



## Communications Action Group Summary of December 16, 2014 Conference Call

### Participants

Deborah Arrindell, American Sexual Health Association  
Jennifer Bass, The Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender and Reproduction  
Tom Beall, Health Communications Consultant  
Martin Downs, Variance, LLC  
Heather Eastman-Mueller, American College Health Association  
Jacky Fontanella, Partnership for Prevention  
Allison Friedman, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Susan Gilbert, Partnership for Prevention  
Jennifer Grove, National Sexual Violence Resource Center  
Lisa Guiterman, Ogilvy Public Relations  
Deb Hauser, Advocates for Youth  
Alyson Kristensen, Partnership for Prevention  
Jennifer Johnsen, Planned Parenthood Federation of America  
Penny Loosier, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Amber Madison, Columnist, Freelance Writer, and Educator  
Ashley Maier, California Coalition Against Sexual Assault  
Jenelle Marie, The STD Project  
Amy Schalet, University of Massachusetts Amherst  
Ksenia Shepelev, Partnership for Prevention  
Larry Swiader, The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy  
Dana Van Gorder, Project Inform  
Beverly Whipple, Rutgers University

### Goals of the Call

The goals of the call were to:

- Share highlights of current CAG and NCSH communications activities, partnerships, and work plan.
- Secure CAG feedback on NCSH's draft quarterly social media campaign.
- Seek input on a draft prototype for fleshing out the five NCSH action steps and development process for other steps.
- Brainstorm story ideas and content partnerships.

### Highlights of CAG/NCSH communications activities, partnerships, and work plan

The call started with a brief overview of current activities. NCSH officially entered the world of social media, and launched its presence on Twitter and Facebook in

November. Currently, we have 68 Twitter followers, and hope to secure even more. We hope you will follow us, and remember that we are happy to tweet about your resources and organizations.

**Partnerships.** NCSH has established new national partnerships to promote sexual health, our messaging, and resources. MTV's "It's Your Sex Life (IYSL)" asked NCSH to serve on its campaign advisory board, which has already been active and we provided feedback on the new IYSL website. We have also agreed to serve as a national partner for the 2015 National Sexual Health Conference, which is sponsored by the Colorado Department of Public Health and draws participants nationwide.

**Media outreach:** On behalf of NCSH, Lisa Guiterman and Ogilvy Public Relations continue to lead proactive and reactive media outreach to promote sexual health stories. Over the past three months, placements have yielded at least 10.7 million audience impressions. Stories, on a wide range of topics, have appeared in Shape magazine, YourTango, CaféMom, and Medical Daily, and featured NCSH spokespeople Dr. Beverly Whipple, Amber Madison, and Dr. Ned Hook. Additional stories are currently pending in Mother Nature Network (featuring Dr. Gale Burstein and Deb Arrindell and Fred Wyand of ASHA); CafeMom (featuring Dr. Burstein); and Ladies Home Journal (with Michelle Sugg of AASECT).

**Work plan:** Susan presented an overview of the proposed CAG/NCSH work plan for the coming year. CAG members seem to be in agreement with work plan, as no specific suggestions were offered up. Core activities include quarterly social media campaigns for NCSH members; national media outreach to promote "Take Charge" guide and other sexual health messages to African Americans, teens, parents, and Latinos; full development of all five action steps; and release of "Audience Profile: Sexual Health of Young Adults in the U.S." If CDC approves funding, NCSH plans to culturally adapt and translate the "Take Charge" guide for Hispanic audiences. Deb Hauser, Advocates for Youth, offered to help with Latino outreach.

The CAG will also continue to engage in story development for leading websites/media outlets, such as YourTango and Kinsey Confidential. Given limited NCSH resources, active CAG involvement in content development will be key. In support of the Media Standards and Practices Initiative, Amber Madison has submitted a pitch for a story to Atlantic Monthly online. The editor is interested, but will only make a final decision once she reviews the article. If the pitch is accepted, the CAG could organize and rally around this piece.

### **Feedback on NCSH draft quarterly social media campaign**

The NCSH plans to create quarterly social media campaigns that will include sample sexual health content which Coalition members can use and/or adapt for digital and social media channels. It is designed to tie core Coalition messages and resources, and those of NCSH members, to timely events, occurrences, or news items. Each campaign

will include one to two central themes, and blurbs for newsletters/blogs/e-mails, sample tweets, and sample Facebook posts.

***Results of Social Media Survey:*** To help ensure that campaigns are relevant and appealing, we conducted a brief survey of NCSH members. Jacky Fontanella provided an overview of the results. In total, 33 members responded to the survey. Key findings included:

- Vast majority of members use social media channels (29 out of 33).
- Most popular channels are Facebook (26), Twitter (25) and Instagram (10).
- NCSH members reach a variety of audiences through these channels, including consumers (17), health care providers (16), and public health professionals (16).
- Topics of greatest interest include how to find and talk with a healthcare provider (21); definition of sexual health and the five action steps (16); building good relationships and treating partners well (16); preventive sexual health services and ACA (14); parents and sexual health for their children (13); STIs: prevalence, consequences, testing/treatment (12).
- NCSH members are most likely to use the following NCSH communications: article for email/blog, website (24); tweets (23); Facebook posts (23). Image for instagram or Tumblr (9).
- Members would like social media content that can be used around the following: timely sexual health issues/controversies in news (25); health observances (22); cultural milestones (11); and other holidays (10).

***CAG Feedback on campaign:*** Overall, CAG members responded very favorably to the draft campaign, and commented that it would be very helpful. One CAG member shared it with her social media staff who also agreed. Several commented that both the evergreen content, which could be used at anytime, and time-sensitive content linked around health observances and holidays was very useful.

CAG suggestions included adding shareable images and graphics that could be featured on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. To start, NCSH plans to create a graphic of the five action steps to good sexual health, and will explore other options for images. Another member suggested featuring hyperlinks in the middle of tweets, rather than at the end. Another suggested that we remind members that they can re-tweet the same messages many times since followers might miss messages during the day.

Since these campaigns will be issued on a quarterly basis, several CAG members thought it would be helpful if NCSH sent out a monthly reminder to promote content, particularly messages that are related to specific observances during each month. A few others thought it might be helpful to urge NCSH members to post messages on a specific theme over a 7 to 10 day period to generate a critical mass of attention. In conclusion, the group agreed that it was important to provide a mix of structured content around certain dates/time frames and evergreen content that can be used at

anytime. One member also commented that it's important for NCSH to give people enough time to fold time-sensitive messages into their social media calendars, which are often established months ahead of time.

NCSH would like to use social media messages to promote the resources of Coalition members. When asked if they were comfortable with this idea, the group said yes, particularly since, as one member said, they are very comfortable with the tone and content of NCSH communications. Another member did say that it might be helpful to share tweets with member organizations for review before they are distributed. Larry Swiader said that he plans to share Bedsider's new campaign, "Get Off Good," with NCSH for promotion.

### **Fleshing out the Five Action Steps**

**Overview:** The CAG plans to flesh out all five action steps to help motivate and equip individuals to take action to improve their sexual health. NCSH created a prototype for review by the CAG, which included five core elements: an attention-grabber; good reasons to take this step; what you need to know; tips, advice and resources; and a call-to-action. The content should be as brief as possible, and limited to four pages. We intend to make the content available in a web-based format.

For the prototype, we selected one action step: make sexual health part of your health care routine.

**CAG feedback:** In general, the feedback on the structure and overall content of the prototype was positive. The discussion focused primarily on some of the specific content in this action step, particularly the "six good reasons to take this step." Some CAG members suggested that we reduce our emphasis on avoiding disease and reducing risk, and aim instead for a more positive framing that focuses on other benefits. Instead of "reducing your risk," some recommended word choices such as "reduce worries," "enjoy sex in a worry-free way," "ease your mind," and/or feel more comfortable when it comes to sex. Susan said that we also should keep in mind our message testing results which revealed that avoiding HIV, STIs, and unplanned pregnancies were some of the top concerns expressed by consumers.

