

HEALTH PEI
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION PLAN
2017-2020

COMMUNICATION PLAN

The objective of Health PEI's strategic communications plan is to provide a framework that continues to support, enable and promote effective two-way communication with all system stakeholders.

Stakeholders include potential and actual clients, families, care givers, leaders, other staff, government, unions, foundations, NGOs and others are identified. The plan identifies communication mechanisms that are designed to share information in a meaningful way that ultimately helps lead to better care.

A recent illustration of principle at work would be the implementation of the Family Presence Policy at facilities in PEI. A leadership group led the planning and worked in close consultation with staff at all facilities. The planning group gathered feedback and addressed unique needs by facility in developing an implementation plan that was wholly owned by all facilities and the ensuing implementation was smooth and timely. As a result of this effective two-way communication, families are enjoying more open access to loved ones and the health system has improved patient centered care.

All communication within the organization is carried out under the vision, mission and values of the organization as set out in the current strategic plan.

VISION

One Island health system supporting improved health for Islanders.

MISSION

Working in partnership with Islanders to support and promote health through the delivery of safe and quality health care.

VALUES

Core values are integral to our activities and relationships as health care professionals and providers at Health PEI.

Caring: We treat everyone with compassion, respect, fairness and dignity.

Integrity: We collaborate in an environment of trust, communicate with openness and honesty, and are accountable through responsible decision making.

Excellence: We pursue continuous quality improvement through innovation, integration and the adoption of evidence-based practices.

INTRODUCTION

Authentic open dialogue is essential to any successful organization, especially a large organization such as Health PEI that is responsible for thousands of internal stakeholders and to the general public. Effective communication builds strong relationships. Trust and loyalty are key factors in any relationship and both are boosted by communication that is focused on meeting individual needs, conveying important information and providing feedback - positive and constructive. Strong relationships with external audiences also build strong solid communication about services and organization culture and values.

Open channels of communication can lead to new ideas and innovation in a number of areas. Internal personnel that understand what's important to their organization can focus on making improvements and spotting opportunities for innovation that can help further success. When team members know their ideas will be sought after, the leaders will have open minds and be responsive to their feedback, they're more likely to contribute their ideas. Potential and actual clients also can be a source of great ideas to help improve products and services. More importantly, when done right, Islanders will see themselves as ambassadors for the health care system if we take the opportunities to engage in meaningful dialogue and information exchange with them.

The more all stakeholders know about the system, its culture and its services, and its response to any negative issues, the better job they can do of serving as ambassadors to the community, their friends, relatives and other business connections. Employees who feel they have a strong, positive relationship with their leaders and trust the information they receive will be more likely to share that information with others. Employees can be a highly valued and trusted source of information about a health system and its services.

Effective organizational communication will lead to strong teamwork and the ability for employees at all levels of the organization to work together to achieve strategic goals. In addition, it will provide employees the knowledge, structure and positive work environment they need to feel comfortable dealing with conflict and resolving issues effectively.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

Strategic communication is not simply process, rather it is the purposeful use of communication by an organization to fulfill its mission. In a Health PEI context, it can be loosely summed up as all efforts to understand and engage key audiences to create, strengthen, or preserve conditions favorable for the improved health of Islanders. Communication is strategic when it is completely consistent with the organization's mission, vision, values and when it is able to enhance that strategic positioning.

This systematic planning and realization of information flows, communication, media development and image care positions what Health PEI stands for now and into the future. It receives and conveys message(s) through the most suitable media to and from designated audience(s) at the appropriate time to contribute to and achieve the desired long-term effect.

Given the nature of health care systems, there are often distinctly different and conflicting challenges – we do not do enough; and, the other we continually strive to do our best regardless of the situations that will arise:

- **Communicating Success** – Communicating success (including programs and community initiatives promoting health) builds support for the strategic direction of the organization. Internally, communication of positive news/initiatives/successes will make for more engaged employees, improve change adoption

and reinforce Health PEI's employer reputation. With stakeholders communicating success will build trust and lead to more positive interaction and support with regard to improving the health of all Islanders. Externally, success clearly indicates to the public that Health PEI continues to be focused on improving the health care of all Islanders and it fosters trust and public confidence.

