



Cycle 2 Locally Driven Collaborative Project

Project Description

ANALYZING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION, AND EVALUATION AT HEALTH UNITS IN ONTARIO

Lead Health Unit:	Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health
Supporting Organizations:	Middlesex-London Health Unit Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit
Collaborators:	North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit Toronto Public Health
Project Duration:	October 2012 – October 2013

OVERVIEW

Social media includes Internet-based tools and platforms (channels) that help people create, publish and share information online. Social media is being used by health agencies worldwide as an “effective way to expand our reach, foster engagement and increase access to credible, science-based health messages.”

Ontario health units have started to use social media as a communication channel. Although there has been some research into how health units do and could use social media, and how they evaluate it, there is no comprehensive guide or set of best practices for health units to follow. The aim of this project is to study and establish these best practices and determine how social media can facilitate and complement public health comprehensive programs and strategies.

A literature review and environmental scan will be conducted to analyze the effectiveness of current implementation strategies and evaluation practices for social media campaigns at Ontario public health units. This will draw on existing guidance documents, models and data available with respect to planning processes. Key informant interviews, and a purposeful sampling of case studies from three health units active in social media will yield information on barriers, facilitators, challenges and benefits to implementing and evaluating social media. A best practices resource, toolkit or “compass” will be created, allowing health units across Ontario to more easily and effectively leverage social media to meet the mandate of the Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS).