

Comms Crash Course: Podcasting to Amplify Public Health Messages

WEDNESDAY, MAY 14

12:30 – 2:00 pm ET / 9:30 – 11:00 am PT

This event will be recorded. The recording and slides will be available on publichealthcollaborative.org later this week.

All attendees are automatically muted upon entry.

Explore publichealthcollaborative.org

- Sign up for the **PHCC newsletter**
- Download **resources** to share with **your community**
- Review **new messaging** on **emergent public health issues**
- Get the latest **trending health alerts**
- Take a **PHCC Academy training**



Closed Captioning

If you'd like to use closed captions: Hover over the “More” button button on the bottom of your Zoom screen.

- Live closed captioning is being provided by AI Media.

Meet Today's Experts



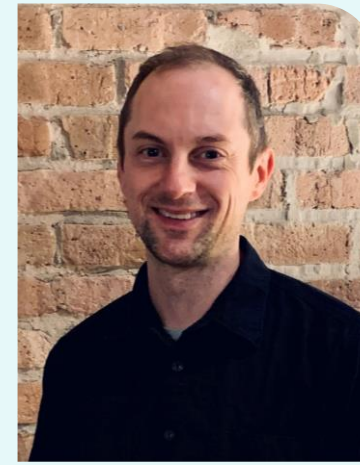
Emily Kwong
Co-Host and Reporter
Short Wave



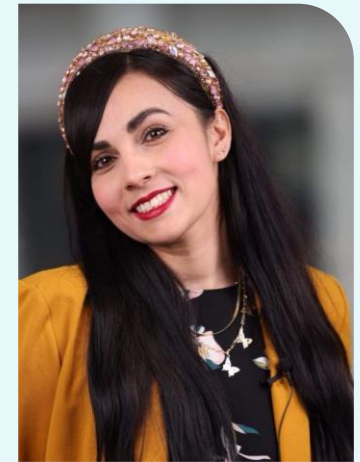
Daniella Barreto
Host
Public Health is Dead



Natalie Esparza
Marketing Manager
North Sound ACH



Josh Zanger
Producer
Healthy Chicago Podcast



Cynthia Ibarra
Producer
Healthy Chicago Podcast

PODCASTING

FOR

PUBLIC HEALTH

Daniella Barreto



HOW I GOT HERE...



DANIELLA BARRETO
MSc. Population & Public Health
BSc. Health Science

PLACES I'VE WORKED



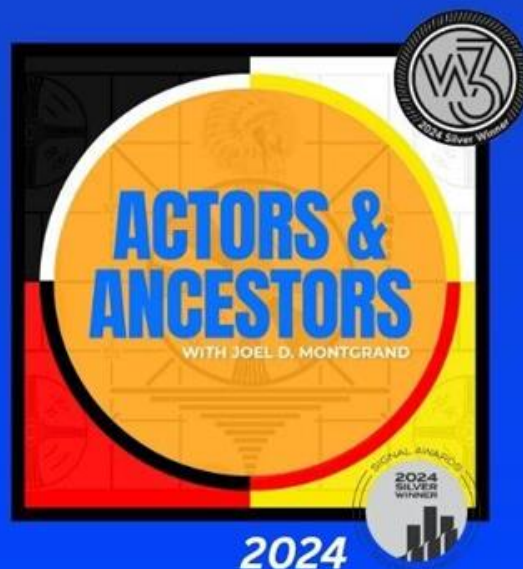
BRITISH COLUMBIA
CENTRE for EXCELLENCE
in HIV/AIDS



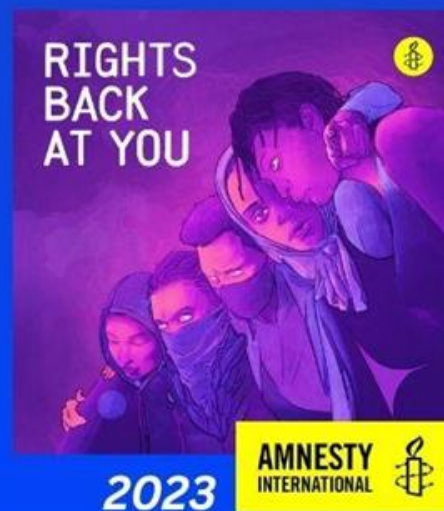
PODCASTS I'VE MADE



NEW!