- **Communicating Challenge** – By their nature health care systems are faced with challenges on a daily basis. There will always be challenges and sometimes crisis situations that have to be effectively communicated. By informing and educating the public, internal and stakeholder audiences, Health PEI can build trust throughout the system. The organization must ensure that accurate and timely information is shared so that audiences are informed and know that they can trust the system.

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Effective organizational communication also requires a structured, fully informed and properly implemented communications plan to serve as a framework to promote effective two-way communication amongst stakeholders. This communications plan outlines the mechanisms by which effective communication occurs.

Dedicated communication personnel have worked in close coordination with the HPEI Board and Senior Management Group and other stakeholders in the planning, initiation and evaluation of a communications plan for the organization.

Communication initiatives and activities across the organization are planned to achieve results over three different time frames:

- **Short-term:** Main focus is on issue/event driven communications and follow-through with existing processes (i.e. internal memos/newsletters, earned and paid media as required, which could include press events/releases, public advisories, social media and advertising, etc.). The success of short-term communication is highly dependent on good quality and timely inflow of communication and coordination of interested parties so that all sides of an issue or event are fairly and wholly represented. Good stakeholder relationships are an extremely important component of this style of compressed activity.
- **Mid-term:** Main focus is on program/initiative based pro-active communications that reflect Health PEI's role as a public health care provider (i.e. development of new (as required) and regular review of existing communications tools such as literature, signage, posters, websites, advertising; development of new (as required) and review of existing internal and external communications approaches/vehicles; stewardship and review of corporate identity; development of new (as required) and review and coordination of material for promotional/ special events).
- **Long-term:** Development of new (as required) or review/revision of existing overarching communications plan, creation of sub plans by division, prioritizing tactics and establishing appropriate timelines. This process will be undertaken every three years or sooner as required.

DRIVING TENETS

GENERAL INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Effective internal communication plays a critical role in informing and motivating staff, managers, directors, physicians, and by extension, the communities served. Over, 4,500 staff and physicians can be our best ambassadors.

While many initiatives in previous strategic communications plans have been effectively implemented and led to improvements, it is important to remain mindful and proactive with regard to the challenges and opportunities that remain, such as the following:

- We will develop a better 'first to know' process for employees and physicians. Staff and physicians are still not always informed of happenings prior to hearing it through the media or general public, and an effective communications approach should strive to have our internal audiences and affected stakeholders know first whenever possible;
- There is a shared belief and commitment within all levels of management that an effective staff/physician communications approach is critical to Health PEI's ability to achieve its goals. Continued focus on this can lead to a very effective communication channel;
- There is a need to establish and implement a system wide information sharing policy that is proactive in nature so Health PEI can more effectively communicate decisions, policies, activities, etc. to its staff and physicians unless there is a valid reason not to;
- Continued, improved two-way engagement with physicians to actively engage them in meaningful dialogue particularly in change management planning, input and adoption. As an integral part of service delivery, the system needs to work from their perspective;
- Health PEI oversees the development of the communication plan and the organization's leaders implement the communication plan. Managers and directors need to continue to play a key role in establishing a healthy environment of information sharing within an organization. The health care industry is known for having structural communication barriers (i.e. shift work, front line environment vs. management environment, inconsistent use of technology, etc.) yet health care surveys consistently highlight that staff want, and value most, information provided to them directly from their line manager; and,
- That an effective staff/physician communications approach must be based on information sharing that is relevant to the right service provider at the right time – not simply mass information distribution. We will continue to work toward efficient information sharing that is relevant to individual's day-to-day roles within the organization.

EFFECTIVE DIRECTOR/MANAGER COMMUNICATION

Today's directors and managers have a wealth of communication channels available to them, and ensuring that people have appropriate information and opportunities for feedback without causing information overload is becoming increasingly difficult. Communicating with through consistent vehicles/methods can reduce the risk of information being missed by all parties.

Due to the size and somewhat hierarchical nature of the organization, senior management may believe that they are communicating effectively to staff; however, as information travels up and down the organization via various 'messengers' and 'mediums' (i.e. email, memo's, teleconference, etc.), information is sometimes only partially conveyed and this process limits the opportunity for interactive exchange. Recognizing this, Health PEI has implemented a variety of communication processes with 'information sharing' as the objective (i.e. management forums and team huddles); and continues to look for areas of improvement.

Leaders and managers generally understand their role in facilitating effective staff communication, but there is always room for improvement.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

External communication is broad and diversified in scope ranging from stakeholder relations, media/public relations, public engagement, social media dialogue, etc.

