



TRIBAL EPIDEMIOLOGY CENTERS

Public Health Infrastructure (TECPHI) Program

YEAR 1 Communications Supplement



Enhancing Essential Public Health Services:

Communicate effectively to inform and educate

Tribal Epidemiology Centers Public Health Infrastructure (TECPHI) cooperative agreement is a comprehensive funding opportunity sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. TECPHI supports each of the 12 Tribal Epidemiology Centers (TECs) and one Network Coordinating Center (NCC) to support a culturally informed, evidence-based, holistic, and population-level approach to disease prevention, health promotion, and wellness. A key strategy of the cooperative agreement is to implement activities to improve the effectiveness of health promotion and disease prevention. To improve effectiveness, the TECs must know how to communicate what public health is and convey the TEC's value, mission, roles, programs, and services they provide.

Increased communication and awareness of the TECs, TEC work, and the value TECs offer to their partners is an important outcome of TECPHI. **Effective communication is essential in providing timely, accurate, and reliable information for T/TO/UIOs, Tribal leaders, Tribal communities, and other partners so they can make informed decisions about the health and wellness of community members.** Communication is important to the sustainability of the TECs so that partners know what the TECs do and why the work is important. Communications are also important to the sustainability of the TECs, whereas the more people know and care about TECs and the value they bring to T/TO/UIOs and Tribal communities, the more likely the TECs would be able to continue providing those valuable services.

The TECs have been working to improve communications efforts and develop communications plans. The plans outline how the TECs communicate important, ongoing project information to key partners and audiences. TECs use a variety of approaches to engage audiences to ensure communication and messaging are actionable and understandable and convey health information.

TECs expanded outreach methods with diverse and culturally tailored communication tools to increase reach and engage T/TO/UIO audiences more effectively. TECs increased engagement (especially on social media platforms) and received positive feedback on communication products. TECs developed internal review processes to enhance the design, data visualizations, and information conveyed in communication products like fact sheets, newsletters, and data dashboards. TECs developed culturally tailored materials in collaboration with T/TO/UIO partners and Tribal communities to communicate public health topics. The collective efforts of the TECs have led to improved visibility of both the important work of the TECs and "hot topic" issues like challenges TECs experience accessing data and issues with data quality.

Communications in Action

NCC:

Building the TEC Brand

The TEC branding is an important visual identity. It helps to effectively convey the TEC presence and functions and fosters a positive reputation among partners. The brand reflects the TEC visual identity, design, mission, values, tone of voice, and personality, inclusive of its culture and values. In addition to making partners aware of the existence of the TEC through a common visual persona, the brand strategy is designed to foster a positive reputation and trust.

Enhancing and building the TEC brand on behalf of the TEC community has been a focus of the NCC during Year 1. The NCC worked to update and refresh the brand and the result is the TEC Brand Style Guide. Now, all communications materials, reports, social media, email marketing, and the TEC website look cohesive and consistent. The style guide was also created as a resource for all TECs to create materials containing the

TEC brand and style as they would like. The TECs are free to add their own logos and individual elements or request technical assistance from the NCC for help in creating those materials. The style guide was widely shared with TEC partners.

The NCC created a survey to request branded TEC materials to print materials for local use. Most recently, the NCC graphic designer worked with the Rocky Mountain Tribal Epidemiology Center (RMTEC) and sent a box full of materials to distribute at local events.

Additionally, for the first time, the TEC exhibit booth featured informational materials that looked beautiful, professional, and cohesive. The new materials have been featured at several national conferences and events and the NCC staff have received compliments about how “great” the materials look.



Inter Tribal Council of Arizona:
Developing a Comprehensive Communications Plans

The Inter Tribal Council of Arizona (ITCA) TECPHI Team developed a Communication Plan and is currently implementing it. On March 7, 2023, the team held a strategic planning meeting to develop Communication Plan goals and a Working Group Meeting Series. The task was completed with the assistance and guidance of a communications consultant. Additionally, they developed an evaluation approach for the Communications Plan and met with a series of internal and external partners to receive feedback on the drafted plan. The TECPHI team looks forward to gaining a better understanding of how strategized outreach and communication can enhance TEC services with partners.

Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Epidemiology Center (GLITEC):

Expanding Reach Through Dissemination Materials

Opportunities for dissemination of informational materials were many during the year post-COVID. The requests from Tribes focused on additional data variables that would help them strategically plan for budgeting, and accurate numbers from enrollment instead of using the national surveys for denominators. GLITEC was able to initiate the Tribal enrollment numbers that would more accurately address the population counts e.g., promotion of Harm Reduction kits, Narcan, test kits, flyers, and hundreds of fact sheets that were developed for purposeful dissemination of public health awareness. Dashboards were started for all 34 Tribes. Data linkage projects between three states and another organization were initiated, and the interactions with these external agencies were beneficial to them after hearing how the GLITEC could work as a partner with public health authority to aid in the acquisition of vital public health data needed for ongoing disease surveillance and communications to increase public awareness.

Urban Indian Health Institute (UIHI):

Increasing Engagement with T/TO/UIOs and Other Partners

The Urban Indian Health Institute (UIHI) shares information on a wide array of topics with the various communication materials, products, and publications created with the intent to engage or educate T/TO/UIO and other partners. Through Instagram and Facebook, UIHI posts reached 96,912 accounts and engaged 36,664 users across Instagram, Facebook and X. The Biweekly Resource Email reached 3,759 subscribers with an open rate of 37% resulting in 1,390 people reading and using the content provided by UIHI. The BRANCH website received 87 visits alone, while the GHWIC website was visited 337 times. A wide array of topics were covered by the various communication and outreach tools created with the intent to engage or educate T/TO/UIO and other partners.

Rocky Mountain Tribal Epidemiology Center (RMTEC):

Creating Communications Products Valued by Partners

RMTEC received positive feedback from Tribes on the communication products and received several requests to generate additional hard copies of materials to distribute at local Tribal events. Examples of these products include quarterly newsletters, anti-vaping campaign materials, and commercial tobacco products educating community members on diabetes, smoking, and cancer. It is a challenge to accurately track how many copies are distributed, but RMTEC aims to track this moving forward.

