Utlizing Technology to Deliver Public Health Messaging: *An Environmental Scan of Community, School, Tribal, Worksite, and Healthcare Sectors in South Dakota*

COMMUNITY

Demographics: Fifty-one respondents represented the community sector, with 83% of those who serve more than one community across SD varied in size from urban clusters to rural and frontier communities.

Patterns of Technology Use: The general public and families are the primary audiences targeted through the top three technologies utilized, e-mail, social media, and website, with the primary focus of messaging as health promotion and prevention and health education. In-person educational events and seminars are other methods used for delivering public health messaging. In addition, the leading health topics these technologies are used to address are physical activity and nutrition, diabetes, and obesity, including other areas identified, mental health and maternal and child health. Oral health is the least addressed.

Feasibility of Technology Use: The effectiveness of the technology used is measured through social media engagement (e.g. like, shared, etc.), page views, and response rates, with reach the least used measurement and some that do not measure at all. Individual staff persons and a communications teams are assigned to deliver messaging, with a few where no one is assigned. Content is largely determined in advance and shared from other sources. In addition, administration, a wellness team, or an external media contractor is also utilized by a few community sectors to deliver messages. Staff roles in delivering public health messages largely include developing content and posting messaging. Many community sector representatives do not use or do not know if tools are used to manage delivery of the messaging, however Facebook, websites, and Hootsuite were indicated by ones that do. Barriers to using technology to deliver messaging is largely budget, followed by lack of staff and lack of staff training on technology, however access to the population base is also a barrier due to poor internet access, lack of social media use, organizational policies for technology use, and staff time.

Barrier to Technology Use

"Large organization that centralizes the use of social media and other technologies. This slows the process, which creates a disconnect in social media platforms that thrive on immediacy and engagement with the audience. Program staff have no access to or ability to interact through social media with the audience."

-Community Organization Staff

Additional Information to Inform Technology Use for Public Health Messaging: Almost half of respondents indicated that the primary areas of chronic disease challenging to address using technology, include obesity, diabetes education, tobacco use and policy, aging populations, disparate populations, as well as having the ability to reach and impact populations effectively. However, many communities have had success using technology to deliver messaging, such as Twitter chats, YouTube videos to promote wellness, or public campaigns promoted through Facebook. Moreover, internet access is often a challenge to utilizing technology to deliver messaging, especially in rural areas, however Facebook has been a useful platform to deliver information.