Building risk communication capacity: Can it be done?

John Rainford, Director, The Warning Project
Risk Communication Excellence

- Transparent
- Adaptive
- Culturally sensitive
- Accessible
- Coordinated
A Health Organization has just found out that there was a serious problem with a single (and small) batch of measles vaccine.
What is the risk from the perspective of the Director responsible for the vaccination program?

1. Measles vaccination campaign is threatened
2. Legal liability of the health authority
3. Authorities will be criticized publicly
4. Broader confidence in vaccine based programs is threatened
5. Adverse reactions
What is the **risk** from the perspective of a mother about to take her child to be vaccinated?

1. Measles vaccination campaign is threatened
2. Legal liability of the health authority
3. Authorities will be criticized publicly
4. Broader confidence in vaccine based campaigns is threatened
5. Adverse reactions
In achieving your objective, who is more important?

A. The Director
B. The Mother

86% for B.
14% for A.
Who is our communication for?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>No secondary education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Some secondary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Secondary school graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Community college graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>University graduate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Communications and the Epi Curve

Time

Infected

Delayed Response

Opportunity for Control
Communications and the Epi Curve

Rapid Response

Opportunity for Control
When would your organization communicate a serious, emerging risk?

A. Immediately, when a potential risk is identified.

B. When full details of the cause and nature of the risk are confirmed.

70% 30%
“The Zika virus should be considered "guilty until proven innocent" of causing birth defects, the World Health Organization said Friday.” Feb 19, 2016, USA Today
Building risk communication capacity: What REALLY matters

Performance measurement
Define success and failure
Building risk communication capacity: What REALLY matters

Re-balance resources between knowledge generation and knowledge translation
Building risk communication capacity: What REALLY matters

Convince leadership of the strategic advantage of better risk communication
Building risk communication capacity:

Can it be done?

It has to be done
Thank You

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