



MRC ★ In Touch

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Featured Article

The Role of Social Media in Health Communications

Social Media is quickly becoming one of the most powerful sources for timely dissemination of information worldwide. There are 163 million people on Facebook and more than 140 million users on Twitter in the United States alone. Often before any reports from the media are released, news of an event has spread rapidly via social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Foursquare. These sites are often the first place people turn to report out information or receive safety messages from family and friends when phone lines are tied. Leveraging the reach of these communication avenues can be a great asset for spreading critical information during emergencies and disasters in your community.

The folks at the Newton (Massachusetts) Health and Human Services Department understand the power of integrating social media into emergency communications. This summer, the assistant regional emergency preparedness coordinator, Jen Brais, provided MRC volunteers and staff with a great introduction to social media and its applications for emergency communications. MRC volunteers from throughout the region, including the Newton MRC, Brookline MRC, NC-7 MRC and the Region 4b MRC were invited to attend. Ms. Brais provided participants with a great overview of many social media tools including Facebook and Twitter, but also explained Pinterest, Blogs, Youtube and many other social media platforms and how they are relevant to emergency preparedness. She also gave specific examples of how the use of social media has helped people and responders during recent disasters.

With the attendees possessing a varying level of skills and familiarity with social media, Ms. Brais tailored her presentation to the audience by using a pre-training survey. Most of the participants at the Newton MRC training were new to social media, so Ms. Brais was able to customize the training to be more relevant for those who attended. Teresa Kett, the Newton MRC Coordinator has been tweeting updates about MRC activities for a year now, "We're enjoying using Twitter to make sure our followers have the latest public health information!"

To find out guidelines and best practices for social media you may view <http://www.cdc.gov/SocialMedia/Tools/guidelines/>.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention has developed a Health Communicator's Social Media Toolkit. For more information visit http://www.cdc.gov/socialmedia/Tools/guidelines/pdf/SocialMediaToolkit_BM.pdf.

Finally, see NACCHO's social media guide for Local Health Departments, please visit <http://www.naccho.org/toolbox/tool.cfm?id=2575>

MRC/NACCHO Connections

We Want to Hear From You!

We need your help to make the MRC newsletters, "In Touch" and "In Focus", informative and interesting to MRC units nationwide. Share news, ideas, stories, or outstanding volunteers at mrcnewsletter@naccho.org.

Announcements

NACCHO joins Loma Linda University in the Journal of Environmental Health's Cover Feature

The feature article in September's issue of the Journal of Environmental Health explores the importance of collaboration and communication among various agencies in building disaster preparedness. The Article, "Building Capacity for Community Disaster Preparedness: A Call for Collaboration Between Public Environmental Health and Emergency Preparedness and Response Programs" was co-authored by NACCHO's Dave Dyjack, DrPH, and is the first in a series on environmental health, emergency preparedness and community resiliency. Read the article here <http://www.naccho.org/topics/environmental/loader.cfm?csModule=security/getfile&pageID=238354>.

Public Health Preparedness Summit 2013

Registration is now open for the 2013 Public Health Preparedness Summit taking place March 12-15 in Atlanta, GA. Visit <http://www.phprep.org/> for more information and to register today for the early bird savings!

REGISTER NOW: HPH CIP Program Webinar Series Topic #2: Using Social Media in Emergency Response

The second installment of the HPH CIP Program Webinar Series is on Wednesday, September 26, 2012 from 1:00-2:00 p.m. EDT. The second topic in the program series entitled, What Do Tweets Have to Do with Me: Using Social Media in Emergency Response, will feature presenters from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services who will highlight current tools used by the Fusion Cell in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response to monitor social media trends that assist with response coordination efforts. There will be a question and answer period following the presentation.

Please register for the event by sending your e-mail RSVP to cip@hhs.gov

Latest Edition of MRC "In Focus"

Are you interested in staying up-to-date with MRC unit activities? Download a PDF version of the summer 2012 edition of "In Focus," at

<http://www.naccho.org/topics/emergency/MRC/newsletter.cfm>.

To submit information for either MRC: In Touch or MRC: In Focus, please contact Stacy Hosler at shosler@naccho.org or (202)507-4197.



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