Research-based Recommendations to Improve Health Equity in Gainesville: Proposal for Alachua County Health Care Advisory Board

*A collaboration of UF's Center for Public Interest Communications
and the Alachua County Health Care Advisory Board*
April 22, 2022

The Alachua County Health Care Advisory Board is working to address disparities in health made even more apparent by the COVID-19 crisis in Gainesville as outlined in the ALACHUA COUNTY COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2021-2024. The board's focus is on East Gainesville where health disparities are the most profound. An essential aspect of meeting this challenge is to better understand how strategic, effective and engaged communication can address the barriers that face people who experience health inequity.

Our objective is to help each member of your organization improve their communication ability and help them build trust with residents who are most affected by the factors that lead to healthy inequity while also providing recommendations for how to approach communications as an organization dedicated to ending health inequity. Our work is rooted in social, cognitive, and behavioral science, and we provide actionable frameworks designed to help communicators apply evidence-based strategies to their efforts. We have deep experience in public health communication specifically, acquired through our work with various center partners including the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the United Nations Verified Project. In this project, we will apply what we've learned from these efforts (both globally and locally in Gainesville), and conduct original research to better understand local barriers and best practices.

<u>Scope of Work</u>
To address the problem we will conduct the following 4 steps:

- **Step 1 - Discovery:** *Listening to residents, literature review and interviews focused on identifying "bright spots."*
- **Step 2 - Build Capacity:** **Helping local health practitioners become more effective communicators**
- **Step 3 - Vision: Develop an accurate theory of change.**
- **Step 4 - Activate: Deliver insights and next steps.**

Project Design

Step 1 - Discovery:
Local interviews and literature review focused on identifying "bright spots."
We will conduct a meta analysis, including interviewing experts and scholars, with a focus on identifying "bright spots," in other areas of the country that have addressed the problem of health disparities through their communications efforts. We'll look for communities that are similar to Gainesville in terms of demographics, resources, organizational communications capacity, and local and state public health policy. To do so, we will use three approaches:

1. As the first part of this step, we will conduct up to 10 interviews with people who are not currently engaging, or partially engaging, with the health care system in Gainesville who live in our zip codes of focus. These interviews will help us understand barriers faced. The interviews will help us ensure we are not missing anything that hasn't already been identified by the Healthcare Equity and Access Advisory Group in Gainesville, which has done an excellent job understanding structural barriers. These interviews will be aimed at further understanding barriers faced by those that are not engaging much with the health system. Doing both of these things will ensure our theory of change is accurate and catch any gaps in local research into health disparities.

2. Academic literature review conducted by the Center's research team: Exploring different cities, towns, and municipalities addressing the problem. We will look at academic literature, but also trade blogs/magazines looking for up to 10 "bright spots" that we can investigate more closely for best practices. The particular focus will be on successful public health communications approaches.

3. Identify and interview 2 scholars (1 national and 1 local) and practitioners/experts (1 national and 2 local) with specific expertise and advice (total are for 5 hour-long interviews). At the Center, we have found a quick way to find "bright spots" is a relevant scholarship, and studies are to interview those immersed in this work.

Step 2 - Building Capacity: Workshops and engagement with health practitioners
We will engage the public health sector in Gainesville through two, 2-hour workshops that will help them apply our science-based frameworks to their communications. These will include what we learn from our interviews and identify in the literature review as relevant bright spots. These lively and hands-on workshops will include plenty of relevant examples and opportunities to apply what they learn directly to their challenges.

The workshops will be for public health practitioners, administrators, and those working directly in the sector. We strongly recommend including community leaders and influencers, as well as people we interviewed.

We propose to hold two, two-hour workshops that help participants build their understanding and skills as communicators. We can accommodate up to 75 people in these workshops and will make PDFs of our slides and worksheets available to those unable to participate.