2024



2023



2017

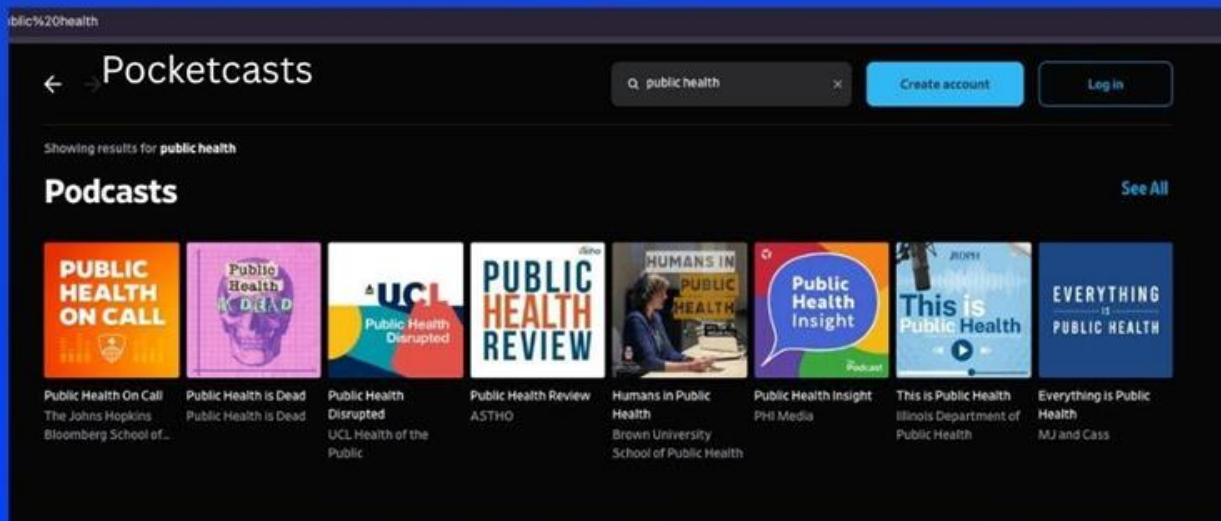


2

STAGES FROM PITCH TO PUBLISH



Podcast landscape for public health



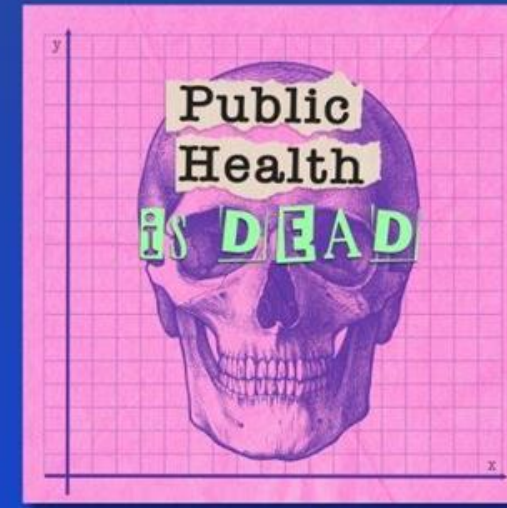
IN GENERAL

- Overall heavy rep from universities
- Some similar names
- Some similar colours (better than before!)
- Audio quality varies significantly
- A lot of “expert interviews”
- Potential for brand risk/concern

Generally, people listen to podcasts for 3 main reasons:

**TO LEARN SOMETHING
TO BE ENTERTAINED
FOR CONNECTION**

And podcasts are a fast growing part of the information ecosystem.

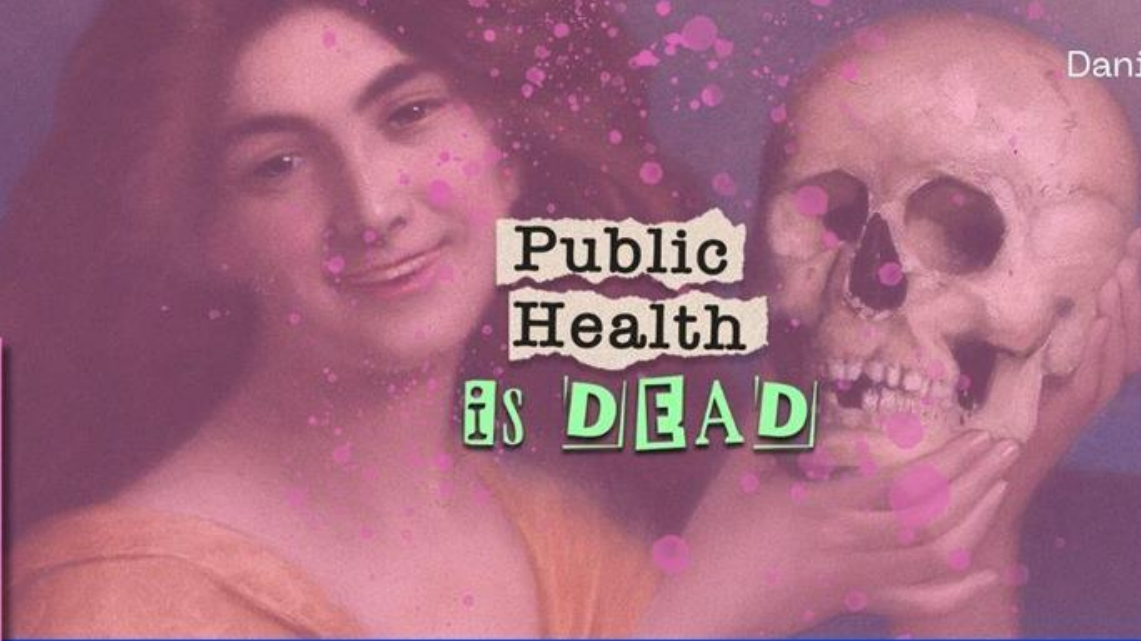


PURPOSE/GOALS

- Bring together critical voices, build connections
- Fill a gap: engaging, independent, well-produced public health podcast
- Use storytelling to counter anti-science attitudes
- Share research and information, contribute something useful to the field
- Take a creative risk, make a *good* indie show!!

