

**The NIH Director's  
Council of *Public Representatives* (COPR)**

**Communications Work Group**

**Presentation to the NIH Director  
October 31, 2008**

Presented by Anne Muñoz-Furlong

# Work Group Day Participants

- Anne Muñoz-Furlong, Co-Chair
- James Wendorf, Agenda Co-Chair Liaison
- Linda Crew
- Valda Boyd Ford
- Nicole Johnson
- Cynthia Lindquist
- Eileen Naughton
- Jim Wong
- John Nelson, ACD Liaison

# Communications Roadmap

- Natural outgrowth of the NIH Roadmap for Medical Research continuum
  - New science → 4 Ps → new communications
- Budget/cultural change relating to NIH-wide communications activity
- **Integrated, unified communications and Web strategy**
- Cross between awareness and branding

# NIH Communications Study

- July 2008 Omnibus Data
- Edelman Focus Groups
- September 2008 Expert Panel Meeting
  
- Next step: Seek broader public input via Request for Information (RFI)

# Work Group Day RFI Discussion

- **Question 1:** What is the appropriate purpose statement to elicit information about public information needs from NIH?

# Work Group Day RFI Discussion

- **Question 2:** How will NIH reach new audiences and use new tools, such as social media? Consider questions that will elicit responsive information for the following categories of concern:
  - Health consumers (e.g., patients, physicians, local health services, community clinics, health plans, etc.)
  - Information needs
  - Accessible places to obtain health information, focusing on differing locations in rural, urban, and suburban areas and using new disseminators
  - Roles stakeholders can play and who they are (national, regional, local levels)

# Work Group Day RFI Discussion

- **Question 3:** How can NIH best disseminate the RFI itself to reach the various health consumers for maximum public response?

# Work Group Day RFI Discussion

- **Question 4:** How can the COPR help with dissemination efforts?



# Work Group Response

- An RFI has certain limitations:
  - Target audiences do not read the *Federal Register*
  - RFI more likely to be answered by organizations than individuals
  - RFI is not consumer friendly

# Work Group Recommendations

## Response to RFI limitations:

- Base the questions on those used at the September Expert Panel
- Engage the COPR to:
  - Introduce the RFI in plain language to make it more consumer friendly
  - Disseminate the RFI to constituents by e-mail/mail/phone, focus groups, etc.)
  - Involve the COPR alumni

# Work Group Recommendations

Benefits of this process:

- Study immediately reaches a wide and diverse group of health consumers and state actors by involving COPR members' constituencies
- It could become a core responsibility of the COPR to conduct such a communication study yearly for an ongoing stream of information. This also relates well to the ambassador role of the COPR

# Work Group Recommendations

- The bottom line:

“We can get more firepower from the people on the COPR than from the *Federal Register*.”

# Additional Communication Strategies

- Communicate through a variety of methods: directly to health consumers, consumer/advocacy groups
- Develop a formal communications network that *any* nonprofit/advocacy group can sign up to receive information

# Additional Communication Strategies

- Partner with professional organizations that interact with large numbers of health consumers (e.g., AMA, etc.)
- Partner with state groups that set health policy and legislation

# Additional Communication Strategies

- Communicate information in traditional and nontraditional ways:
  - Establishments that exist in every community (e.g., pharmacies, grocery stores, barber shops, etc.)
  - Tailor communication vehicle to target audiences (e.g., places of worship, small/ethnic newspapers, etc.)

# Additional Communication Strategies

- Link an “NIH Awareness Month” campaign to high-powered television exposure, such as arranging for the NIH Director to appear on *Oprah*
- Provide lapel pins or stickers to COPR members, COPR alumni, physicians, health care providers, advocacy groups, etc., that say “Ask me about NIH.”



# Additional Communication Strategies

- Blue sky: Use Facebook or MySpace to form a group, such as “Friends of NIH,” to attract interest and encourage dialogue.

# Next Steps for RFI

- Draft
- Determine the timeline
- Determine evaluation mechanism
- Post and distribute