Participants will learn to:
- Apply six fundamental principles of communication to their work, specifically:
  - Communicating in a way that brings value to the people you most hope to engage and communicating in the context of their values, identities and worldviews.
- Use a 4-question framework to develop an effective communications strategy and mindset.
- Use story to build effective, compelling narratives that increase engagement and trust.

<u>The topics, which we will spread out over the two workshops, will include:</u>

The Fundamentals of Excellent Communication
This session introduces participants to six core communications principles from behavioral, cognitive, and social science that can be applied to help people care more about their work. Using lively, hands-on activities, participants practice using the concepts and pair-and-share feedback provides opportunities to develop and test communication efforts with peers.

Learning Outcomes
- Construct communications that are anchored in the 6-point framework
- Characterize the fundamental theories of worldviews
- Integrate visual images and language to enhance communications efforts
- Experiment with the range of emotions in communications efforts
- Create actionable calls to action
- Recognize the role of narrative in communications efforts

The Back of the Envelope Guide to Strategic Communications
In this session, participants will learn a science-driven approach to developing a public interest communications strategy. This highly-functional framework will provide theoretical, scientific, and practical insights for campaign development. It will guide participants in a step-by-step process to create a communication strategy that can drive change that creates meaningful impact on an issue. Hands-on activities allow participants to explore the framework while applying it to their personal work.

Learning Outcomes

- Develop meaningful goals that align with a particular belief, narrative, or behavior change
- Identify the sphere(s) of influence to use to best affect the change you are seeking
- Segment audiences using insights from behavioral, cognitive, and social science
- Design effective tactics to engage identified audiences

The Six Spheres of Influence
While the ultimate goal of most media impact campaigns is to create policy change, changemakers should consider the different spheres of influence where effort can be made to drive that policy change. Deciding which of these spaces to work in is a critical strategic decision and must be linked to a carefully considered theory of change.

Learning Outcomes
- Identify the six spheres of influence
- Understand how to leverage one or more of the spheres
- Map relevant, existing activities and conditions within each sphere
- Identify new conditions that would create a resolution to your issue
- Determine where your efforts can have the greatest effect

Science of Story Building
What makes one story more compelling than another? How can we build stories that illustrate the importance of the issues and challenges at hand and that can drive social change? This session dives deep into the structure of story and uncovers seven principles to help you build stories that will resonate with identified communities and align them with your theory of change. Using a small-group feedback model, participants will experiment with each of the principles throughout the course

Learning Outcomes
- Explain the implications of dominant and counter-narratives
- Discuss the uses of the seven different plot structures
- Recognize the intentional use of emotion in a narrative
- Determine where to make room for the audience in stories
- Discuss the elements that create narrative transportation
- Explain the importance of verisimilitude in story building
- Recognize techniques to build surprise into a story

The workshops will be led by Center coaches who hold expertise in research, strategy, pedagogy, and media, and will be driven by recent insights from psychology, sociology, and communications scholarship. The workshops will be taught live, either in person or remotely.

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Step 3 - Vision: Develop a theory of change
A theory of change is vital for an effective public communications strategy. A theory of change allows you to identify how the changes you make in your own approach and behavior will lead to a solution for the community. After we complete the two workshops, we will collectively develop a theory of change with the participants.

Toward the end of the training we will work with the participants to develop a theory of change, using our Four Questions: Back of the Envelope Guide to Strategy^{SM} framework that will inform our proposed public communication recommendations to enact change in health disparities in Gainesville.

Step 4 - Activate: Share public health communications next steps
The Center will develop a set of actionable and practical next steps for effective communications to build health equity. They will be informed by our literature review on "bright spots" and what we learn from the interviews and workshops, especially from those already working and living in East Gainesville.

We will share our recommendations for next steps in a public workshop with those working on health for the county and interested local government officials along with a report not to exceed 15 pages.

Our deliverables in this communications strategy will be:

1. Specific, actional and practical next steps that we will present in a public setting.
2. A slide deck capturing these recommendations, provided as a .pdf file.
3. A report that summarizes our insights from literature review, workshops and interviews, and includes our specific actionable recommendations for next steps.