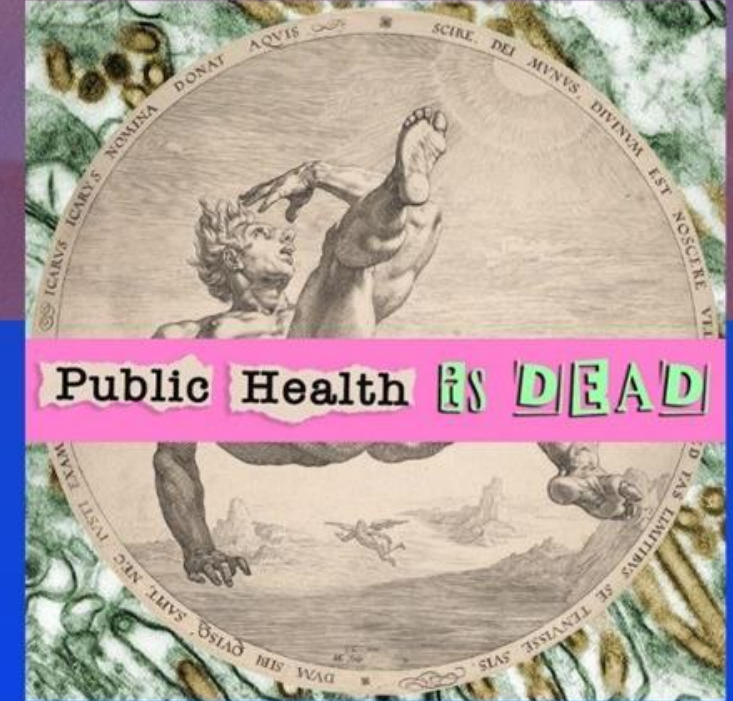
Target Audience:

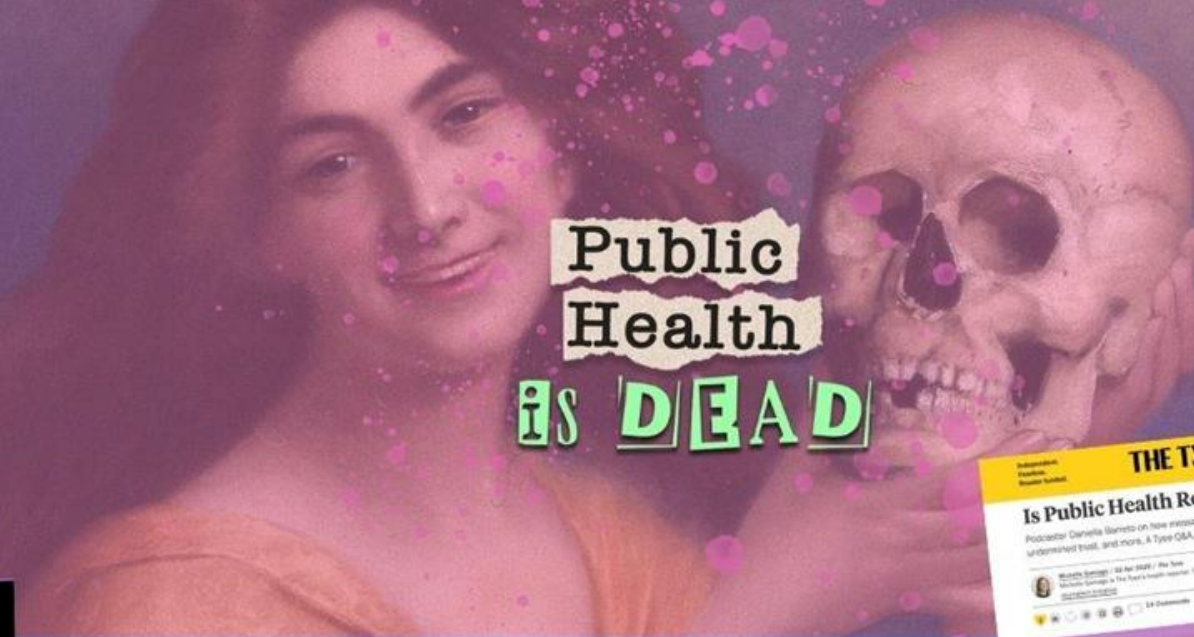
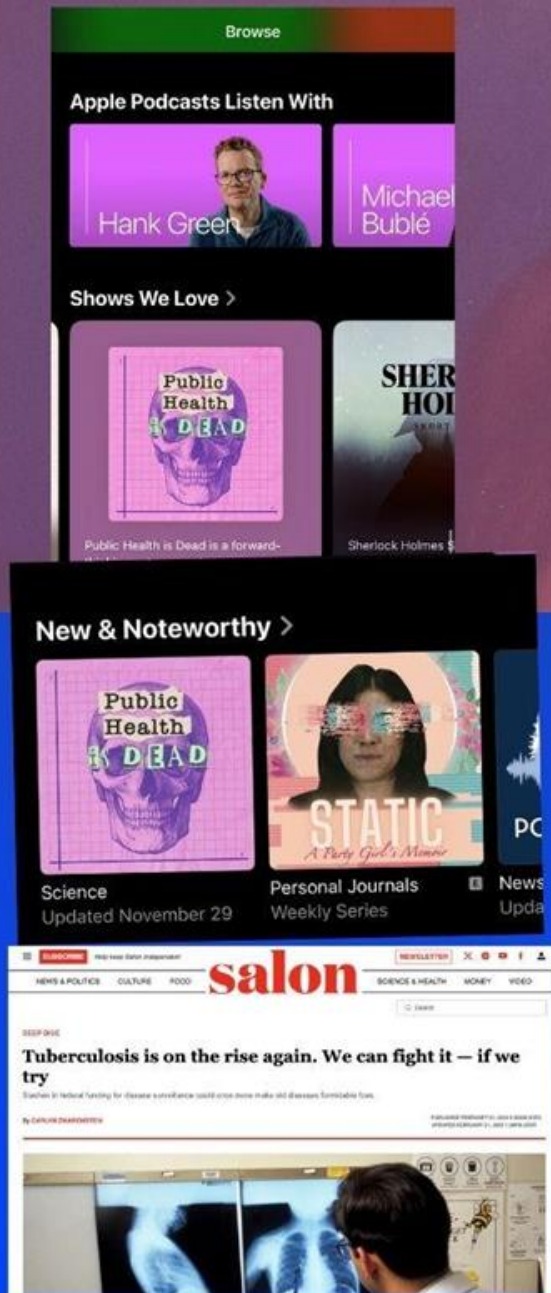
1. People who feel let down by public health.
2. People who want independent public health media + critical perspectives