One commented that she liked the positive framing in the statement: "planning pregnancies is much easier now." Another suggested that we should try to focus on new, fresh information, whenever possible, and use a light tone.

Other suggestions include moving up content around relationships with doctor/provider; make people feel empowered rather than scared; connect the emotional to the physical, e.g. increase your comfort level while decreasing your worries; emphasize that testing can ease your mind.

### *Next steps to flesh out other action steps.*

We will hold a series of brainstorming calls to start fleshing out the other action steps, which will be based on the original message framework created by the CAG in 2013. The calls will be open to all CAG members who would like to participate. After we receive initial feedback during these calls, NCSH will prepare a draft of each action step, similar to the prototype discussed today. Based on interest of CAG members, small working groups could be created. The goal is to complete development of the action steps by end of March, with full review by the CAG in April followed by pre-testing with the public.

NCSH will send out a Doodle poll in early January to schedule these calls for January and February. We plan to hold three calls, grouped around the action steps as follows:

**Call #1:** “Value who you are and decide what’s right for you.”

**Call #2:** “Build positive relationships” and “treat your partners well and expect them to treat you well.”

**Call #3:** “Get smart about your body and protect it” and “make sexual health part of your health care routine.”

### **Content Development and Placement**

Lisa Guiterman provided an overview of content development and placement opportunities with YourTango, GirlZone, Kinsey Confidential, and others. NCSH has established a partnership with YourTango, and recently placed its first piece, “Six Facts about Sex that Every Smart Girl Should Know.” YourTango responded very favorably, and would like to place additional content created by NCSH. If any CAG members are interested, GirlZone would like assistance to review their existing sexual health content and to create new content. In addition, they are currently creating a book proposal, and have asked NCSH to provide content. Thanks to CAG member Deb Levine, who has volunteered to work directly with GirlZone on this book project.

In support of this discussion, NCSH prepared and distributed a document, “Story Ideas: Content Partnership with YourTango and Other News Stories.” It included potential story ideas for Your Tango and other outlets, including:

- HPV Confusion: everything you need to know about HPV
- It’s not just teens: unplanned pregnancies more common among twenty somethings
- How to bring it up: talking to your doc/provider about sexual health
- Top ten facts about STIs that everyone should know
- I have an STI, now what?

In addition, NCSH recommended that we leverage some of Amber Madison’s existing editorial relationships with top women’s/news outlets by pitching some hard news

stories on hot topics where we can offer a strong point of view, such as sexual assault on college campuses; sexual assault running rampant in society; and HPV confusion.

**CAG feedback:** In general, the feedback on story ideas was very positive. In particular, members felt that stories on HPV, unplanned pregnancy, and sexual assault would be very helpful. Specifically,

- For the HPV story, members suggested we consider a series of stories since there are many important dimensions to HPV (prevalence, vaccine, how to talk with children/teens, HPV test, new clinical guidelines). We should explore the new test guidelines that will be issued by ACS and ACOG on or around January 7<sup>th</sup>. Larry Swiader volunteered to be interviewed about a Dad's experience getting his 13 year old child vaccinated. Deb Arrindell offered information about ASHA's cervical cancer resource center. Jennifer Bass said that Kinsey would be interested in HPV articles that are aimed at the college population, and would like to do social media promotion.
- For the unplanned pregnancy story, Larry Swiader volunteered to have a follow-up conversation, and mentioned that we should take a look at an innovative pregnancy prevention program in Oregon ("Are you planning to be pregnant in next year?). We would also like to explore how we could feature Bedsider and research conducted by the National Campaign in the story.
- For the sexual assault story, Ashley Maier suggested that our pitch could be "sexual health promotion = sexual violence prevention." Our focus could be on prevention, and we should review existing resources from NSVRC (talking points for addressing Bill Cosby and Rolling Stone article, and the media resource kit). Our story should focus on prevention and practical advice.
- Jenelle Marie offered to take the lead on writing the STI stories. We will follow-up to discuss.
- Dana Van Gorder offered to write a story that provides a current update on HIV. We will follow-up to discuss.