Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board of Health:

1. Receive this report for information.

Key Points

- Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health’s (WDGPH) Communications department reviews its activities on a quarterly basis and summarizes the key initiatives of each year in an annual report on Communications Highlights. These quarterly and annual reports use industry accepted standards for measuring the reach of various communication platforms. Metrics for Twitter, Facebook, web visits, media coverage and activities specific to the Medical Officer of Health help us understand who we are reaching and where we might invest more focus regarding targeted communications activities.

Discussion

n/a.

Conclusion

n/a.
Ontario Public Health Standard

Section 6.11 of the Ontario Public Health Organizational Standards:
The board of health shall ensure that the administration develops an overall communication strategy that is complementary to the program specific communication strategies required in the OPHS and its Protocols, and addresses both external and internal audiences.

WDGPH Strategic Direction(s)

Check all that apply:

☒ Health Equity
  We will provide programs and services that integrate health equity principles to reduce or eliminate health differences between population groups.

☒ Organizational Capacity
  We will improve our capacity to effectively deliver public health programs and services.

☒ Service Centred Approach
  We are committed to providing excellent service to anyone interacting with Public Health.

☒ Building Healthy Communities
  We will work with communities to support the health and well-being of everyone.

Health Equity

When communicating to the public about health issues, WDGPH must ensure that all messaging is accessible, meaningful and relevant to people whatever their social circumstances may be. By providing messaging online and many other formats there are a variety of ways that audiences can be engaged depending on their preference or need. For critical health messages or crisis communications it is important that multiple opportunities to receive messaging are available to everyone.

Appendices

Appendix “A” - The Organizational Communications Plan 2017.

References

n/a
Communications Report: Yearly Communications Highlights

2016

Summary of Activities

In 2016 the local media landscape changed dramatically when the only remaining daily newspaper in our area, The Guelph Mercury, closed its doors on January 29. While traditional media, including print and online newspapers, continues to play a significant role in communicating the work of Public Health, it is also essential that the Agency’s digital space continues to expand.

To that end, a new, mobile-friendly website was prepared for launch in early 2017; to continue to build on our well-established social media profiles; and to continuously explore and evaluate new channels, such as blogs, e-newsletters and videos.

In 2016, the Communications team managed media and public relations for a variety of high-profile issues, including:

The first infection control complaint against a registered health professional

- The team worked closely with Control of Infectious Diseases and the Medical Officer of Health within the Incident Management Structure (IMS). As part of the response, phone messages, letters, fact sheets, media lines and web/social media content were developed and deployed. Several high-profile media stories resulted, including interviews with Dr. Mercer on CTV Kitchener and CBC Kitchener-Waterloo and coverage in local newspapers and radio stations. Due to inquiries monitored on social media a blog post from Dr. Mercer clarified the role of Public Health in investigating registered health professionals.

Phase 2 of Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA) communications

- Communications worked with the Vaccine Preventable Disease team to inform parents of the need to update their children’s records and how to do so; after sending out over 2,400 letters, only 62 suspension notices were issued.

Agency Website Redesign

- In conjunction with Purchasing and IT, the Communications team reviewed Requests for Proposals (RFPs), interviewed and awarded the contract, gathered public input, created a new navigation (“information architecture”), audited every page on the
existing website and worked with program areas to write and edit content for the new website. To support the 2017 website launch, Communications prepared a video and public relations campaign to be rolled out in 2017 called *I am the public in public health*.

Communications also supported internal clients through:

- Library searches
- The weekly *Stay Well Informed* e-newsletter
- Graphic design services for print, web and social media
- Monitoring and circulating media coverage
- Distributing Board of Health agendas and reports to local LHINs and other stakeholders
- Completing a review and copy edit of main sections of the Agency *Emergency Response Plan*
- Completing a Health Equity Impact Assessment for Reception
- Facilitating a consultant review of the Agency phone system
- Prepared online and print editions of *Building Healthy Tomorrows Today, 2016-2020 Strategic Plan*

**By the Numbers**

In 2016, Communications:

- Edited and distributed **19 Physician Advisories**
- Wrote and distributed **15 media releases**
- Wrote/edited and published **49 blog posts that were delivered to over 500 subscribers**
- Sent **851 Tweets**
- Posted **508 times on Facebook**
- Published **49 news items on our website**
- Sourced **672 journal articles**

In return, Public Health:

- Was mentioned in **140 media stories** with the potential to be viewed **6.8 million times**
- Received **215,438 website and 9,210 blog visits**
- Was **mentioned 398 times on social media**
- Garnered **190 new Facebook followers**
- Gained **325 new Twitter followers**, surpassing the 3,000-follower mark
- Was followed by **100 new people on LinkedIn**
Websites

In 2016 there were 215,438 visits and a total of 605,407 page views on the Public Health website (www.wdgpublichealth.ca). These numbers are very similar to visits and page views in 2015. Visitors (including staff) were most likely to access the site via desktop/laptop computer (71%), mobile device/cellphone (24%) and tablet (5%).

