Organizational Communications Plan
2017

TO: Chair and members of the Board of Health

MEETING DATE: June 7, 2017

REPORT NO: BH.01.JUN0717.R19

PREPARED BY: Chuck Ferguson, Manager, Communications

APPROVED BY: Elizabeth Bowden, Interim Director, Administrative Services

SUBMITTED BY: Original signed document on file

Dr. Nicola J. Mercer, MD, MBA, MPH, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health & CEO

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board of Health:

1. Receive this report for information.

Key Points

- Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health’s (WDGPH) Organizational Communication Plan informs the day-to-day work of the Communications Team regarding target audience, resource allocation and staff assignments.
- Communications supports all Agency staff by assisting them in developing communications plans and by providing design, writing, and editing services while arranging for print and delivery of materials.
- Along with agency-wide communication to the general public, Communications staff are specifically responsible for media relations, crisis communications and communication from the MOH to physicians, healthcare providers and community partners.
- Integrated communications will ensure the Agency’s messaging is consistent across multiple audiences and platforms.
- Audiences receive messages more clearly when they trust the source. Communications will work to enhance trust by promoting and strengthening the Public Health brand; enhancing and protecting the Agency’s reputation; encouraging public engagement; and reinforcing key health messages for residents of Wellington, Dufferin and Guelph.
The Organizational Communication Plan has a map of all the communication channels currently available to WDGPH and the audiences they have been designed to reach (see Appendix “A”, page 14).

Discussion

n/a.

Conclusion

n/a.

Ontario Public Health Standard

From 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

Communicating to the public in general or to specific audiences raises about health issues 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. For critical health messages or crisis communications it is critical that multiple opportunities to receive messaging are available to everyone in the communities we serve.

Appendices

Appendix “A” - The Organizational Communications Plan 2017.

References

n/a.
APPENDIX “A”

Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health

Organizational Communications Plan

May 2017
Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health Communications

This *Organizational Communications Plan* informs the Agency regarding the general direction and approach of WDG Public Health’s communications goals and activities over the coming year. This Organizational Communications Plan reflects a more detailed Operational Plan for the Communications department in 2017.

Many initiatives will have a communications plan specific to a program goal or campaign. These individual plans identify audience, key messages, how success will be measured and what are the risks and mitigations. The Communications Team ensures all communications activities are integrated by supporting and coordinating:

- program messaging
- media relations
- stakeholder communications
- public relations
- internal communications
- client service standards
- issues management
- crisis communications
- reception messaging

Integrated communications will ensure the Agency’s messaging is consistent across multiple audiences and platforms. Because of the diversity of audiences and the plurality of messages there could be inconsistent impressions of who Public Health is and what it does. Communications has developed a variety of online and hardcopy platforms for communicating to the right audience at the right time using a consistent style under a well-established brand.

Audiences receive messages more clearly when they trust the source. Communications will work to enhance trust by promoting and strengthening the Public Health brand; enhancing and protecting the Agency’s reputation; encouraging public engagement; and reinforcing key health messages for residents of Wellington, Dufferin and Guelph.

With social media at the forefront, Public Health does not just send out messages for audiences to receive. Social media means Public Health is involved in conversations and receive comments directly from stakeholders on social media platforms. A clear protocol guides Public Health’s engagement with audiences on social media, but inviting their input and responding to their questions in real time adds a whole new dimension to engaging our audiences. The Communications Team uses several social media platforms to drive overall Agency engagement online and supports specific program social media initiatives.
COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health’s Organizational Communication Plan informs the day-to-day work of the Communications Team regarding target audience, resource allocation and staff assignments.

The overarching goal of the Communications Team is to deliver the right message through the right channels to achieve Public Health’s strategic, operational and communications goals.

- Chuck Ferguson, Manager Communications
- Jill Davies, Communications Specialist (on leave)
- Brian McKechnie, Communications Specialist (contract for leave)
- Sharon Ord, Communications Specialist
- Maria Simpson, Communications Specialist
- Tanya Harron, Librarian
- Kim Underwood, Program Assistant

AGENCY STRATEGIC PLAN

Communications works within the following framework of Building Healthy Tomorrows Today 2016-2020: Strategic Plan.

Vision: Everyone has the opportunity for health and well-being.

Mission: Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health uses an innovative approach to deliver evidence-informed programs and services to meet the distinctive needs of our communities.