It can be challenging to provide clear consistent messaging in the face of external stakeholders and special interest groups. Receiving and disseminating relevant information to and from the right audience(s) in a timely fashion (ideally, first) is key to clear external communication.

As our population continues to age and diversify, we need to be ever more mindful of fair and equitable, effective two-way communication to increasingly diverse populations.

The following tools exist (or are in development) to facilitate message delivery:

- **Positioning & Promoting Health PEI's Vision** – repetition of the corporate vision in speeches, publications, statements, visual presentations, etc.
- **Positive News** – maximize the communications value of activities/initiatives that support the vision. Promote these using integrated marketing strategies such as media, personal contact, internal communication, publications and advertising.
- **Speaking to Groups** – we capitalize on opportunities to explain the corporate vision and progress being made in achieving it by having senior management and Board members engage with community-based organizations, chambers of commerce, Foundations, auxiliaries, professional development events for staff, etc.
- **Community Development** – The leaders and employees support and participate in ongoing community initiatives to promote health and prevent disease. Often employees participate in fundraising initiatives and advocate for healthy public policy. Whether the involvement is formal (i.e. Funding to support NGO campaigns) or more informal (i.e. staff participation in the Run For The Cure), every opportunity should be taken to celebrate community development.
- **Website** – use effectively to receive inquiries, deliver information, promote achievements and progress. We continue to grow this area of communication as it is a highly effective way to distribute and receive information, especially during times of crisis (e.g. pandemic or disaster).

- **Social Media** – capitalize on the opportunity to profile the organization’s achievements through program and staff/physician profiles, patient success stories and stakeholder partnerships as a means to educate the public about the organization.
- **Publications** – continue the transparent sharing of publications (e.g. business plans, strategic plans, program newsletters, etc.) and advertisements/promotions that explain the vision, and show examples of how Health PEI is achieving its goals, and make these available on the website where appropriate.
- **Event Promotion** – enhance involvement in all new facility openings, tours of new buildings/renovations/showing of new equipment, program expansions or enhancements, etc.
- **Branding** – continue to brand Health PEI as a trusted promoter and deliverer of health care services.

PLAN OUTLINE

Health PEI has made great strides in building a reputation as an organization with an open, dynamic communications approach through:

- Engagement with communities, employees, stakeholders, Members of the Legislative Assembly and government representatives
- Consistent and timely media relations approaches
- Effective participation in and sharing of reports/reviews/strategic plans
- Improved processes for information sharing and feedback from staff and physicians
- Dissemination of internal publications
- Regular Board interaction and feedback

This plan expands and builds on these opportunities through goals and objectives outlined in the following pages. The plan is also a framework for enabling overall engagement and will serve as a guide for tactical planning by divisional leaders and communication resources.

Goal 1: Build Organizational Communication Competency and Capacity

Objective 1.1: Improve Internal Communication

<p>Target Audiences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal – staff, physicians, managers and internal stakeholders <p>Target Communicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior Management Group <p>Key Messages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBD by topic (i.e. key initiatives, issues, successes) <p>Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standardize, consistent and relevant communications and messaging across the system Informed and engaged employees Increased communication between staff, physicians and senior leaders Positive, supportive relationships with staff, physicians, managers and internal stakeholders <p>Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff satisfaction surveys 	<p>Strategies/Tactics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications sub-plans by division with appropriate support resources. Provision of management communication education workshops and resources. Regular dissemination of significant health care system change. Regular updates and engagement at Leadership Forum, Provincial and Local Medical Advisory Committees (PMAC/LMACs) to both share information and receive input/feedback from managers and physicians. Regular updates, and engagement on key system initiatives and information via established divisional management forums. Regular updates to the Staff Resource Centre website page as a sharing portal of internal information. Leadership ‘walk-about’ within health care facilities and program sites, meeting informally with staff without an agenda to discuss concerns, issues or simply express what is going well. Regular divisional updates between Chiefs and their staff about work being carried out within their division, including new initiatives, accomplishments and success stories. Feedback/input opportunity for staff and physicians via Health PEI’s email address – healthinput@gov.pe.ca. Annual review of current communication processes.
--	---