The top-viewed pages behind the homepage were:

1. Jobs (26,671 views)
2. Clinic Location/Clinics (16,179 and 8,469 views respectively)
3. Contact Us (9,781 views)
4. Food Safety Certification (8,225 views)
5. Adults (7,843 views)
6. Teens Sexual Health (7,136 views)
7. Prenatal Classes (6,885 views)
8. Office Locations (6,470 views)
9. Parents & Parents-to-be (6,265 views)
10. Check Before You Choose Complaints (including complaints against registered health professionals, 5,675 views)

Other popular pages included Forms (4,925 views), Flu Clinics (4,667 views) and Beach Testing (4,524 views).
**APPENDIX “A”**

*Stay Well WDG.ca Blog*

This year was the first full year StayWellWDG.ca blog was live. It attracted 13,234 page views, with the average amount of time spent reading being 2 minutes 19 seconds. Blog posts are sent via email list to subscribers (which numbered 506 by year-end), as well as shared regularly on Twitter and Facebook from our corporate accounts. The radon blog also became part of the campaign to promote our three radon clinics in the fall.

Blog posts will be promoted more heavily under the wdgpublichealth.ca website umbrella as part of the website redesign.

The most-read posts of the year were:

1. Do you need to test for radon? (940 views)
2. 5 Myths about e-cigarettes (404 views)
3. Rabies is back (350 views)
4. How to say No to Norovirus in your home (343 views)
5. Inspecting Regulated Health Professionals: Public Health’s Role (286 views)

*Check Before You Choose*

Communications supports efforts to publicize the CheckBeforeYouChoose.ca website, which is host to public health inspection reports for food services (such as restaurants) and personal service settings (such as nail salons).

In 2016, Check Before You Choose had 10,903 visits, with visitors viewing an average of 12.3 pages per session. This resulted in a total of 134,305 page views. In terms of how visitors access the site, 52% of visits were from a desktop computer, 38% were from a mobile device (e.g., cellphone) and 9% were from a tablet computer.

*ImmunizeWDG.ca*

In its first full year of operation, available web metrics suggest the site received 1,661 page views in 2016, with visitors spending an average of 4 minutes 49 seconds on the site. Metrics also suggest users preferred to access the site via desktop computer (67%) compared to mobile device (9%) or tablet (1%). More reliable statistics will be available when the form is brought into the WDGPublicHealth.ca domain.

*Media*

In 2016 the local media landscape changed drastically with the closing of the Guelph Mercury. There are no longer any daily newspapers that service Wellington, Dufferin or Guelph. It is therefore unsurprising that our media coverage decreased significantly (by over one-third) from 2015 to 2016. Still, Public Health was mentioned in 140 stories that garnered a potential 6.8 million impressions.
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Of those stories, 44% were in publications that produce both print and online versions; 28% were on websites (anything from blogs to online-only news sources like GuelphToday.com), 23% were on radio (and radio websites), and 5.6% were on broadcast on TV and online.

Of the 15 media releases Communications wrote and distributed in 2016; 87% were picked up by media outlets. Rita Sethi was profiled and promoted immunization in the Children’s Foundation of Guelph and Wellington – *Free to Play Program* publication.

Topics that received significant media coverage included:

- RMG infection control lapse (first quarter)
- Radon and radon testing (fourth quarter)
- Basic income/living wage
- Flu
- Immunization of school pupils
- Blue-green algae bloom at Belwood Lake
- Heat warnings
- Beach testing
- Lyme disease
- West Nile virus
- E-cigarettes
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Social Media

Facebook

In November 2015 Communications launched an Agency Facebook page. Over the course of 2016 190 followers were added for a total of 233 by year-end. Generally, original content is posted and shared; other organizations’ content is posted once or twice per day; in 2016 there were 507 posts. Content posted to the Agency’s Facebook page is seen by fewer people than on Twitter, but has a longer “shelf-life” in their news feeds.

Top (most-clicked) content included:

- The first cold weather alert of the year (508 clicks, 39 shares)
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- Radon blog post: Do you need to test your home for radon? (25 shares, 261 link clicks, potential reach of over 10,000 people)
- Riverview Medical Group (RMG) infection control notice (19 shares, 158 clicks)
- Did you or your 17-year-old get a message about their immunizations? (23 shares, 230 clicks)
- New website survey (to help us build our new website) (3 shares, 61 clicks)
- March break immunization clinics (8 shares, 51 clicks)
- Blue-green algae found at Belwood Lake (7 shares, 38 clicks)
- New library resource kits from Public Health (5 shares, 33 clicks)

Twitter

In 2016, 325 new Twitter followers were added, growing from 2,780 to 3,105 by the end of December. 852 messages were tweeted or shared. Each message has the potential to be seen by all of our followers, as well as the followers of any user who re-tweets our message.