Mandate: The Province of Ontario mandates Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health to provide programs and services that prevent disease, protect health and promote the well-being of individuals.


Strategic Directions: Health Equity/Organizational Capacity/Service Centred Approach/Building Healthy Communities.
ONTARIO PUBLIC HEALTH STANDARDS

The work of Communications aligns with a new emphasis in the soon to be implemented modernized Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS) on research, knowledge exchange and communication. The modernized OPHS states:

*Promoting and protecting the public’s health requires effective communication. Various communication strategies may be needed to ensure the greatest impact, depending on the population, local context, available resources, and local and provincial priorities.*

This *Organizational Communication Plan* has taken into consideration the changes being made to the overall healthcare system to strengthen patient-centred care and health equity (*Bill 41, Patients First Act 2016*).

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS MAP AND DETAILS

The Communication Channels Map (see page 14) shows the public website as central to all Agency messaging and the channels available to reach various audiences. The details of the channels map shows some of the opportunities found in different communications vehicles.
# Communications Goals

**GOAL #1:** Enhance trust and credibility with the public and stakeholders through the distribution of timely and accurate information.

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<tr>
<th>What will be achieved</th>
<th>How will it be achieved</th>
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| Enhance the visibility of the Public Health brand and the public’s awareness of the Agency’s work. | • Provide communications templates for staff use.  
  • Conduct ongoing scans of communications materials to ensure they meet brand standards while updating templates to they meet the needs of Public Health but are accessible and easy to use by stakeholders. |
| Provide collaborative cost-effective communications consulting services to internal clients in the areas of:  
  • content review  
  • graphic design  
  • print production  
  • media relations  
  • website and social media  
  • photography and video production  
  • library research  
  • copyright and permissions | • Develop comprehensive communications plans that outline the objectives, audience, key messages, timeline, tactics and budget of each project.  
  • Update the Agency Style Guide and post it on The Core so staff have a consistent reference for style, spelling, format and punctuation.  
  • Evaluation of all Agency communications initiatives to ensure they effectively and efficiently reach their intended audience. |
| Increase community awareness of public health as a key part of the local health care system | • Launch an “I am the public in Public Health” campaign in the fall of 2017 to increase awareness of the difference Public Health makes in the lives of our clients and the communities where they live. |
**GOAL #2: Promote programs and services to the public using the new robust website.**

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<th>What will be achieved</th>
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<tr>
<td>Steer the public and other stakeholders (health care providers, schools, day care providers) to our website as the primary source of information about our programs and services.</td>
<td>• Develop our website as the main destination for information from Public Health. Ensure that any changes or additions to the website are user-friendly, easily searchable and compatible with mobile devices.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ensure our website provides local, relevant information regarding information located under main navigation headings: Your Health, Your Kids, Your Home, Your Community, Clinics &amp; Classes.</td>
<td>• Continuously update our website with timely information about Public Health’s evidence-based programs and services.</td>
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<td>Ensure our website meets the information and communications standards under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation as part of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).</td>
<td>• Conduct an external accessibility audit of our website and modify, revise as necessary.</td>
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**GOAL #3: Use social media platforms to promote Public Health messages and for the rapidly share important health messaging in “real time” whenever necessary.**

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<th>What will be achieved</th>
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| Use of social media to engage the public and share important Public Health messages. | • Use social media to distribute public health information to the stakeholders in our communities.  
- Post a weekly blog on an important public health topic that will be of interest to a wide public audience.  
- Promote Facebook as one of the ways the public can obtain daily/weekly updates and health information about clinics and classes.  
- Utilize Twitter for the daily distribution of Public Health messages.  
- Post and promote relevant videos on our YouTube channel. |

Social media platforms will inform the public about routine messages that are trusted and will establish credibility with a wide variety of audiences who choose to follow us.

• Monitor and respond to social media comments and encourage dialogue with Public Health on issues relevant to our mandate.

• Use social media platforms, including the corporate blog, to position Public Health as an essential part of the local health care system.

Social media will be an integral part of the Agency’s emergency response plan through crisis communications plans ensuring immediate and widespread dissemination of key messages that will enhance the Agency’s ability to protect the public from health risks.

• Use Twitter (and other social media platforms as appropriate) during an incident or emergency of public importance.

GOAL #4: Assist with positioning Public Health as a trusted source of population health information for health care partners and community stakeholders.

