

# Effective Health Communication within the Current Information Environment and the Role of the Federal Government: A Workshop

March 20-21, 2023

Lecture Room, National Academy of Sciences

## MONDAY, MARCH 20, 2023 (All times are ET)

### Purpose

This workshop will 1) explore the current health information environment and other forces that affect federal health communication; 2) examine the goals and roles of federal health agencies within this information environment; and 3) identify concrete steps for building capacities needed across US government to support effective health communication moving forward.

9:30AM–9:50AM

### Welcome and Opening Remarks

**William Hallman** (Chair), *Rutgers University*

9:50AM–10:45AM

### Importance of Effective Health Communication and the Goals, Roles, and Responsibilities of Federal Health Communication

This session will describe why effective health communication is so vital to public health and well-being, and the important role that federal health communication plays. Many federal agencies communicate about health as part of their core missions to improve the well-being of Americans, as well as to act in times of crisis. Being explicit about the varying objectives for health communication, and the appropriate roles and responsibilities of federal agencies is vital for determining what capacities are needed. This session offers an overview of the types of key health communication goals, roles, and responsibilities of federal agencies, an exploration of the assumptions and considerations underlying them.

#### Moderator:

**William Hallman** (Chair), *Rutgers University*

#### Panelists:

**Lauren Gardner**, *Johns Hopkins University*

**Maureen Lichtveld**, *University of Pittsburgh (virtual)*

**Arthur Lupia**, *University of Michigan*

**Laura Smillie**, *Joint Research Centre, European Commission (virtual)*

10:45AM–11:00AM

### Audience Q&A

11:00AM–11:20AM

### Break and Interactive Session

11:20AM–12:30PM

### Key Cross-Cutting Challenges and the Implications for Federal Health Communication

This session will describe why there may be a need to reimagine federal health communication in the current health communication environment. Presentations will emphasize structural causes of inequities in health and health communication, characterize the many complexities and challenges of the contemporary health communication environment, and explore the factors (including social/networked media system and a

climate of both politicization of health information and declining trust in institutions) that shape how and where people encounter, understand, and perceive health information. The session will also include a discussion about developing trends in this environment and their implications for capacity building.

Moderator:

**Jeff Niederdeppe** (Member), *Cornell University*

Presentations:

The challenge of equity in health and health communication

**K. Vish Viswanath**, *Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health*

The challenge of the current health communication environment

**Andy King**, *University of Utah*

The challenge of health communication in a climate of political polarization and politicization of health and science

**Bruce Hardy**, *Temple University*

The challenge of declining trust in institutions

**Henry Brady**, *University of California, Berkeley*

**12:30PM-12:50PM**

**Audience Q&A**

**12:50PM-1:50PM**

**Lunch**

A buffet lunch and options for purchasing lunch in advance will be provided.

**1:50PM-2:00PM**

**Key Themes from Morning Sessions: Implications for Capacity Building**

**William Hallman** (Chair), *Rutgers University*

**Jeff Niederdeppe** (Member), *Cornell University*

**2:00PM-3:00PM**

**Capacity: Listening to and Engaging Communities**

The goal of this session is to explore expert recommendations about approaches and considerations for building federal capacities for engaging, listening to, and valuing the needs and concerns of communities, as part of building trust and ensuring that relevant decisions and communications are responsive to the community needs. In addition, discussions will address perspectives on the functions that should be carried out by the federal government directly and those that could be incentivized, supported, or funded by the federal government.

Moderator:

**Amelie Ramirez (NAM)**, (Member), *UT Health San Antonio, Salud America!*

Panelists:

**Ella Greene-Moton** (Member) *Community Based Organization Partners Community Ethics Review Board and Flint/Genesee Partnership, Health in Our Hands*

**Khanh Ho**, *King County Department of Public Health*

**Emma Maceda-Maria**, *King County Department of Public Health*

**Dmitry Khodyakov**, *RAND Corporation*

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**Greg Talavera**, *San Diego State University*  
**AI Richmond**, *Community-Campus Partnerships for Health*

**3:00PM–3:30PM**

**Audience Q&A**

**3:30PM–3:40PM**

**Break**

**3:40PM–4:40PM**

**Capacity: Digital Data and Information Systems**

The goal of this session is to explore expert recommendations about the types of data and information that could support federal health communication that is increasingly anticipatory and timely, understandable, relevant to people's concerns, and able to adapt to changes in the communication environment. The session will address the types of data that could be useful to collect, including real-time and on-the-ground information, self-reported data, records of digital information consumption and information seeking, and current trends in mis/disinformation. Panelists will explore the potential benefits and risks, challenges, and pitfalls of such data collection, including ethical and practical barriers to practice.

