Beyond Health Fairs: Creative Ways to Communicate Children’s Health Information

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Your Mission: To increase healthy eating and movement of the children in our community.

What is your short-term goal?
To reduce number of obese and overweight children (ages 5-10) in Precinct 4 by the end of 2020 by providing healthy lifestyle training and opportunities for children and families.

Who is impacted by the problem?
- Families with children
- Hospitals
- Pediatricians
- Schools

Who is on your side? Who is already working on this?
- School districts
- Health Care Systems
- City Governments
- United Way
- State Government

What other organizations have an interest?
- PTAs
- Business groups
- Fitness clubs

Who or what are your biggest obstacles?
- Competition for school resources
- Competition for school day time
- Parents’ time/money limitations
- Availability of school/community recreation
- Insurance companies

Who are you targeting with your message? Who has the power to take the action you desire?
- Parents of children ages 5-10 in Precinct 4
- Children in Precinct 4
- Your County Commissioners
- Your ISD Board

What tactics can you use to reach your targets and achieve your goal?
- Support promotion of locally grown foods
- Provide instruction for students on healthy cooking principles
- Host a healthy cooking competition
- Incentive counseling in offering healthy food options
- Offer scholarships for students who participate in healthy cooking classes
-邀請學校董事會成員參加學校自助餐
-邀請縣政府委員會進行社區玩耍場步行巡視
-主辦健康烹飪比賽

Your County
Children’s Health Advocacy Message Map Example
What is the short-term (within the next 2 years) goal you want to achieve?

Your goal will drive all of your activities. This goal should be concrete, achievable and specific. It should include a WHAT and a HOW. For example:

*Our goal is to:*

*To reduce number of obese and overweight children (ages 5-10) in Precinct 4 by the end of 2020*

[the what]

*by providing healthy lifestyle training and opportunities for children and families.*

[the how].

You can repeat this planning process for each specific goal your coalition is pursuing. If you start to write “raise awareness” on your map, ask yourself if all you want to do is to let people know that there is a problem and a solution, or if you want to change policies or behaviors.
Again, be as specific as possible. Instead of saying “parents,” think about how to narrow that group – maybe parents of children of a specific age, or who attend a particular school, or of a population sub-group. And remember that parents and children aren’t the only ones who benefit from improved child health.

For example, expanded access to preventive dental health care leading to a reduction in emergency room visits related to severely neglected dental health doesn’t just benefit the directly impacted children and families. Hospitals may benefit from shorter wait times in their emergency rooms for other patients. Health insurers will benefit from reduced emergency room claims. Pediatric dentists will benefit because they will be seeing more patients on a regular basis.
Who is on your side? Who is already working on this issue?

This question is a little different than the previous question that asked who would benefit from the action you are proposing. This list *may* include individuals and organizations that would benefit from the action you are proposing, but groups don’t have to be self-interested to be involved. This is a list ONLY of the individuals and organizations that are already working on your issue. They may be working on your issue broadly or specifically be supporting the action you are promoting. It’s likely that you know who these players are in your community. These are your natural partners.
What other organizations would have an interest?

This is the time to think outside the box. You know who is already engaged on this issue, but who might be interested in joining you for this campaign. Think in terms of partners specifically on this issue and this action.

Maybe the soft drink companies that opposed your coalition on an issue like keeping sugary beverages out of schools would be willing to support your effort to help every child in your county see a dentist. Maybe your local Toastmasters club would support you because they think that having a nice smile will help you to be a more confident speaker.

Sometimes businesses (and business groups or associations) that don’t seem like natural partners to you will join you to give them a “white hat” image in the community. That’s okay. Every partner’s motivation doesn’t have to be the same.

Remember: Always leave the door open for next time. Just because an organization doesn’t support one of your initiatives, doesn’t mean they won’t support you on another.
Who or what are your biggest obstacles?

Who and what are the individuals, organizations, and obstacles that stand in the way of your success? It’s not always as simple as saying, “no one is against preventing injuries” or “no one is in favor of child abuse.”

Sometimes your opposition comes from a group that may support what you are doing in principle, but is competing against you for the same pot of money. You may want to put up billboards about drowning prevention and your opposition is a neighborhood group that opposes billboards.

And remember to always keep the door open. Your opponent on one campaign may be your ally on another.
Who are you targeting with your message? Who has the power to take the action you desire?

Who are you trying to reach with your messages? The more specific your targets are, the more effective your tactics can be. The “general public” is never a target.

Think about the difference between saying, “our target is the United States Congress,” versus “our target is the North Texas delegation to the United States Congress,” or, even better, “our target are the members of the North Texas congressional delegation who sit on the appropriations committee.”

Another example, “our target is parents in Tarrant County;” versus “our target is parents in Precinct 1,” versus our target are parents of children under 10 in Precinct 1.”

For each level of specificity you add, you make it easier to develop tactics that will successfully reach the people who are in the power to take action.
What tactics can you use to reach your targets and achieve your goal?

Tactics are the individual steps and actions you can take to achieve your goal. A tactic can be a one-time activity (make a presentation to a community group) or an activity or project that takes place over a period of time (starting a petition and getting parents to sign online).

There’s no one tactic that works in every scenario. In most cases, you’ll be layering your tactics on top of one another. You’ll be planning to get the message to your targets in multiple ways – in meetings, on social media, through letters and email, in the newspaper, etc. And remember that every time your coalition executes a tactic there is an opportunity to raise the profile of not only your issue and your goal, but also of your coalition itself.

It’s important to involve the people who will be impacted by this action to be involved in developing and implementing the tactics. Working on an issue that impacts schools in a particular area? Work collaboratively with the PTA on tactics to reach parents and teachers. Reaching out to a new immigrant population? Involve recent immigrants and the agencies who serve them in your discussions.

Tactics must:
• Be focused on achieving your short-term goal
• Be directed at a specific target
• Be appropriate for the community you are serving

Tactics include:
• Contact with Key Targets: speaking at public meetings, one-on-one meetings with targets, sign-on letters from multiple organizations
• Applying Public Pressure: call-ins, e-mail, petitions, social media or letter-writing campaigns
• Media Events: press conferences, media releases, op-eds, letters to the editor, radio talk shows
• Raising Awareness: educational events, posters, flyers, social media, health fairs, one-on-one or group education
• Products or Services Distribution: free or reduced-price child health and safety products or child health services (e.g. car seat or smoke detector installation, screenings)
• Personal Stories: collecting and sharing the stories of families impacted by your key issue – families who have been, or would be, helped by the solution you propose
• Being Creative and Thinking Outside the Box: None of the above, a unique and different way to convey your message – just make sure it stays focused on your goal.
Tactics Worksheet:
What tactics can you use to reach your targets and achieve your goal?
Parking Lot:
Great Ideas that Don’t Quite Fit Right Now!
Children’s Health Advocacy Message Map

Who is impacted by the problem?

What is your short-term goal?

What tactics can you use to reach your targets and achieve your goal?

Who is on your side? What else are you working on?

What other organizations have an interest? Who or what are your biggest obstacles?

Who are you targeting with your message? Who Else? Who can help you get the power or use the resources you desire?