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<th>What will be achieved</th>
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<td>Ensure stakeholders get the population health information they need as soon as possible.</td>
<td>• Continue to send physicians’ advisories and updates as approved by the Medical Officer of Health.</td>
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<td>• Work with programs and Health Analytics to provide population health information in plain language that meets brand standards.</td>
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<td>• Make the Community Report, Board Highlights and other relevant communications pieces readily available to stakeholders.</td>
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<td>• Continue to liaise with a local network of professional communicators from the WWLHIN, public health units, hospitals, CCACs, etc.</td>
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<td>• Post useful information for health care providers, schools and day cares on our website.</td>
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GOAL #5: Ensure health equity principles inform proactive and reactive communications initiatives.

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<th>What will be achieved</th>
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| Ensure everyone has access to Public Health information regardless of their economic or social status so they can be supported by the appropriate program to achieve their optimum health. | • Add a new component to our communications plan to address health equity by considering the needs of priority populations and how to communicate important Public Health messages to them.  
• Our librarian will assist in conducting research regarding evidence-informed best practices.  
• Communications will play a role on the Health Equity Committee and help committee members communicate priorities throughout the Agency. |

GOAL #6: Develop and maintain a positive and proactive relationship with local media outlets in Wellington, Dufferin and Guelph, as well as national media outlets when the opportunity arises.

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<th>What will be achieved</th>
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| Develop positive working relationships with local media outlets.  
Position the Medical Officer of Health as the primary spokesperson for WDGPH – with directors, managers and staff who are recognized experts in their field as spokespeople when appropriate. | • Ensure that media releases, advisories and story pitches are timely, relevant and of interest to a wide local audience.  
• Respond to media inquiries as quickly as possible to answer questions and to provide an appropriate spokesperson by the reporter’s news deadline.  
• Update media toolkit.  
• Work with media spokesperson by providing background information, key messaging and interview preparation.  
• Equip the MOH with public presentations that show the impact and added value of Public Health to residents, clients, and health care providers and their patients.  
Develop a presentation template with organizational key messages that |
reflect the modernized standards and can be used by any Public Health staff presenting in the community.

GOAL #7: Provide open and responsive communication with the public through a client feedback process.

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<th>What will be achieved</th>
<th>How it will be achieved</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ensure clients are satisfied with programs and services and that expectations are exceeded.</td>
<td>• Refresh our current client feedback process by making some revisions to the client comment card, including an online survey and a takeaway business card with the URL to the survey.</td>
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<td>• Develop an Agency client service philosophy and strategy that articulates Public Health’s high standards regarding interactions with clients and equips staff to deliver services that exceed the expectations of those coming to Public Health for services.</td>
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GOAL #8: Provide professional reception services that serve the needs of programs interacting with the public and clients calling Public Health for services or information.

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<th>What will be achieved</th>
<th>How it will be achieved</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Ensure client needs are taken into consideration when using reception services.</td>
<td>• Ensure reception understands which programs or staff are best able to help a client seeking services or asking questions about Public Health.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Be professional, empathetic and responsive to client needs so their initial or repeated first contact with Public Health encourages them to use our services with confidence.</td>
<td>• Ensure reception is equipped with the information, training and tools they need to respond knowledgably to inquiries from the public, clients or stakeholders.</td>
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GOAL #9: Provide staff and the Board of Health with value-added internal communications, in addition to training for staff as needed.

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<th>What will be achieved</th>
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| Engage staff and the Board of Health in the work of the organization and support their understanding of our mandate. | • Work with Human Resources to provide orientation to Communications for new hires.  
• Use The Core (staff intranet) to build an Agency culture that moves beyond program silos to a better understanding of Agency-wide issues and an increased understanding of the work of our colleagues. |
| Ensure staff have the library support and access to resources they require to do their work. | • Provide literature searches and other library services as requested. |

GOAL #10: Manage risk communication during an incident or emergency that has the potential to affect the reputation of the organization or the health of the community.

