

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

TUESDAY, JUNE 10

1:30 – 3:00 pm ET / 10:30 am – 12:00 pm 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.

Join Our Newsletter

Get our latest public health messaging, resources, communication tools, trending health topics, and more delivered directly to your inbox.



Closed Captioning and ASL Interpretation

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

- Live closed captioning is being provided by AI Media.
- ASL interpretation is being provided by Keystone Interpreting Solutions.

Meet Today's Experts



Mala Persaud
Senior Communications Strategist



Rhea Farberman
*Director of Strategic
Communications and Policy
Research*
Trust for America's Health



Adam Zimmerman
Communications Consultant



Katherine Wells
Director
Lubbock Public Health

Don't Forget to Use the Chat!

Add your questions to the chat throughout the webinar. We'll do our best to get to all of them, but if we don't get to yours, we will repurpose your pressing questions for future webinars, resources, and PHCC Academy courses.





Building the Foundation of a Successful Media Relations Program: *Culture and Infrastructure*

Rhea Farberman, APR

Director of Strategic Communications and Policy Research

Trust for America's Health





“

An effective media relations program begins well before a call from a reporter. It is rooted in an organizational cultural that values news coverage and is prepared to earn it.



Building and Maintaining a Successful Media Relations Program – *Why Invest the Time?*

- Consumers want to make informed health decisions - they want information, not mandates.
- Consumers rely on multiple sources for health information: healthcare providers, friends & family, social media/websites, and news reporting.
- A successful media relations program will position your organization as a resource for reliable health information.
- Working with news media to deliver evidence-based information helps counter misinformation.
- Effective public health is a partnership between health departments and the public – a strong media relations program supports that partnership.



Building and Maintaining a Successful Media Relations Program – *Creating the Culture*

- Get your boss (and her boss) on board.
- Convince your organization's hierarchy of the need to invest resources into being ready for news making opportunities (and challenges).
- Anticipate how news and events will impact your organization – a culture of being ready.
- Create a preference for communicating in plain language.



Building and Maintaining a Successful Media Relations Program – *Creating the Culture*

- Lean into transparency – always say what you know and what you don't know.
- Acknowledge when there is uncertainty – where more data is needed.
- Emphasize when data is overwhelming (vaccine safety) and where benefits are more nuanced (fluoride protective of dental health at appropriate levels).



Building and Maintaining a Successful Media Relations Program – *Building the Infrastructure*

- Establish relationships with news outlets/reporters before you need them.
- Identify and train spokespeople before you need them.
- Create routine issue/events talking points.
- Monitor news and social media –anticipate opportunities and challenges.



Building and Maintaining a Successful Media Relations Program – *Be Ready!*

Have a process in place for:

- Requests triage
- Getting input from your epi specialists
- Creation and clearance of event specific talking points
- Working with other governmental agencies and community NGOs to determine and help deliver consistent messaging



Use Social Media

73% of Americans have social media accounts!

- An established social media presence for your department will be critical when you need to communicate during an emergency.
- Be an amplifier of accurate and helpful online health information.
- Create content for your department website that is accessible to the public. Ensure that your website is easy to navigate.



Rhea Farberman, APR
Trust for America's Health
RFarberman@tfah.org



Ruby
Tuesday

Making it Work

Katherine Wells, DrPH, MPH
Director



Build Trust with Media

Leverage Communications Teams

Make Time for Media—Even the Light Stories Matter

Be Present—Don't Hide During a Crisis

Talk to Everyone—Not Just the Friendly Voices



Lessons from COVID-19

Say What You Know and What You Don't

Hold Predictable News Conferences

Provide Standardized, Consistent Data

Lead with Authenticity



Measles Outbreak: A Challenging Communications Landscape

An Information Void at the Top

Federal Disruption and Uncertainty

- No CDC Director
- CDC was under a communications blackout
- Ongoing reorganization and funding cuts
- Conflicting or politicized comments from elected officials

Complex Multi-Jurisdictional

The Misinformation Machine Moves Faster than Us

Moments of Learning: Measles Outbreak

Lean Into Trusted Partners

- National: NACCHO, Big Cities Health Coalition
- Local: Hospitals, medical school, medical society
- Personal: Professional networks and established reporters

Centralize and Manage Media Requests

Create and Push Out Your Own Content

Use AI as a Communications Tool

Moments of Learning: Measles Outbreak

Lead with Compassion

Stick to Talking Points

Stay Local When the Debate Goes National

Control the Narrative with Timely Updates



Q&A

Explore More from PHCC

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



Thank You

More Resources

www.publichealthcollaborative.org

Contact

info@publichealthcollaborative.org

Follow PHCC

LinkedIn: Public Health
Communications Collaborative