STRATEGY

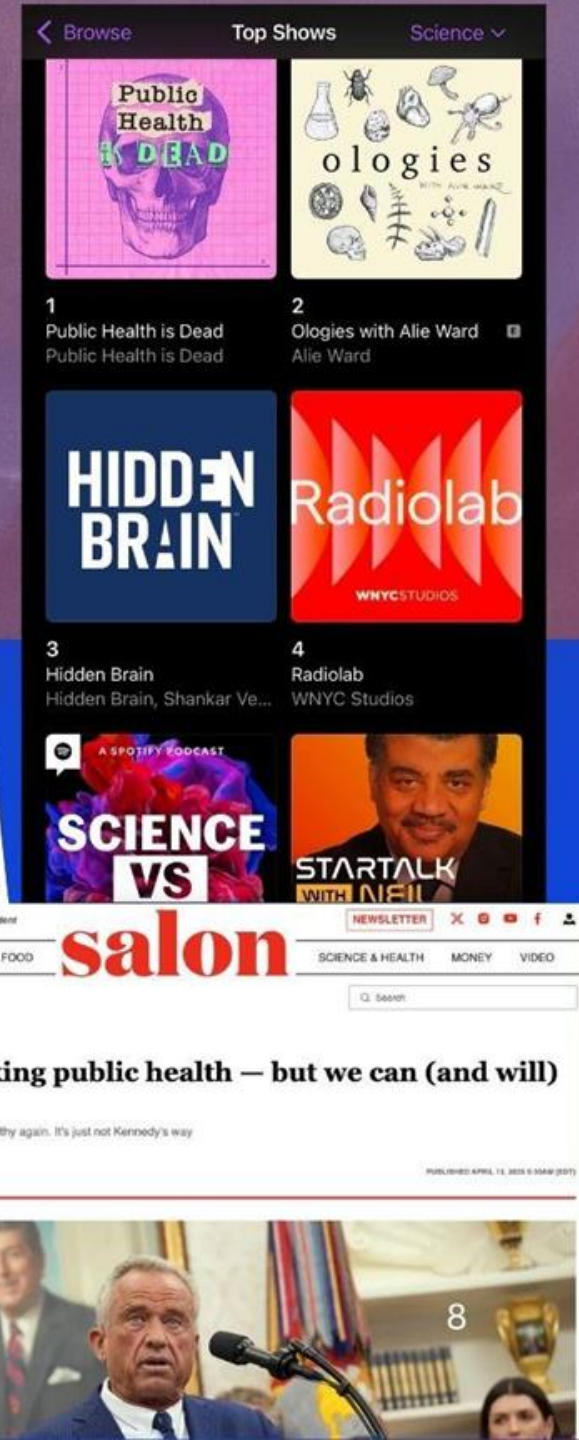
- As well produced as possible, familiar narrative style
 - *kind of like a Science Vs. or 99PI but for public health*
- Provocative/spiky perspective & “scroll-stopping” visuals
- “You deserve to know”; appeal to people questioning public health (int/ext)
- Frankness as entry point: public health has messed up in various ways and how can we make it work for all of us?





