

## STEP 10: Establish & Implement a Communication Plan

A communication plan clarifies how the community can share the vision with others, promote the **published** needs assessment and health improvement plan, and “make things happen.” To develop goals and objectives, planners must determine priority audiences, desired results, key messages, strategies and tactics, and partners.

### To identify your **PRIORITY AUDIENCES**, ask the team...

Whose opinions or actions are most important to the success of the CHNA & HIP process and the implementation of goals and strategies?

**Next**



Identify potential target audiences and choose two to three of most importance.

### Sample Target Audiences for Communication Plans

- ✓ Policymakers, including elected officials
- ✓ Private sector health organizations, including managed care organizations
- ✓ Private sector employers
- ✓ Medical societies and other health professional associations
- ✓ School and education leaders
- ✓ State voluntary organizations with local affiliates
- ✓ Public health leaders and program managers
- ✓ Front-line public health and hospital staff
- ✓ Grass roots groups with the capacity to address health objectives
- ✓ Potential community advocates for priorities

### To determine your **DESIRED RESULTS**, ask the team...

What do you want each target audience to know or do?

**Then**



Be specific! The final plan and marketing materials should be designed, either explicitly or subtly, to achieve the desired outcome.

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**To identify your KEY MESSAGES, ask the team...**For each audience, what are the main messages to communicate?

Things to consider when developing messages...

Perhaps your main message is that this is a “people’s plan,” a call to action, or a measure of the current path to success. Whatever your message, be sure to identify key words and phrases that support it. If your target population responds favorably to “milestones,” “action plans,” and “steps to success” but turns off when they hear “objectives” or “benchmarks” or “social determinants,” include the preferred words in your key messages. Remember to be consistent with vocabulary. Key messages should be reinforced in all communications about the plan, including slogans, conference presentations, press releases, and executive summaries.

**When developing COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES AND TACTICS, ask the team...**How will you reach each audience?

**REMEMBER:** Strategies describe your general communication approach. For some audiences and purposes, the best strategy may be to blanket the audience with messages about the plan in a short time period. For others, your strategy might be to selectively promote the plan in connection with timely events (e.g., budget hearings) over several years. Assess the communication environment of the target audience. The way to reach policy makers may be through their staff or targeted newsletters, whereas the way to reach leadership may be through an annual conference or posters at work. List the marketing strategies with a budget in mind. However, a longer menu of marketing options can help identify communication opportunities and resources in the future.

**Finally, when identifying your COMMUNICATION PARTNERS, ask the team...**Who can help us reach our audience?

Tip:

General media, special interest media, advocacy organizations, public relations offices, health education units, graphics departments, private health care organizations and professional organizations with newsletters or web sites may be excellent partners.