



National Coalition for Sexual Health Meeting  
Communications Action Group Session: Meeting Summary  
September 20, 2013

**Meeting Participants**

Deb Arrindell, American Sexual Health Association  
Tom Beall, Ogilvy Public Relations  
Jesseca Boyer, Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States  
Jaclyn Fontanella, MPH, Program Associate, NCSH  
Susan Gilbert, MPA, Communications Director, NCSH  
Lisa Guiterman, Ogilvy Public Relations  
Debra Hauser, Advocates for Youth  
Kate Heyer, National Association of County and City Health Officials  
Jennifer Johnsen, Planned Parenthood Federation of America  
Justin Keller, Center for Research and Education on Gender and Sexuality at SFSU  
Jami Leichter, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Deb Levine, YTH  
Penny Loosier, PhD, MPH, Division of STD Prevention  
Ashley Maier, California Coalition Against Sexual Assault  
Eva Margolies, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Amy Margolis, Office of Adolescent Health, Department of Health and Human Services  
Joleen Nevers, American College Health Association  
Rachel Pryzby, MPH, ORISE Fellow, Division of STD Prevention  
Monica Rodriguez, Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States  
Martha Saly, National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable  
Amy Schalet, University of Massachusetts Amherst  
Karen Shea, Planned Parenthood Federation of America  
William Smith, National Coalition of State STD Directors  
Katy Suellentrop, The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy  
Dana Van Gorder, Project Inform  
Ben Wise, NYS Department of Health, AIDS Institute

## Agenda

The goals of the CAG meeting were to present and discuss:

- A proactive and reactive media strategy for this year
- A potential initiative to influence media policies and practices relating to sexual health content
- Strategies to promote adoption of the new sexual health message framework

## Proactive and Reactive Media Strategy

**Presentation.** Tom Beall and Lisa Guiterman of Ogilvy Public Relations presented an overview of the draft plan for proactive and reactive media for the next 12 months. To access their slides, please use this link: <http://www.slideshare.net/NCSH/presentations>. The draft plan includes year one goals and objectives, priority audiences, core message strategies, and recommended activities.

The proposed activities are:

- Proactive media outreach to promote priority NCSH stories, messages and products and to leverage media attention around ACA implementation (two waves of outreach)
- Reactive media outreach to capitalize on other relevant news stories, events or media queries that provide opportunities to leverage/insert NCSH messages
- Cultivating partnerships with priority media outlets with reach and appeal to specific audience segments
- Serving as an agenda-setting content provider to place opinion pieces and/or stories to advance discussion of sexual health
- Positioning NCSH as a media resource center with access to story ideas, information/data sources, and a spokesperson network with NCSH members
- Monitoring, measuring and evaluating the media initiative. Monitoring current coverage to identify opportunities for reactive outreach; measurement and evaluation to assess quality and quantity of coverage
- Developing assets, tools and resources to support media outreach, including media center on website, spokesperson network, fact sheets, audience profiles, etc

**Discussion.** CAG members responded favorably to the plan. Some CAG members suggested that NCSH also consider using Facebook and/or Twitter to promote sexual health messages. Partnership staff responded that these social/digital media channels are definitely under consideration, but first they want to ensure that staff is available to create and update high quality content on a regular basis. Some CAG members asked if they should promote the NCSH to their members, and if so, how should they do so. Tom suggested that perhaps when the “Guide” is released, we could officially launch the coalition and provide tools, such as sample newsletter copy, to use for communicating with their members.

## Potential Media Standards and Practices Initiative

*Presentation.* Deb Levine (YTH) presented a potential initiative that she and Larry Swiader (The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy) developed in response to a discussion during a recent CAG conference call. If there is widespread support for this initiative, the CAG could undertake work in support of it over the coming year.

As Deb reported, various media outlets, both traditional and new, have widely varying policies and publishing standards, both stated and unstated, about sexual health-related content. In many cases, this ranges from specific word and phrase filters (sex, sexual, sexuality) to more insidious censorship for no stated reason.