Objective 1.2: Ensure Effective Management of Emergency/Crisis Issues

Target Audiences	Strategies/Tactics
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Internal, Stakeholder and External	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Review of previous and establishment of new crisis communication process, including roles and responsibilities, and stakeholder implications (internal).
Target Communicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Establish an internal communication approach giving Health PEI, or a designated site, the opportunity to broadcast its messages in real time, as required (internally).
<ul style="list-style-type: none">CEO, DESO, Senior Management Group and Senior Communications Officer (as appropriate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Communications staff works in tandem with CEO, DESO, and frontline staff as deemed necessary.
Key Messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Public information line, website and social media (all external resources).
<ul style="list-style-type: none">TBD by topic – messaging is proactive, informative, reassuring and concise	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Include use of collateral materials and paid/earned media as appropriate.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Debriefing sessions (lessons learned).
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Public confidence in Health PEI's operationsMore efficient crisis managementEnhanced internal moralePredetermined intergovernmental expectations	
Evaluation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Number of internal and external inquiriesResults based (i.e. public uptake of call to action as directed by Health PEI)	

Objective 1.3: Improve Media and Government Relations

Target Audiences	Strategies/Tactics
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Media and Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review media relations guidelines, revisions to existing and training as required (including for Senior Management Group, directors, managers and key program-related physicians).
Target Communicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure communicators are aware of formal accepted channels for dissemination of information
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Senior Management Group and Senior Communications Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regular meetings between CEO, Senior Management Group members (as required), Board Chair with Ministry of Health and Wellness.
Key Messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open accessibility to Health PEI staff and government officials as required.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• TBD by topic – messaging is proactive, transparent and timely	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Health PEI briefing notes on key initiatives and emerging issues.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regular updating of program/service/initiative information on the website and social media (where appropriate).
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An informed media that can count on Health PEI being open and transparent• Continued positive relationship with the provincial government and its representatives• Continued commitment to quality improvement	
Evaluation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ease of relations• Demonstrated understanding of the health care system, initiatives and needs	

Goal 2: Improve Interaction Between Health PEI and Its Audiences (Engagement)

Objective 2.1: Inform About Trends, Best Practices and Challenges in Health Care

<p>Target Audiences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal, External and Stakeholders <p>Target Communicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CEO, Senior Management Group and Senior Communications Officer (as appropriate) <p>Key Messages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBD by topic – messaging designed to educate and manage expectations <p>Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better understanding of Health PEI’s direction, annual priorities and key initiatives Increased understanding and communication among staff and physicians of Health PEI activities Increase understanding and communication of Health PEI activities with Islanders, communities and stakeholders <p>Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from Islanders and Stakeholders via health surveys, social media promotion, etc. Increase in earned media 	<p>Strategies/Tactics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlighted in Health PEI Annual Report and Three-Year Strategic Plan. Regular communication of important health care system decisions/changes resulting from changes in trends, best practices or to recognize and address challenges from CEO or Senior Management Group members. Regular updates of key system initiatives and information via established divisional management forums. Toolkit(s) and educational materials to support staff in engagement efforts - http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/src_engagetoolk.pdf Earned media as appropriate (news release, feature stories, media interviews, etc.). Social media promotion (targeted info graphics, feature stories, sharing of third party info (i.e. CIHI and national health association reports), etc.). Regular website updates corresponding to changes in trends, best practices and addressing challenges. Coordinate Health PEI’s efforts with the communication/community engagement strategies of the Board (as appropriate).
--	---

Objective 2.2: Inform About Why Change Is Needed

Target Audiences	Strategies/Tactics	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Internal, External and Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Toolkit(s) and educational materials for staff to support change initiatives (e.g. Change Management Toolkit - http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/mrc_changemgmt.pdf)Highlighted in Health PEI Annual Report and Three-Year Strategic Plan.Regular communication of reasons behind important health care system decisions/ changes from CEO or Senior Management Group members.Regular updates via established divisional management forums.Paid and earned media as appropriate (news release, feature stories, media interviews, etc.).Social media promotion (targeted info graphics, feature stories, sharing of third party info (i.e. CIHI and national health association reports), etc.).Coordinate Health PEI's efforts with the communication/community engagement strategies of the Board (as appropriate).	
Target Communicators		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">CEO, Senior Management Group and Senior Communications Officer (as appropriate)		
Key Messages		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">TBD by topic – clearly outline the reason(s) for change		
Outcomes		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Better understanding of Health PEI's direction, annual priorities and key initiativesIncreased understanding and communication among staff and physicians of Health PEI activitiesIncrease understanding and communication of Health PEI activities with Islanders, communities and stakeholders		
Evaluation		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Feedback from Islanders and Stakeholders via health surveys, social media promotion, etc.Increase in earned media		

