



# Communicating the Value of Public Health

## Building Capacity to Share Stories and Speak with One Voice

### Everyone benefits when communities are healthy and safe.

Public health professionals often work behind the scenes to safeguard people and communities by addressing major health challenges. Still, too few stakeholders truly understand the vital—and *seemingly invisible*—role public health plays in creating safe and healthy workplaces, schools, neighborhoods, and individuals.

In order for this important work to continue, public health professionals need to communicate *better* with stakeholders (including legislators, funders, and community members) about the value of their work. Stories of impact and value can help assure public and financial support stays strong into the future, so that **everyone, everywhere continues to benefit from healthy and safe communities.**

This shared need for greater outreach and communication inspired public health organizations to convene and form the *Illinois Strategic Communication Leadership Project*. The overarching goal is to make it easier to communicate the value of public health. Success looks like:

- 1. Speak with one voice.** Our respective communication efforts will have more impact if we use a similar set of messages, speak from a collective voice, and tailor those messages to particular audiences.
- 2. Demonstrate value.** We have great stories to share about why this work matters. Let's collect and share our stories—documenting and making visible all the ways public health improves lives and communities.
- 3. Sustain support and funding.** Through the above efforts, we can showcase the value of public health and earn stakeholders' respect and support for sustaining the role of public health in creating healthier people and communities.

#### Lead Organizations & Sponsor

- *Illinois Public Health Association*
- *MidAmerica Center for Public Health Practice at UIC School of Public Health*
- *Illinois Department Public Health*
- *Heath Resources and Services Administration (HRSA); funder*

**Share your stories!** A set of key messages have been created for you to use and adapt. Next, we invite everyone to get invested in sharing your stories and moving this journey forward ...



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*Building Capacity to Share Stories and Speak with One Voice*

Your Turn:  
***Finding Stories***

Find Stories

Story Ideas

Next Steps



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## **MESSAGES**

### **General Public and Media**

**Overarching Message:** Public health promotes and protects the health of people and the communities where they live, learn, work and play. It serves as an invisible shield protecting you from getting sick from what's around you

**Lead Message 1:** Public health is the invisible shield – protecting people against disease outbreaks from food, water, and poor hygiene; informing and supporting healthy choices around weight management and smoke-free living; and protecting the most vulnerable through vaccinations.

**Lead Message 2:** Those of us working in public health try to prevent people from getting sick or injured in the first place by using health data about health trends to solve problems and promote positive health outcomes and policy.

### **Community Partners and Healthcare Professionals**

**Overarching Message:** Public health promotes and protects the health of people and the communities where they live, learn, work and play. It is woven into every aspect of life. Today's local public health systems and practices are adapting and responding to new trends and challenges in healthcare.

**Lead Message 1:** Public Health's responsibility to prevent, protect from, prepare for, and respond to threats grows every year. The public health field and its partners are charged with preventing illness, promoting healthy behaviors and health equity, and achieving optimal health and safety for all Illinois communities.

**Lead Message 2:** Health reform has required the health care system to think more collaboratively and holistically about improving health outcomes through community assessment, prevention, treatment, and partnership.



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### **Funders, Elected Officials, Community Leaders**

**Overarching Message:** Health departments are on the front lines of preventing illness and preparing for emergencies. You may not always see the work we do but we are healthier because of it. Investing in public health creates a lifetime of wellness by improving the health of communities, and saving in resources and costs through diverse partnerships.

**Lead Message 1:** From regulation at the state level to inspections at the local level, public health works together to protect communities. Public health successes such as reducing disease, lowering the tobacco rate, and restricting lead paint in homes were accomplished in partnership with community members, funders, and policymakers. We all live better because of committed public health stakeholders.

**Lead Message 2:** Applying proven, cost-effective methods, health professionals in the public health sector, prevent chronic disease and unnecessary medical expenditures. Investing in public health leads to better food and water quality, stronger emergency response systems, and a healthier population.