) is easy to find.** What is your report called? Does your communication activity focus more on promoting that name or your Collaborative? Which is more important for people to know about? This may seem like a side issue, but in the world of social media people need to be able to easily find and connect with you by typing in a name or related keywords. If you decide to use Twitter to communicate with reporters and other opinion leaders, for example, will your Twitter account be named after your Collaborative, your public report, or something else? The issue of naming will be important for several types of social media Web sites and tools. It will also improve consistency in your other communication activities.
- **Identify the type of content you want to share.** Consider posting progress in meeting milestones for producing your public report, announcements from your Collaborative, and local or national news articles that are related to the need for or content of your public report. There is still a great need to help people understand the gaps in quality and why public reporting is an important part of the process of quality improvement in health care. Also, social media is all about interaction, so be sure to scan what others are saying to learn the perspectives and interests of reporters and other key audiences.
- **Check in and add an update or a comment twice per day.** Post a comment on a topic of interest (see previous bullet). Remember to add your comments to others' posts to encourage discussion and learning about topics relevant to your Collaborative's public report and other efforts to improve health care quality and affordability. Being engaged means participating in the conversation, rather than just pushing out information. If people comment on what you have posted, consider the issue and comment back. Even a brief response lets them know that your Collaborative is listening and interested in what people have to say.

Creating Audio Clips or Videos for Download and Use by Media: Strategic Considerations

Purpose

The goal of promoting your public report is to get others to write, talk, and think about it, as people need to be aware of your report before they will use it. Fortunately, technology can help you create audio and video communication pieces to help spread the word about your public report.

Considerations

1. **Make it easy for reporters to cover your public report.** With electronic communication, it's now much easier to create interesting communication materials that others can tap into and repost or use for their own purposes. Reporters and others who work for traditional broadcast (i.e., radio and TV) media are often strapped for time and resources. This is especially true for smaller organizations and media outlets. By creating audio clips and short videos for download, you can make their work easier.
 - **Audio clips.** Most computers can record audio clips with simple software and an inexpensive microphone. As you develop a news release or other announcement about your public report or the work of your Collaborative, consider recording a short audio clip that could be used as a quote in a radio reporter's story or replayed by the station in its entirety. You may want to talk with your local radio stations in advance to see what length and file format would be of greatest use to them. Once you've created the audio clips, post them with your traditional news release (connected using hyperlinks) in an area of your Web site dedicated to providing information and resources for reporters and others in the media. Then let the media know that these resources are available for their use.
 - **Video clips.** Another way to extend your communication reach is to create one or more short videos—ideally less than 2 minutes—about your public report or other news from your Collaborative. Most people own or have access to a digital camera that can be used to record these short video clips. The quality of your videos may not satisfy the needs of local TV stations, so they might not run your video in their story. But videos can be used to encourage reporters to interview your leaders and can be used to inform others. For example:
 - Post the videos on your public report or Collaborative Web site for the public to watch, as some would rather do that than read a document.
 - Post the videos on YouTube and other social media sites such as Facebook or Twitter to create the ability for others to pass it along. The viral spread of social media is a big part of the value: others can share the link with their friends or repost it to expand the number of people who eventually see it.
2. **Make the clips interesting to your audience.** As you explore whether to create audio or video feeds as another tool in your coordinated communication, consider

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your intended audience carefully to ensure that what you produce will be interesting and useful to them. Simply having someone read from your news release will not produce the results you want. Instead, consider these basic ideas:

- **Have consumers talk about some aspect of your public report and what it means to their own health and well-being.** It's best if consumers can speak to how they have used the report or how they engaged in their own care with their doctor to improve their health.
- **Ask employers, union leaders, or human resources professionals to speak to why they find the public report valuable.** Again, this is a way to offer the perspective of real people in the community, speaking about specific elements of the report and how they've used the information to make better health care decisions. This works best to not only address the issue of promoting the health and well-being of employees, but also to touch on the cost pressure that concerns most employers. Better quality care is often lower cost care in the long run, so this is an important connection to make for the business community and consumers.
- **Have one of your Collaborative's physician leaders speak about the process of how your public report was created and how doctors can use the information.** Being able to see how their performance compares to peers across the region is often a great benefit that the medical community gains when a public report is available. Most people don't realize that in many areas, doctors and hospitals have not had this kind of information available either. In contrast to a potentially punitive interpretation of reports being used to expose bad doctors or hospitals, this positions physicians in a positive way, as they are interested in learning from each other so that everyone can improve.