So Far...

- 7,500 dl/ep (Orpheum ep 10K+)
- 31,000+ dl all time
- 3,000+ hrs listen time Spotify + Apple
- ~70% consumption rate
- Apple Podcasts features - New & Noteworthy
- Shows We Love
- Media features: Salon, Tye
- But my most valued metric...



Unsolicited Engagement as a metric

- **URR: Unsolicited Response Rate*** = people took their own time to tell you how they felt about what you created
*from Jay Acunzo
- Hundreds of interactions - shows you that it's landing
- Get some messages from surprising places!
 - Mostly positive (trolls don't sit through full episodes!)
 - And sometimes criticism is helpful/thoughtful

- resonance
- connection
- trust
- action

**"KEPT ALMOST CRYING.
THIS IS SUCH A BIG DEAL
TO ME I CAN'T EVEN LIE.
THE WORLD FEELS A
LITTLE BIGGER."**

— Spotify Reviewer, Parker

**"...THIS COULD BE
LIFE-CHANGING
LISTENING..."**

— Apple Podcasts Reviewer, Hatskill

**ONE OF THE BEST PODCASTS ON COVID ★★★★★
"SUCH EXCELLENT INFORMATION, WELL RESEARCHED.
EXPERT GUESTS ARE GREAT. A MUST LISTEN FOR ANYONE
TRYING TO SURVIVE THE PANDEMIC AND PREP FOR THE
NEXT PANDEMIC."**

— Apple Podcasts Reviewer, DiamondDust3

...This might be the most important podcast I have ever listened to. I have shared with friends who are willing to listen. Please keep the episodes coming.

"G"

4 things you need to get started

But everyone
has a podcast
these days





WHY

What purpose does creating your podcast serve?

Why start one now? What would success look like for you?



GOOD CONCEPT

Nobody will listen to a boring show

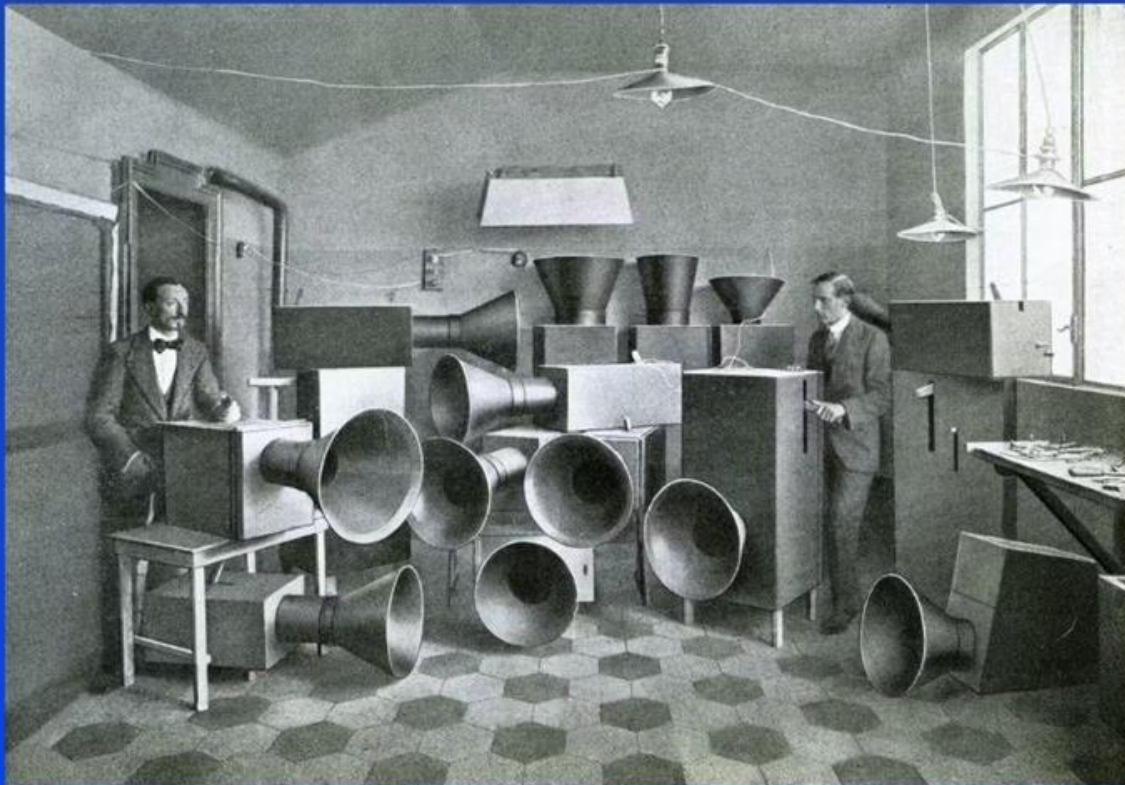
ACTIVITY:

