



Pandemic Flu Audience Research

Background:

During an influenza pandemic, public health communications must be strategically framed to promote trust in Public Health's leadership, support for response efforts, and compliance with health-related guidance and instructions. Messages must also be delivered in ways that are relevant and culturally appropriate to diverse target audiences, particularly vulnerable populations. Audience research is needed to better understand how best to communicate with the public during a public health crisis, especially limited English proficient (LEP), generationally poor, and other hard-to-reach communities. Data gathered from the audience research will inform message development and dissemination prior to and during an influenza pandemic.

Project:

In the first year, audience research will be conducted with the following target audiences:

- African Americans
- Spanish speaking Mexican immigrants
- Vietnamese immigrants

Research methods will include:

- 25 key informant interviews conducted in English by Public Health with staff from community-based organizations serving the target audiences
- Focus groups

Involvement by Community-Based Organizations (CBOs):

As trusted and knowledgeable leaders in their communities, CBOs serving African Americans, Mexican immigrants, and Vietnamese immigrants will be key partners in this research effort. CBO activities will include:

- Initial meeting with Public Health staff
- Review of focus group guide questions
- Review of focus group guide translation (a translation service will do the translation work)
- Training on focus group facilitation
- Recruitment of 2-3 focus groups (8-10 participants per focus group)
- 2 staff to run the focus groups (facilitator, note taker for 2 and a half hours)
- Debrief with Public Health staff

Funding for CBOs: \$4000-\$5000 for staff time; focus group participants will be paid \$50 for 2 hour focus group.



Deliverables:

- Preliminary research report of informant interview findings
- Final report of all data analysis.

Goal:

This research project will produce data that will inform communications development and dissemination, enabling the Public Health Communications Team to create more strategic and focused communications prior to and during a pandemic. We propose to address the following questions:

Q1) What are people’s experiences, opinions and attitudes towards issues salient to pandemic flu, including:

- Illness and influenza
- Death and dying
- Government roles and responsibilities as they relate to public health disasters generally and pandemic flu specifically (e.g., social distancing measures, alternate care facilities)
- Other salient issues as they emerge

Q2) How can communication about pandemic influenza make a difference in individuals’ ability to:

- Manage outrage (i.e., levels of emotional upset)
- Associate trust and credibility with Public Health
- Comply with health-related guidance and instructions
- Preserve or develop coping skills
- Maintain or develop resiliency (e.g., resourcefulness, mental and emotional health, ability to withstand stress)

Q3) What are effective communication channels for disseminating messages during a pandemic, especially to hard-to-reach communities?

Q4) Who do target audiences regard as credible sources for information about health issues?