Deliverables for the project:
- A report with strategic public health communications recommendations for next steps to engage those not engaging, or only partially engaging, with the health system (informed by literature review, workshops, and interviews).
- Two two-hour workshops for those working in the public health sector, including customized slides and worksheets.
- A public presentation of our findings and recommendations for next steps and a .pdf copy of a slide deck capturing our insights and recommendations for next steps.

Approach:
Our research methods involve interviews with experts and with people affected to understand the problem. In many of the steps, we will invite a number of stakeholders on health equity and

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relevant communities to co-design with us where possible, including people working closely with this project and representative members of our groups of interest. We will employ and explore social norms theory, nudge theory, social network analysis, market factors, socio-economic factors, attitudes and trust of government, and communities of influence.

Timeline (flexible per client's preference)

We propose this working timeline for the duration of the project. We aim to start the project on September 1, 2022, with any pre-project work completed before then:

Step 1:	**Weeks 1-6**
Step 2:	**Weeks 7-20**
Step 3:	**Week 21**
Step 4:	**Weeks 22-26**

It is important to note that this timeline is preliminary and can be updated once the final project is agreed upon by the County and the Center.

BUDGET:

Item	Rate	Total Cost
Literature review, interviews with people affected, and interviews with experts We will conduct a nationwide literature review with a focus on identifying "bright spots," or positive deviance, in other areas of the country that have best addressed the problem of health disparities. In doing so, we will interview national and local experts and scholars. As part of this step, we will also conduct up to 10 interviews with people who are NOT engaging, or partially engaging, with Gainesville's health care system who live in our zip codes of focus. ● Identify and interview 2 scholars (1 national and 1 local) and practitioners/experts (1 national and 2 local) with specific expertise and advice (total is for 5 1 hour-long interviews).	**Academic literature review** 45 hours x $175/hour **Interviews/experts and scholars** 7 hours x $175/hour **Synthesis and report generation** 10 hours x $175/hour	$10,850

Workshops and interviews We will engage the public health sector in Gainesville through two 2-hour workshops on effective, science-based communication for health equity. The workshop will be informed by what we learn in the discovery phase	**Training program** 18 hours x $300/hour	$5,400
Deliver communications recommendations The Center will develop recommendations for the county for health equity that is informed by our literature review on "bright spots" and what we learn from the training with practitioners across the sector, especially those already working in East Gainesville. We will present the recommendations in a public meeting for all project stakeholders.	**Write up and presentation of findings** 58 hours x $175/hour	$10,150
Honoraria Pool	**For experts** 5x$100=$500 **For interviewees** 10x$30=$300	$800
	Total	**$27,200**

Although none has been anticipated, any travel will be invoiced at cost, following UF travel guides. Costs will be estimated and approval sought from the partner prior to confirmation of travel arrangements. Costs associated with renting space, catering or technology for workshops and public presentations are not included here.

Estimated Total Engagement   **$27,200**

About the Center
The Center for Public Interest Communications at the College of Journalism and Communications has provided strategic communication training and science communication training to hundreds of communicators, scholars, scientists and leaders at organizations that include the International Labor Organization, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, College of London, University of Florida Health, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, United Nations

High Commissioner on Refugees Innovation Service and the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

The Center for Public Interest Communications, housed in the University of Florida College of Journalism and Communications, is the first of its kind in the nation. Launched in February 2018, the Center is designed to study, test and apply the science of strategic communication for social change. The Center partners with government agencies, universities, foundations and nonprofits to craft effective campaigns and ensure that science-based communication is built into their program design, strategy and content. The team uses systems thinking, human-centered design and behavioral, cognitive and social science to discover and develop messages and communication strategies that support change efforts.

Mutual agreement on services design:

X_____   _____
[PARTNER]   Date

X_____   _____
Center for Public Interest Communications   Date