- >Open up your main podcast app
- >Scroll through a topic you are interested in or the main browse areas
- >Pick 2 new shows you might actually listen to
- > Ask yourself why? (think about description, show art, other factors)

SHOW ART IS IMPORTANT!

Ideas that will probably flop

- Your busy CEO/ED who loves to hear themselves talk
- “A show for everyone” (is a show for no one)
- A chat show about “anything and everything” - doesn’t solve a problem
- Unedited 3h stream of consciousness/ researcher reading their research off the page
- Poorly recorded, poorly edited, tin-can-at-sea



L. Russolo, L'Arte dei rumori, 1916

You need a target audience!

PHiD target audience/problem to solve =
People feeling let down by public health.
They wanted a show that treats COVID in the present tense and integrates systemic, critical perspectives of public health and society into an enjoyable show.



TIME + RESOURCES

**Making a podcast is not quick or easy.
High effort & high payoff.**

It will take longer than you think.
Longer than that. Longer than that. Longer than that...

Different kinds of shows

Chat shows
Interview shows
Narrative/documentary shows
Game shows
Kids' shows
Collabs/partnered/sponsored shows
+ More! Be creative!

J*e R*gan

TAL



BREAK WITH TRADITION

Podcasting is not radio or TV or one-way “official” comms

*Podcasting is relational; listeners **build a relationship** with the host, the brand, the organization*

TRUST-BUILDING

The power of podcasting

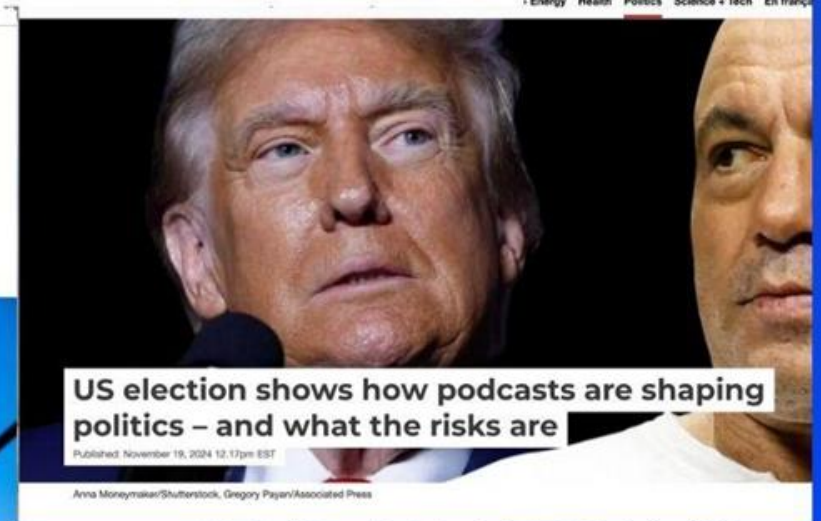
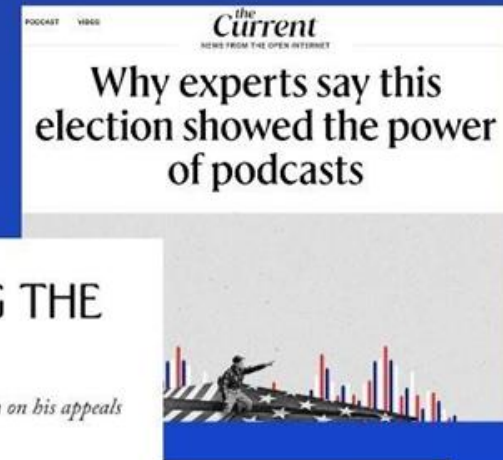
Unparalleled meaningful time with target audience.

Way more engagement vs socials, ads, webinars, traditional comms methods in public health.

(hours vs. seconds)

This could be game-changing for public health.

Podcasting can be a powerful medium for storytelling, connection, education, and amplifying a message.



BIGGEST QUESTION...



Do you even need a podcast at all?

Sometimes, after all of this, it's just not feasible. BUT!

That doesn't mean you have to skip out on the engagement and resonance that podcasting can have!

Can you sponsor a show?

Can you get other people to make it?

Can you pitch and position interesting guests on shows that reach your audience?

Can you make good ads on shows your target audience is listening to?

THANK YOU!