Moderator:

**Maimuna Majumder** (Member), *Harvard Medical School and Boston Children's Hospital*  
(virtual)

Panelists:

**Rahul Bhargava**, *MediaCloud and Northeastern University*

**Agata Ferretti**, *Health Ethics & Policy Lab, ETH Zurich*

**David Lazer**, *Northeastern University*

**Elaine Nsoesie**, *Boston University* (virtual)

**4:40PM–5:10PM**

**Audience Q&A**

**5:10PM–5:20PM**

**Key Themes from Capacity Building Sessions**

**Amelie Ramirez (NAM)**, (Member), *UT Health San Antonio, Salud America!*

**Maimuna Majumder** (Member), *Harvard Medical School and Boston Children's Hospital*

**END OF DAY 1**

## TUESDAY, MARCH 21, 2023

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9:30AM–9:40AM

### Welcome, Day 1 Recap, and Overview of Day 2

**Amelie Ramirez (NAM)**, (Member), *UT Health San Antonio, Salud America!*

9:40AM–10:40AM

### Capacity: Expertise and Human Capital

The goal of this session is to explore expert recommendations for building and leveraging expertise in health communication, other social sciences, and communities for health communication in the federal government. Expert presentations will address ideas for building capacity in the expertise needed for different health communication outcomes and strategies. Discussion will address potential benefits, challenges, and pitfalls; and near and long-term steps toward ensuring that the federal government draws upon the expertise needed to meet current and future health communication needs.

Moderator:

**William Hallman** (Chair), *Rutgers University*

Panelists:

**Amanda Boyd**, *Washington State University*

**Sarah Gollust**, *University of Minnesota*

**Robert Hornik**, *University of Pennsylvania*

**Sandra Quinn**, *University of Maryland*

**Itzhak Yanovitzky**, *Rutgers University*

10:40AM–11:00AM

### Audience Q&A

11:00AM–11:15AM

### Break

11:15AM–12:00PM

### Working Session #1

12:00PM–1:00PM

### Lunch

A buffet lunch and options for purchasing lunch in advance will be provided.

1:00PM–1:20PM

### Key Themes and Report Out on Working Session

**William Hallman** (Chair), *Rutgers University*

1:20PM–2:00PM

### Capacity: Organizational Capacities for Agility

Building on the conversation about expertise, this session will explore recommendations for organizational structures and roles that can facilitate coordinated and agile health communication in the federal government. The conversation will focus on approaches for addressing barriers to nimble decision-making and cross-agency coordination, potential benefits, challenges, and pitfalls, and near and long-term steps, cognizant of the nature of government.

Moderator:

**Donald Moynihan** (Member), *McCourt School of Public Policy, Georgetown University*

Presentation:

Approaches for increasing agility in government

**G. Edward DeSeve**, *The National Academy of Public Administration*

Response Panel:

**Sharon Natanblut** (Member), *Natanblut Strategies*

**Joshua Sharfstein**, *Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health*

**K. Vish Viswanath**, *Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health*

**2:00PM–2:20PM**

**Audience Q&A**

**2:20PM–2:30PM**

**Break**

**2:30PM–3:15PM**

**Building Relationships to Enhance Effective Health Communication**

This session will explore the relationships and partnerships that the federal government could leverage to increase the effectiveness of health communication in the near term and build for the long term.

Moderator:

**Angela Bednarek**, *The Evidence Project, Pew Charitable Trusts*

Panelists:

**Adam Levine**, *Bloomberg School of Public Health, Johns Hopkins University* (virtual)

**Hilary Karasz** (Member), *Public Health – Seattle & King County*

**Janine Knudsen**, *Accompany Health* (virtual)

**Jewel Mullen**, *Dell Medical School, University of Texas at Austin*

**3:15PM–3:35PM**

**Audience Q&A**

**3:35PM–3:45PM**

**Break**

**3:45PM–4:45PM**

**Working Session #2 and Report Out**

**4:45PM–5:00PM**

**Final Key Themes and Closing Remarks**

**Donald Moynihan** (Member), *McCourt School of Public Policy, Georgetown University*

**Angela Bednarek**, *The Evidence Project, Pew Charitable Trusts*

**William Hallman** (Chair), *Rutgers University*

**MEETING ADJOURNS**