The challenge will be to keep these audio or video clips both interesting and brief. Depending on the comfort level of your Collaborative leadership, adding appropriate humor is a great way to get the attention of the public, especially for a topic that is often viewed as somewhat dry and complicated. That being said, tread carefully and seek comments from trusted advisors before you post any audio or video clips that are intended to be humorous. What one person finds funny others may not.

Evaluating the Impact of Coordinated Communication Activities: Strategic Considerations

Purpose

Identify and track basic elements of your communication activities that you expect to increase awareness of your public report. Evaluating the impact will show the value of communication and will allow you to refine and improve its effectiveness over time.

Considerations

1. **It's hard to know whether or how to improve if you don't evaluate your impact.** While the ideal evaluation process may be comprehensive, multifaceted, and driven by statistics and longitudinal data, that may not be possible in the early stages of your public report. Don't let the perfect become the enemy of the good: there are many ways to consider the impact of your communication activities even if initially on a small scale. For example, Google Analytics, a free tool, provides statistics about your Web site traffic, such as page views, visitors, and source of visitor (e.g., search engine, link from another site).
2. **Your approach to evaluation should reflect your communication strategies.** As you decide what to use as an indicator of progress, first review your overall communication plan for the next 12 months (see Resources 1a and 1b). Consider questions such as:
 - **Are you expecting greater traffic to your report Web site after specific planned events each month?** If so, track the event date and note whether traffic to your report Web site increases within the week after the activity.
 - **Will you encourage local employers, providers, community groups, health plans, and others to promote the public report to their key audiences?** If so, work with them to collect examples of their communications and note the dates so that you can review the impact, if any, on traffic to your public report Web site. Also track the number of newsletter articles or other materials your stakeholder partners produce to help promote your public report.
 - **Are you working with employers, providers, community groups, health plans, and others to link the report Web site to their intranet or public Web site?** If so, review the data on Google Analytics or other Web site traffic analysis software to see where the visitors came from. You should be able to tell when visitors get to your report Web site by clicking a link from a stakeholder partner's Web site.
 - **Are you working with the media, both traditional and bloggers, to cover your public report on TV, radio, print, and online media?** If so, track the number and type of media coverage. When a major story runs in the media, assess whether the number of report visitors increases and how they get to the report Web site (e.g., a link on the local newspaper's Web site).
 - **Will you have a presence on Twitter and Facebook?** Facebook automatically sends use statistics to organizations with pages, which will help in your

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evaluation. You also can track the number of followers and “reTweets” on Twitter.

These ideas provide a starting point to consider how to evaluate your communications planning and implementation. See Toolkit Resource 9b for a matrix template to customize.

Simple Matrix Template for Evaluating Your Public Report Promotion

NOTE: Use this basic evaluation form to get started in tracking and assessing the impact of your coordinated communication activities. Customize it to fit your Collaborative situation, public report specifics, and overall communication strategy. Over time, you will likely develop more advanced evaluation techniques.

Simple Evaluation Matrix for Basic Communication Activities

Public Report: Media Coverage	Baseline [date]	Week of Launch [date]	Media Story (title) [date]	Media Story (title) [date]
Web traffic - # page views				
Web traffic - # visitors				
Top 3 sources of visitors (type in URL, Google search, link from member org, etc.)				

Public Report: Social Media	Baseline [date]	Facebook Launch [date]	Twitter Launch [date]	Monthly Stats
Web traffic to public report - # page views				
Web traffic to public report - # visitors				
Top 3 sources of visitors (type in URL, Google search, link from member org, etc.)				
Followers on Facebook				
Followers on Twitter				
Number of ReTweets				

Public Report: Stakeholder Activity	Baseline [date]	Abc, Inc., Email to Employees re Report [date]	Main St. Clinic Patient Newsletter [date]	[Other...] [date]
Web traffic to public report - # page views				
Web traffic to public report - # visitors				
Followers on Facebook				
Followers on Twitter				
Number of ReTweets				