Where to find me on the internet



daniella.barreto@alumni.ubc.ca



[@daniellabarreto](#)



[@sharpflower.bsky.social](#)



Public Health is Dead
www.publichealthisdead.com



Podcasting Help
daniellapodcasts.carrrd.co



Why Podcasting is a Great Medium for Storytelling

Lessons from *North Sound Voices*



Natalie Esparza (She/They)
Marketing Manager at North Sound ACH
May 2025



Land Acknowledgement

We begin by acknowledging, with humility, that the land where we are today is the territory of the People of the Salish Sea.

Their presence is imbued in the waterways, shorelines, valleys and mountains of the traditional homelands of the Coast Salish People.

Since Time Immemorial...

Visit <https://native-land.ca/> to learn more about the Indigenous land where you live, work, and play.

Why We Started a Podcast

- Launched *North Sound Voices* in June 2023
- Aimed to uplift stories from our region, from rural, urban, and island communities
- Honoring storytelling traditions in Coast Salish culture
- Wanted listeners to hear directly from local voices

Gaining Leadership Buy-In

- Framed podcast as an equity tool
- Highlighted regional uniqueness and the need to bridge physical/geographic divides
- Showed how it complements our mission to break silos and elevate community voices

Designing the First Season

- Theme: Vital Conditions for Health & Well-Being
- Focused on a national framework, grounded in local stories
- Guests included national and community leaders
- Each episode illustrated interdependence and systems thinking



What Makes Podcasting Work

- Authenticity: Real voices from real people
- Flexibility: Can be listened to anytime, anywhere
- Intimacy: Builds connection through sound and tone
- Storytelling: Engages hearts and minds better than stats alone

Lessons from the Field

- Wins:
 - a. 11 full episodes + bonus content from our artist-in-residence
 - b. 720 downloads to date
 - c. Empowering partners
- Missteps:
 - a. Scheduling and capacity disruptions → year-long pause
 - b. Waiting for the right person to make a move
 - c. Believing it had to be new/current

What's Next

- Season 2 in development with better planning & production systems
- More collaboration with partners, more community-led voices
 - Buy-in from team members to see themselves as part of the process (sharing partner stories)
- Exploring themes that elevate multi-solving

Final Takeaways

Podcasts are powerful for public health storytelling because they:

- Elevate lived experience
- Encourage deeper listening
- Break silos and strengthen relationships

Thank You!

Scan QR Code to explore North Sound Voices!



Connect With Us: Communications@NorthSoundACH.org

PODCASTING TO AMPLIFY PUBLIC HEALTH MESSAGES

Presentation at Public Health Communications Collaborative

Wednesday, May 14, 2025



HEALTHY
CHICAGO



Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH)

Public Information Office (PIO) team: Josh Zanger- Public Relations Coordinator, Cynthia Ibarra- Information Coordinator



IS THIS THE SORT OF COMMUNICATION FOR ME/MY ORGANIZATION?



- Audience
- Goals
- Right fit?
- Limitations





WHY WE DECIDED TO START A PODCAST?

- Bilingual Facebook Lives launched
- Viewership dropped post-pandemic
- Launched podcasts for engagement

Measles Discussion with Dr. Ige

On Facebook/Twitter
Live @ChiPublicHealth

Olusimbo Ige, MD, MS, MPH
Commissioner, CDPH

Wednesday, March 13 from 11am-12pm | Live

Commissioner Ige will be joined by other public health experts to talk about the current measles cases in Chicago, symptoms to watch for, how everyone can protect themselves, and more. The group will answer questions from the FB Live audience.

Acompáñanos todos los miércoles en punto de las 11 a.m. ya que la Dra. Luna estará hablando de los temas más relevantes de la salud para que tu y tu familia estén bien informados. ¡Te esperamos!

Pregúntale a la Dra. Luna

11am Live en Facebook y Twitter



WHY WE DECIDED TO START A PODCAST?

Communication habits shifted... and so did we.



WHO IS OUR AUDIENCE?

THE DECISION TO RECORD IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH

- Large English-speaking audience.
- Serving Chicago's Latino community
- Culturally appropriate information
- Wide-ranging audience interests



HOW WE DECIDE ON TOPICS?



- Relevance
- Timeliness
- Provide resources of need
- Availability of guests





HEALTHY
CHICAGO

WHO WE ENGAGE AS HOSTS AND GUESTS

- Identify subject matter expert
- Coordinate on topic approach
- Draft questions for discussion
- Create talking points
- Confirm date and time
- How we record





HOW WE'VE BROADENED OUR REACH IN CHICAGO?

- Organic spread
- Know limitations – don't spam
- Boost with \$ if you can. If you're able to include in marketing campaigns, that can help.

