What’s Your Handle? Using Social Media to Build Infectious Disease Awareness
Marla Dalton, Joanna Colbourne, William Schaffner

Background:
More than 50,000 US adults die each year from vaccine-preventable diseases and their complications, more than breast cancer, HIV/AIDS, or motor vehicle traffic accidents, yet overall vaccination rates remain low. Adult vaccinations can protect against illness, absenteeism from work, hospitalization, or even death; however, adult vaccination rates, on average, are far lower than the Healthy People 2020 goals for immunization and infectious diseases. In order to move the needle, NFID has employed novel and effective communication tactics, with overall positive responses and engagement.

Setting:
Activities included national, state, and local settings to maximize reach and leverage strategic partnerships

Population:
Target population included all adults, with certain activities targeted to younger adults, older adults, and those with chronic health conditions

Project Description:
For nearly 45 years, NFID has been an established leader in creating awareness campaigns focused on the importance of adult vaccination. Unique outreach tactics recently implemented include: partnerships with influencers, bloggers, and journalists; Facebook Live Q&As; on the ground pilot campaigns to increase vaccination rates in areas with low coverage and an aging population; paid social media campaigns on Facebook and Twitter; placement of public service announcements and blog posts on popular consumer websites such as CNN and MSN, through the use of online digital platforms; and multi-purpose creative assets (infographics and gifs)

Results/Lessons Learned:
Top 10 lessons learned include:

1. Find & target your audience by being visible where your audience already spends time
2. Engage with commenters and posters & convert them to friends/fans
3. Optimize content for mobile users
4. Metrics matter
5. Create/use memorable hashtags
6. Collaborate with relevant partners to reach target audience
7. Seek non-traditional influencers to maximize reach
8. Customize campaigns to maximize effectiveness (multiple images/headlines)
9. Don’t be afraid to try new tools/tactics

10. It takes a village!
Your Best Shot: Insights from a new health education video series on vaccines
Jordan Broderick, Judith Mendel, Ann Aikin, Anju Abraham

Background:
Moms, often the health decision-makers for their family, search for answers to their health questions online, with 3 in 5 turning to online videos (Google, 2015). Providing health information in multiple formats can improve user learning and engagement (Health Literacy Online, 2016). Yet, credible, evidence-based, plain language video content on vaccines is lacking—often replaced by untrustworthy, overly scientific, or anti-vaccine content. Although video is becoming more common, it is largely for public service announcements and campaign-messaging and it is yet to be harnessed as part of a larger digital health information strategy. As user demand for interactive content increases there is a clear need to build understanding of the role of video as a health communication tool and to identify best practices.

Setting:
In-depth interviews by phone and in-person were conducted at a research facility with moms of children ages 0-7 as well as with adults ages 60 and older. The videos will be available on Vaccines.gov and Healthfinder.gov.

Population:
Moms with children ages 0-7 and seniors ages 60 and older.

Project Description:
The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ National Vaccine Program Office and Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion partnered to develop and test three health education videos on vaccines and vaccine preventable diseases. The videos focus on whooping cough, shingles, and pneumococcal vaccines. Three rounds of user-testing were conducted to inform video design and content.

Results/Lessons Learned:
User-testing is an important strategy for refining video design and messaging. It offered insight into awareness of vaccines for shingles, pneumococcal disease, and whooping cough; which key messages are easy-to-understand, memorable, and persuasive; if messages address potential vaccination barriers or concerns; and overall perceptions on the video look and feel (including use of animation). Metrics will soon be available and provide further insight on video impact.
The Importance of Personal Stories as Part of Flu Vaccine Advocacy Efforts
Serese Marotta

Background:
For the 2017-2018 season, influenza (flu) vaccination coverage in the U.S. remains below Healthy People 2020 goals for all age groups. As a non-profit advocacy organization comprised of families that have been adversely affected by flu, Families Fighting Flu aims to raise awareness about the seriousness of flu and the importance of annual flu vaccination. Efforts to increase flu vaccination rates across the lifespan must consist of a multi-pronged approach involving education and advocacy, including peer-to-peer influence, using various communication channels.

Setting:
To reach a variety of demographics, our communications strategy includes a combination of earned media, social and digital media, and published content that addresses the needs of specific audiences.

Population:
Social and digital media serve as primary information sources for many segments of the population, particularly adults, parents, and caregivers, including those that are making healthcare decisions for themselves and/or their families, as well as influencers such as healthcare professionals and teachers.

Project Description:
We use social media to disseminate a variety of flu-related messages and information, ranging from flu surveillance data and statistics, to educational resources, to the sharing of personal stories of families that have been adversely affected by flu. The tracking of social and digital media metrics allows us to determine which messages and types of information resonate most with audiences.

Results/Lessons Learned:
Because personal stories provide real-world examples of how serious flu can be, they are an important peer-to-peer influencing tool with the capacity to change vaccination behavior for vaccine-hesitant individuals. Based on our data, we have found that on average, messages involving personal stories of people adversely affected by flu result in a 300% increase in engagement and a 450% increase in reach on social media compared to other types of message content, which indicates that the sharing of personal stories is critically important for increasing flu awareness.