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<th>What will be achieved</th>
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| Effectively manage risk or crisis communications.                                    | • Use the processes and tools in the Crisis Communications Plan (a component of the organization’s *Emergency Response Plan*) during an incident or emergency.  
• The Reception Coordinator will ensure messaging and scripting during a crisis is consistent and up-to-date for receptionists interacting with the public. |
| Ensure positive relationships with stakeholders and the media, in addition to having open lines of communication with the public which becomes all the more critical during an emergency. | • Regularly update our media contact list and work closely with all local (and at times national) media outlets.  
• Maintain the Emergency Response Management System and use it when vital information must get to community stakeholders in a dependable and fast format. |
KEY MESSAGES

Key messages are an essential component of every communications plan. They establish Public Health as a trusted and credible source of health information, and they ensure everyone speaking on behalf of the organization speaks with one voice. The Communications Team works with content experts in the development of clear, concise and consistent messages that are used across every communications platform. Each key message is reinforced by two or three supportive facts.

The Communications Team proactively looks for opportunities to promote the organizations’ key messages. All communication is tailored to meet the needs of various audiences including those with limited English proficiency and health literacy.

Every communications plan includes an evaluation component to assess whether messages reach and are understood by various target audiences and if the initiative was successful in reaching its goals.

AUDIENCES & COMMUNICATIONS VEHICLES

Communications works to meet the needs of a variety of audiences using the most appropriate communications’ vehicles for the message.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Communications Channels</th>
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| **Board of Health** | • BOH Highlights  
|                  | • Media Release Coverage  
|                  | • Community Report  
|                  | • Stay Well Informed E-Newsletter                           |
| The Board of Health is comprised of elected representatives from Wellington and Dufferin Counties, and the City of Guelph; as well as local representatives appointed by the provincial government. BOH members regularly have opportunities to share Public Health messages with residents of their communities. |

| **Public** | • Website (Mobile Friendly)  
|           | • Social Media  
|           | • Media Releases  
|           | • Community Report  
|           | • Fact Sheets  
|           | • Lobby Materials/Screen  
|           | • Newspaper Advertisements  
|           | • Videos  
| The residents of Wellington County, Dufferin County and the City of Guelph, both clients and non-clients, are the intended audience of most of our communications. |
|           | • Custom Items (brochures, posters, flyers, banners, signage, etc.) |
| **Physicians & Health Care Providers** | • Physicians Advisories & Updates are distributed through ERMS.  
• Letters (e.g., infection control)  
• Program Materials (e.g., cold chain information)  
• Public Health Forms (e.g., vaccine ordering) |
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<td>Physicians are an important audience for the Medical Officer of Health. Communications distributes information to this group on her behalf.</td>
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| **Government** | • Community Report  
• Letters  
• Advisories  
• Marketing Materials |
| The Board of Health consists, in part, of government representatives from local municipalities. The Communications Team and other WDGPG staff have established working relationships with other municipal staff and share information with them as needed. | |
| At times, there are opportunities to share information with MPPs and other provincial government officials. | |
| **Community Stakeholders** | • Website  
• Social Media  
• Marketing Materials  
• Joint Media Releases  
• Newspaper Advertisements  
• Reports |
| WDGPH participates in many stakeholder groups. The Communications Team often provides communications expertise either directly by participating on a committee or indirectly by supporting a staff representative. | |
| **Staff** | • The Core  
• Stay Well Informed  
• Templates  
• Web Training  
• Social Media Training  
• Photography & Videography |
| The Communications Team provides staff with opportunities to share professional and extra-curricular information with each other. The Communications Team offers opportunities for staff to learn more about communications tools. | |
| **Media** | • Media Releases  
• Media Advisories  
• Photo Opportunities  
• Story Pitches  
• Interviews  
• Newspaper Advertising  
• Radio Advertising  
• Community Board |
| The Communications Team monitors and shares media mentions with the BOH, MOH, appropriate staff and on The Core. The local media is generally very supportive of WDGPH and picks up the quotations of the MOH. A local media | |
scan shows there are about 25 small-to-medium market media outlets in the area.

In addition to the following local outlets, WDGPH has received national coverage from Global Television.