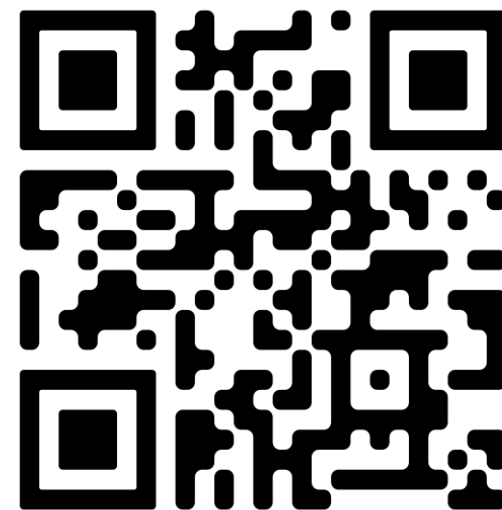


WHERE TO FIND US:

Spotify:



Apple:





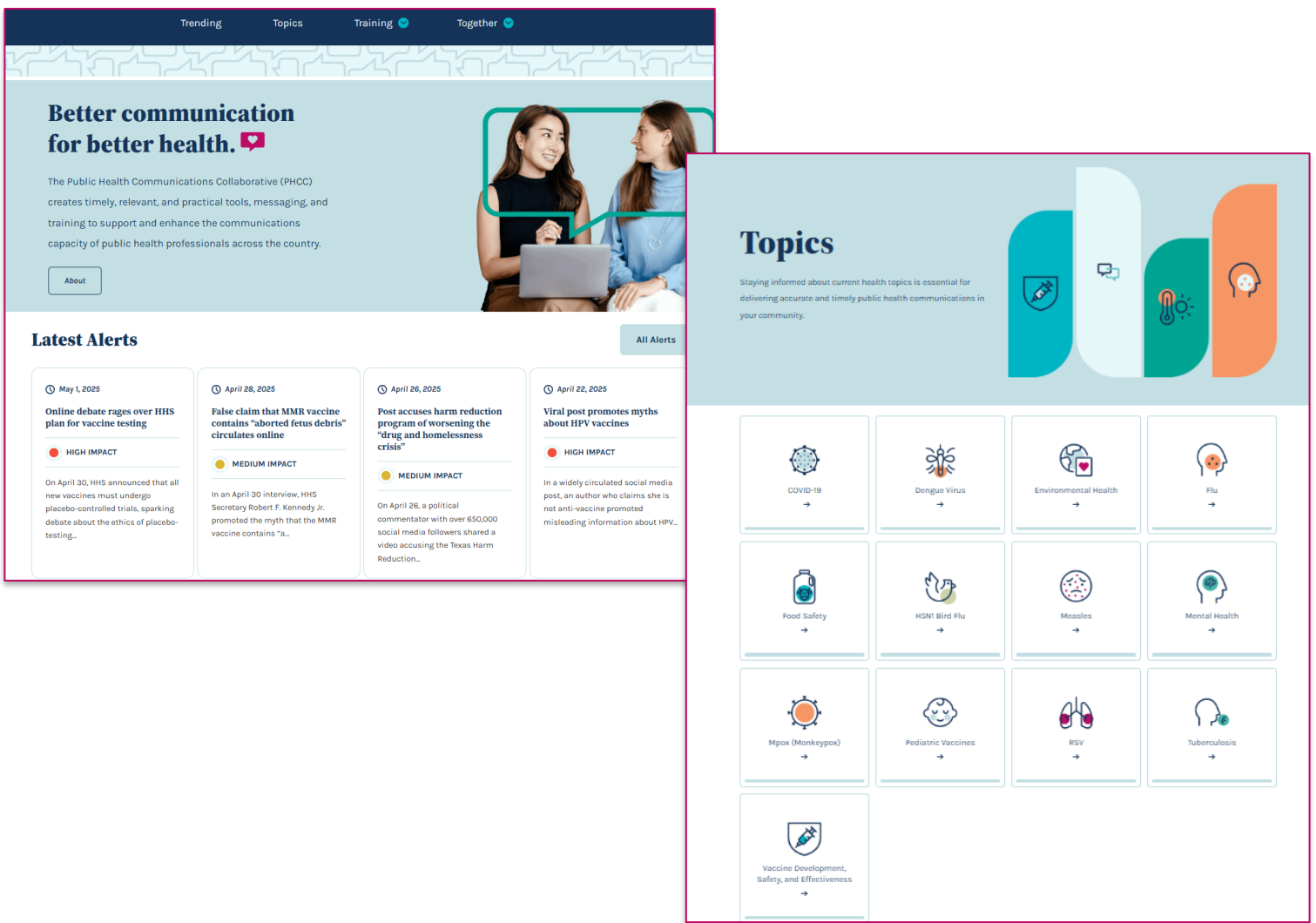
THANK YOU!!!



Q&A

New Website!

Plus, PHCC's June Webinar



Save the Date

Media Relations Today: How to Build Trust in Public Health Guidance

Tuesday, June 10, 1:30-3 EST

Registration opens soon!

Thank You

More Resources

www.publichealthcollaborative.org

Contact

info@publichealthcollaborative.org

Follow PHCC on LinkedIn

Public Health Communications
Collaborative