She proposed development of a set of standards and best practices for inclusiveness of sexual health content for a range of media outlets and target audiences. Then, a strategy will be created to positively engage with policymakers and decision-makers at priority outlets, in the hopes of building productive relationships and influencing responsible, inclusive coverage of sexual health.

Before creating these standards, an audit of existing standards and practices among priority outlets will be conducted. In addition, stories of experiences in which sexual health content has been censored, rejected, not promoted, and/or taken down will be collected from NCSH members and others. Deb requested that coalition members submit these examples to her through a web form. Following this landscape analysis, a draft plan of action for this initiative will be created.

*Discussion.* The CAG responded favorably to this proposal, particularly to the strategy for positively engaging media outlets, rather than putting them on the defensive. There was broad support for the development of best practices relating to sexual health content, which provide specific advice about how to include positive, comprehensive, and responsible sexual health content. One member commented that with the NCSH and its nearly 40 members behind the initiative, it is likely to have a much greater influence than one undertaken by a single organization.

Others commented that we should also explore organizational filters, particularly in government agencies, that can prevent coalition members from communicating with each other. Case in point – several coalition members did not receive the invitation to this meeting since it was blocked by their organizations. Others advised that good filters can be set up that allow for positive sexual health content, while screening out undesirable content. Perhaps we can provide some specific suggestions for language that helps organizations set up appropriate filters.

All members of the CAG were invited to join this working group, if interested. Once the plan is in place, one member suggested that NCSH could also take specific actions, such as writing jointly signed letters to outlets that don't air condom advertising. Deb and Larry will start the landscape analysis and report back to the CAG during the next conference call.

## Development and Promotion of Message Frameworks

**Presentation.** Susan Gilbert presented an overview of possible strategies for broad-based promotion of the new sexual health message framework. Potential audiences could include coalition members, sexual health-related websites, commercial outlets/producers, and media channels. Possible tactics could include:

- Producing materials, such as a “how to guide: talking with the public about sexual health,” journal article(s), one page public brochure about sexual health and how to achieve it, and media content/op ed
- Outreach to organizations (presentations at professional meetings, workshops, articles for inclusion in organizational newsletters/websites, one-on-one meetings with high priority groups)
- Conduct webinar(s) to promote research results and message framework
- Promote consumer messages through social media, such as Twitter

**Discussion.** Following the media training session in the morning, several CAG members thought it would be very helpful to further refine the message frameworks and create sound bites/talking points that are tailored for the media. One member suggested we create a set of approximately five primary message points. This will help us weave in our priority messages during all media interviews. Also, it will enable us all to talk from and reinforce the same message strategy. This should help us shift the way people think and talk about sexual health.

Others, however, reminded the group that we also need to have more detailed messages and content at our disposal. Not all media coverage will be limited to 10-12 second sound bites. In-depth feature coverage is likely to give you more flexibility and opportunity to cover messages in greater depth. The detailed message frameworks already created by NCSH could be helpful to these stories.

One member hoped that the coalition could create a national media campaign that utilizes PSAs and other tools. While the resources aren't currently available, we will put this on our wish list, if additional funding is secured. In the meantime, we need to be creative about identifying opportunities to obtain low cost media coverage.

In general, the group agreed that a “how to guide,” promotion at one or two key conferences per year, and webinars could help us encourage broad adoption of this message strategy.

## CAG Organization and Communications

The group agreed that we should try to do most of our work via conference call and/or webinars throughout the year. The group felt this worked very effectively over the past year. In general, we will plan to meet in person once per year during the annual NCSH meeting. However, we can meet in

person if the group feels it is necessary or would be beneficial, e.g. for media training and/or message development.

Partnership will follow-up with CAG members to schedule the next call. In general, these calls are likely to occur on a quarterly basis. The agenda for the next call is likely to include media-centric message refinement, an update on the media standards and practices initiative, and status of media outreach efforts.