Objective 2.3: Inform and Engage Stakeholders About Changes, Progress and Results

Target Audiences	Strategies/Tactics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal, External and Stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlighted in Health PEI Annual Report and Three-Year Strategic Plan.
Target Communicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentations at Board and Caucus meetings, as well as stakeholder sessions (e.g. union meetings), as well as senior management and divisional management forum meetings.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CEO, Senior Management Group, Directors, Managers and Senior Communications Officer (as appropriate) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular communication from CEO or Senior Management Group members.
Key Messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular updates and engagement via established divisional management forums.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBD by topic – clearly outline new processes and procedures, pending new initiatives, solicit input or feedback (as appropriate) and report on progress being made 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paid and earned media as appropriate (news release, feature stories, media interviews, etc.).
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media promotion (targeted info graphics, feature stories, etc.).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better understanding of Health PEI's direction, annual priorities and key initiatives Increased understanding and communication among staff and physicians of Health PEI activities Increase understanding and communication of Health PEI activities with Islanders, communities and stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate Health PEI's efforts with the communication/community engagement strategies of the Board (as appropriate).
Evaluation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from Islanders and Stakeholders via health surveys, social media promotion, etc. Increase in earned media 	

Goal 3: Patient Empowerment

Objective 3.1: Inform People About Services and How to Access Them

<p>Target Audiences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External <p>Target Communicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Communications Officer, Clinical Expert (as appropriate) <p>Key Messages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBD by topic – promote available services, who they are for, how they benefit Islanders and how/where to access them <p>Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase public confidence in Health PEI delivered services • Educated public on health care choices and options • A more informed, proactive and care-seeking public <p>Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from Islanders and Stakeholders via health surveys, social media promotion, etc. • Increase in program/service utilization 	<p>Strategies/Tactics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust website with up-to-date information about programs, services and how/where to access them. • Program and services highlights in Health PEI Annual Report. • Regular updates about programs and services to referring health care providers and community stakeholders. • Program collateral materials (brochures, rack cards, posters, etc.). • Program specific campaigns (as required). • Earned media (news release, PSAs, feature stories, media interviews, etc.). • Social media promotion (targeted info graphics, feature stories, etc.). • Cross-promotion with other health care programs and services. • Conversations between health care providers and patients.
---	---

Objective 3.2: Improve Patient-Centered Focus in Health Care Delivery

Target Audiences	Strategies/Tactics	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Internal and External	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Patient-centered approach to website.Feature patient stories in Health PEI Annual Report and Strategic Plan (as appropriate).Include patients and caregivers as members of program planning committees and quality teams.Program collateral materials that encourage public to become more engaged in their care (brochures, rack cards, posters, etc.).Program specific campaigns that feature patients (as required).Earned media that includes patients and care providers (news releases, feature stories, media interviews, etc.).Social media promotion encouraging public to become active partners in their care.	
Target Communicators		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">CEO, Senior Management Group, Directors, Managers and Senior Communications Officer (as appropriate)		
Key Messages		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">TBD by topic – key message focuses on 148,000 reasons to pursue excellence in care delivery for those who entrust Health PEI with their lives		
Outcomes		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increase public confidence in the health care systemBetter service and patient experienceHealth PEI viewed as a partner in individual health care		
Evaluation		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Patient satisfaction surveyIncreased public participation as part of committees and teamsIncreased patient engagement in earned media		

Objective 3.3: Help People Understand Their Own Role in Their Health Care

<p>Target Audiences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External <p>Target Communicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEO, Senior Management Group, Clinical spokespersons and Senior Communications Officer (as appropriate) <p>Key Messages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBD by topic – public has a responsibility to be an active member of their own health care team <p>Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase confidence in the health care system • Health care services better tailored to public need • Health PEI viewed as a partner in individual health care <p>Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from Islanders and Stakeholders via health surveys, social media promotion, etc. • Increased patient engagement in earned media 	<p>Strategies/Tactics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of patient rights and responsibilities in messaging and on website. • Messaging from clinicians encouraging public to become involved in their care. • Feature patient stories in Health PEI Annual Report and Strategic Plan (as appropriate). • Include patients and caregivers as members of program planning committees and quality teams. • Program collateral materials that encourage public to become more engaged in their care (brochures, rack cards, posters, etc.) • Program specific campaigns that feature patients (as required). • Earned media that includes patients and care providers (news releases, feature stories, media interviews, etc.). • Social media promotion encouraging public to become active partners in their care.
--	---

