

Evaluation of a Communicable Disease Program Communication of Health Alerts, Health Advisories and Health Updates in Oregon

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PRESENTATION FORMAT: 15 minute oral presentation

TOPIC/TARGET AUDIENCE: Administrators, Researchers, Evaluators and Public Health Department officials

ABSTRACT:

Purpose: Health alerts, advisories and updates (HAAUs) are essential to communicable disease programs. HAAUs communicate with providers, schools, hospitals and other community members to prevent the spread of disease. Health departments evaluate these programs to comply with Public Health Accreditation Board standards, but few published evaluations exist. We conducted a process evaluation of Benton County Public Health Department's HAAU system.

Methods: We developed an online survey to evaluate: community reach, usefulness, preferred methods of communication, and satisfaction. We report descriptive analyses as well as thematic data from open-ended questions.

Results: Eighty-eight participants completed the survey. 55% received 1-3 and 34% received 4+ HAAUs in the past six months. 47% of participants received HAAUs by email, 33% by fax, and 20% by both methods. Participants mostly used information from HAAUs for: 87.5% containment, 18% immunization, 14.7% treatment protocols, 14.7% clinical decision-making, and 16% identification of suspected cases. 76% of participants were satisfied with the current HAAUs. They expressed the need to increase community awareness about communicable diseases.

Conclusion: HAAUs were found to be useful to organizations, particularly for raising awareness and improving patient outreach. Findings could enhance communicable disease programs in terms of methods of communication and expanding health information.

OBJECTIVE(S): Describe the process of building an evaluation that responds to stakeholder's interest and community characteristics.

Describe community members that receive HAAUs.

Evaluate how community members use the information included in the HAAUs.

Define recommendations on how to better disseminate the HAAUs.

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