**Local Newspapers:**
- Guelph Mercury Tribune
- Orangeville Banner
- Orangeville Citizen
- Wellington Advertiser (Fergus, Drayton)
- Fergus-Elora News Express (Metroland)
- Minto Express (Metroland)
- Arthur Enterprise (Metroland)
- Erin Advocate
- Puslinch Pioneer
- Shelburne Free Press
- The Record (KW/Cambridge/Guelph)
- Ontarian (U of G)

**Local Radio:**
- Bayshore Broadcasting Dufferin
- County 105 Shelburne
- Erin 91.7
- Magic 106.1 / CJOY 1460
- MyFM Orangeville
- The Grand (Fergus)
- CBC Kitchener

**Local Online News:**
- Guelph Now
- Guelph Today
- Orangeville Today
- The Fountain Pebn

**Local Cable TV News:**
- Cogeco Fergus
- Rogers Dufferin
- Rogers Guelph

- Twitter
### Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health

#### COMMUNICATION CHANNELS IN DETAIL

**WDG PUBLIC HEALTH WEBSITE & BLOG**

<table>
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<th>Supports strategic directions:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Service-centred approach</td>
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<td>- Health Equity</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Building Healthy Communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Organizational Capacity</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key content:</th>
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<td>- Provide value</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Timely</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Client focused</td>
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<td>- Transparent</td>
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<th>Non-negotiable:</th>
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<tr>
<td>- BOH content (agendas, reports, committees, bylaws etc.)</td>
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<td>- P&amp;Rs (act manager discretion)</td>
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<td>- Emergencies and alerts</td>
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### HOUSED ON WEBSITE

- **ImmunizeWDG.ca**
- **School Absenteeism Reporting System**
- **Career Portal (Nouys)**
- **Bridges Out of Poverty**

### PERIPHERAL & PARTNER SITES

- **Wee Talk**
- **Growing Great Kids**
- **Check Before You Choose**

### SOCIAL NETWORKS

- **WDOG Twitter**
  - Broadcast updates during emergencies
  - Connect with community partners
  - Share news, updates from other health networks, health units, etc.
  - Message Repe: Short (approximately 140 characters)

- **Facebook**
  - Sharing Public Health stories and updates
  - Sharing partner content
  - Message Repe: Short (5-50 characters)

- **YouTube**
  - Talks to the story of Public Health visually, video and audio
  - Message Repe: Long-form (90-180 seconds)

- **LinkedIn**
  - Connects with job-seekers, career seekers, and community partners/leaders
  - Job postings
  - Thought leadership pieces
  - Showcases the breadth and depth of Public Health work and impact it has on the community
  - Message Repe: Medium (240-280 characters)

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<th>SUPPORTED MEDIA</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Google Business/Maps</td>
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<td>- Let’s Talk Parenting Facebook/Twitter</td>
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<td>- Pregnancy to Parenting Facebook Group</td>
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**Connecting people to Public Health Services**

- **WDG Twitter**
  - Staff Hub for internal resources, training and information
  - Staff Support Services include:
    - Human Resources
    - Finance
    - Library
    - Corporate Communications
  - Facilities
  - Privacy
  - Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
  - Ethics Review
  - Health & Safety
  - WDOG Analytics

- **Board of Health Portal (Leading Boards)**
  - A place for Board of Health members to access:
    - Agenda
    - Minutes
    - Open session documents
    - Closed session documents

- **Community Partner Collaboration Space**
  - External partners can log in
  - Document collaboration
  - Launch date TBD

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<th>NEWSLETTERS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- WDOG Newsletters</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Let’s Talk Parenting/Pregnancy</td>
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<tr>
<td>- One Health (Nets)</td>
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<tr>
<th>LOBBY AREAS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Lobby Screens</td>
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<td>- Lobby Brochures</td>
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<th>PHYSICIANS</th>
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<td>- Advisories</td>
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<td>- Media Releases</td>
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<th>MEDIA</th>
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**LET’S TALK PARENTING/PREGNANCY**

- E-newsletter (formerly WDOGLINE (Quarterly Let’s Grow))
  - Focus on pregnancy and parenting, age-specific content:
    - From birth to school age
  - Tangerine: Parents and parents-to-be
  - Subscribed on our website, distributed through MailChimp

**ONE HEALTH (NETS)**

- E-newsletter
  - Focus on improving communication in the One Health community in WDG

**ORAL HEALTH UPDATE**

- E-newsletter
  - Focus on providing information to local dentists
  - Email quarterly by dental team to their list of dental offices
  - Communications support includes content editing/design

**HEALTHY SCHOOLS eBULLETIN**

- Email newsletter, sent to select local school boards to forward to teachers
  - Launching Fall 2017

**STAY WELL WDG Blog**

- Public can subscribe to blog to get weekly posts directly to email

**BOH HIGHLIGHTS**

- One-page summary of BOH meetings
  - Sent to directors and BOH, regional councils, LHIN's
  - Prepared monthly, posted on news section of website

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*Not managed by Communications*