CRITICAL COMPONENTS

The strategies and tactical directions outlined here are meant to be an overarching direction to assist the divisions in setting the strategic direction of their communications planning. Divisional strategies will have more tactical components and development will be supported with communications resources as required.

The following tactical components will span all divisional initiatives:

Internal Information Sharing Portal – Staff Resource Centre

A portal differs from an intranet in that it is less static and more interactive in terms of its applications. It allows for program sections and dynamic information sharing as opposed to an intranet that is generally one-way communication. It is important to ensure that the Staff Resource Centre is updated with the latest organizational news and information, so that accurate and reliable content can be used to support management communication. Its purpose is to enable staff and the organization to function more effectively and efficiently, and to **foster a stronger community and greater employee engagement** within Health PEI. Communication Planning Resources are made available on the Staff Resource Centre for use by staff across the health care system – this includes a communication plan template that is meant to provide guidance in making announcements, rolling out projects, implementing new programs, etc.

Health PEI Website

The website need to be the central web-based hub for program and service information, emergency/ emerging issues, procedures, forms, information and community-building. This website needs to be promoted to public as the place to go for guidance and information or have friends of family members go to assist them. Website content should be written using plain language and be presented in a conversational format making it easier for people to understand the information being shared.

Paid Media, Publications and Collateral Materials

Advertising campaigns, internal newsletters, as well as public publications and collateral materials are all strategic tools that serve to promote consistent system-wide, standardized information to the relevant audiences. These types of tools not only serve to uniformly inform, but also assist audiences with holding Health PEI accountable. Sometimes, especially in crisis or challenging situations, the heavy hand of paid media (advertising) is required to effectively communicate messages without risk of editorial intervention.

Earned Media

Earned media can also be critical when dealing with emerging or crisis issues and as generally the media choose to play a supportive role in times of difficulty. Earning media on Health PEI's accomplishments or "good news stories" continues to be a challenge. Regularly issuing news releases that speak to good news and health promotion remains an important element in garnering media support. It is becoming increasingly important to include a 'story telling' or human element in information we expect the press to carry. This trend in earned media plays well into Health PEI's patient centered care model and every effort will continue to be made to humanize content – tell the stories of how the health care of an Islander(s) has been improved. Given the high degree of social media engagement in PEI, leveraging Health PEI and Government communication platforms such as social media to cross-promote the same information will further ensure information is being shared with targeted public audiences.

Personal Contact

Personal contact and communication with staff, physicians, stakeholders and the public is the most valuable communication tool. All Islanders can be ambassadors for the health care system if we take the opportunities to engage in meaningful dialogue and information exchange with Islanders. Health PEI will continue to promote these opportunities in the form of: 1) leadership meetings; 2) management meetings; 3) Board meetings; 4) community presentations; 5) media interviews; 6) facility tours/walk-about; and, 7) Every informal opportunity.

COMMUNICATION RESOURCES

As with health care systems world-wide, health human resource issues on PEI are challenging ones. The right people in the right jobs are often difficult to recruit and retain and these challenges can extend into the area of communication. Ever increasing public interest and expectations, as well as the complexity, of healthcare often means that health communication resources are taxed. Due to this reality, communication efforts need to be strategic and efficient, with internal resources sometimes requiring support from other communication resources, such as divisional, departmental or external.

As a result a strategic communications plan that is supported and participated in by senior management and directors is important to maximize efficiency, and to effectively engage with the Island community to support Health PEI's vision of better health care for all Islanders.

CONCLUSION

In a dynamic and changing environment, planned communication strategies and tactics will change over the course of several years. Communication plans are, by nature, dynamic documents. As situations evolve and communication is shared, the initiatives will be adjusted. However, the fundamental principles of sharing, openness and transparency will continue to guide a proactive style of communicating Health PEI's vision, values and goals for the future of health care on Prince Edward Island.