Twitter content varies between health promotion messages, organizational information (hours, closures) and sharing health information from our website/blog as well as other reputable sources.

Our followers found the following message most clickable and shareable:

- Riverview Medical Clinic: Reached 4,013 people; received 103 clicks and 2 shares
- Turkey tips (link to our blog): 96 clicks
- Beaches posted for bacteria: up to 55 clicks, 5 shares per post
- Radon testing information: 57 clicks, 3 shares
- Are e-cigarettes safe? (link to a Sunnybrook hospital article): 32 clicks, 1 share
- Mental Health Status Report (15 clicks, 12 shares)

LinkedIn

We continue to post select career opportunities and web content/blog posts to LinkedIn. In 2016, we posted 32 times and added 101 new followers (499, up from 398 in 2015).

Client service

To enhance customer service and comply with Section 5.5 of the Ontario Public Health Operational Standards, Communications designed and implemented a Client Satisfaction survey to evaluate service delivery. Clients are invited to complete a comment card when visiting a public health office.
APPENDIX “A”

In 2016, 141 cards were completed. The results of the survey indicated:

- 6 people were not satisfied (4%)
- 12 people were very unsatisfied (8%)
- 13 people were satisfied (9%)
- 108 were very satisfied (76%)
- 3 people did not answer (2%)

Clients surveyed had visited Public Health for a variety of reasons including:

- Immunization and clinical services
- Wee Talk appointments
- Travel clinics
- Dental care, health protection services
- Harm reduction assistance

Many of the positive comments reflected the commenter's experience with Public Health staff. For example:

- "I have always been treated very well by staff, very respectful."
- "Front desk staff and nurses are awesome! Everyone is very kind and friendly."
- "Everyone myself and my son have been in contact with have been wonderful."

Negative comments tended to relate to frustration with wait times. For example:

- "There seems to be a problem with 9:00 am scheduling appointments. Now 9:15 and my appointment was for 9."
- "Very slow. Had to wait just to get new refill."

These findings will help form the benchmark for future client service initiatives to ensure we are providing an optimal client experience.

Library

In addition to sourcing 672 journal articles (249 from other libraries), the Library was involved in several large projects and committees in 2016:

- Completed a literature search for the CQI (Continuous Quality Improvement) LDCP (Locally Driven Collaborative Project) scoping review in conjunction with the Librarian at Kingston/ Frontenac Public Health, generating approximately 18,000 results of academic and grey literature. (A related poster presentation is forthcoming at The Ontario Public Health Convention – TOPHC – in April 2017).
- Assumed responsibility for the Document Management Lead activities in the IMS structure during the infection control lapse event
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- Corporate Services representative member of the Research and Ethics committee

The Librarian also provided literature searches on topics such as:

- Reference checks for new hires
- Nursing documentation using electronic medical records
- Healthcare providers sexual health services to older adults
- Food literacy
- Environmental links to breast cancer

Reception

Clinical statistics show that in the last six months (July – December) of 2016 there were 9,500 clients visiting our clinics. Almost all of those appointments were booked by phone and then received in person by Reception. Over the full year this could have been as many as 20,000 clients handled by phone or in person by Reception.

Reception supports the whole Agency, not just the clinical programs. Telephone reports indicate Public Health receives about 1000 calls a week. These call volumes go higher during seasonal activities like flu clinics and ISPA audits.

Medical Officer of Health (MOH)

The MOH gave 9 interviews resulting in 1.2 million media impressions (includes media hardcopy and websites).

Topics included:

- Two interviews about student immunizations and suspensions (Immunization of School Pupils Act; ISPA).
- Seven interviews about the infection control incident at Riverview Medical Group (RMG), Upper Level.

MOH media quotes

The MOH was quoted 44 times based on media releases or BOH presentations resulting in 2.5 million media impressions (includes media hardcopy and websites).

Topics included:

- Student immunizations and suspensions (ISPA)
- Infection control incident at Riverview Medical Group (RMG), Upper Level
- Basic Income Guarantee
- Weather alerts (heat, cold)
- Public health inspections (tobacco enforcement)
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- Patients First
- Syrian Refugees
- West Nile virus and ticks/Lyme disease
- Flu shot
- Radon
- Rabies
- Harm Reduction (alcohol)

Social media

Four blog posts from the MOH went directly to 550 subscribers, 3100 twitter followers and each posted on our webpage and Facebook account.

- Inspecting regulated health professionals – Public Health’s role
- Is Your Family Up-to-date?
- Supporting Syrian refugees in their new beginnings
- What is the Basic Income Guarantee?

Publications


Ongoing Communication Metrics and Planning

Measuring is as important as planning. Each applicable communications activity is planned with a component to measure its impact as best as possible using industry-standard methodologies. Communications creates quarterly reports of activities during the current operating year and regularly updates the annual Organizational Communication Plan to reflect new technologies and changing communications priorities or emerging opportunities. These documents are available on The Core under Support Services/Communications.