Capstone Project Proposal

A. Contact Information

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B. Information Needed if Coordinating with a Site

☐ No ☐ Yes, please identify:

Will the site require an IRB to review this project prior to initiation of any activities? ☐ No ☐ Yes

C. Project Description and Logistics

Date CITI training completed: 12/29/2010

Will you receive any funding via a

D. Narrative Description

1. Rationale

Social media has quickly become one of the most effective ways to communicate with the general public about a wide variety of issues, including public health matters. The need for public health officials to understand and become proficient in the use of social media to advance their objectives is evidenced by the sheer number of individuals who subscribe to social media sites. The number of people who are looking to social media as their sole source of information grows every day. How does a local health department (LHD) effectively utilize Facebook, Twitter, and other social media tools to market public health ideas, programs and initiatives? What are some examples of how social media has aided public health initiatives? What are some barriers reported by LHD's in utilizing social media? How can these be addressed to move forward with social media marketing? I will answer these questions in my capstone paper, and I will also provide information about why it is imperative public health departments join the social media revolution.

2. Project Design

First, I intend to define what "social media" means and provide examples of its most popular uses. In doing so, I will also compare and contrast the terms "social marketing," "social networking," and "social media marketing." Secondly I will analyze which forms of social media would be most beneficial to a local health department's mission and purpose. I will do this by reviewing the literature and analyzing which age groups and demographics gravitate toward which program (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, etc.). Secondly I will review other social media marketing plans for private businesses and public agencies if available. If needed, I will contact entities that I know have plans to see if I can obtain a copy.

The data and information that will be gathered includes completing a literature review of existing studies on marketing techniques in social media and the effects of using social media on selling a product or service. Because social media is a relatively new phenomenon, it is expected that the literature I review will be recently written and studies conducted within the past few years. I will not be working with private health information or interacting with participants in any fashion.

To locate information, I will search for peer reviewed literature and research with the following keywords or a combination thereof: Social Media, Twitter, Facebook, Public Health, Online Program Marketing, Online Service Marketing, MySpace, Blogs, Information Sharing, Privacy, Legal, Policy and Social Media Uses. I will use a variety of websites and sources, including but not limited to the following:
* www.google.com/scholar
* www.pubmed.gov
* PsychINFO
* BadgerLink
* MedScape
* Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
* American Public Health Association

In addition to a study of peer reviewed literature, I will also conduct interviews of public health professionals to gather more information as to why they use social media in their positions or why they have refrained from joining it. I hope to interview public health communications experts from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and other national sources. Additionally, I would like to interview local public health officials who have begun to use social media in their organizations, and those who have not, to determine the reasoning for both. The individuals or organizations who I hope to interview include:
   **** County Public Health Department – Currently Using Social Media
   **** County Health Department – Currently Using Social Media
   ******** County Public Health Department – Not currently using Social Media
   Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
   Communication Director, National Association of City and County Health Officials (NACCHO)

The interview will consist of the following questions:

Is your organization currently using social media to advertise health services or programming?

- o If the answer is yes, these are the questions I will ask.
  - Why did your organization start using social media?
  - When did your organization start using social media?
  - How many people maintain social media at your organization? Is it one person's responsibility or is it integrated into several different positions?
  - What methods/applications do you utilize?
  - Why is it important for your organization and public health in general, to utilize social media?
  - How do you measure the return on investment or success of your social media marketing campaign?
  - Have you had success or improved service utilization through social media for any programs or services? If so, which ones?
  - What barriers or challenges have you experienced with using social media in public health?
- o If the answer is no, these are the questions I will ask.
  - Why has your organization decided against using social media at this time?
  - What are some barriers you see to using social media in a governmental public health setting?
  - Do you plan to explore using social media in the future?
  - Is there any information you would need to in order to use social media in the future? If yes, what information would help you make your decision?
  - If you were provided a social media marketing plan designed for local health departments, would this help you to begin using social media?

3. Materials

For this project, I will need access to a computer and an internet connection, in order to obtain relevant literature and log on to the social networking sites to use as examples in the final paper. I plan to use my home computer and internet connection to accomplish these tasks.

4. Data Analysis or Evaluation

The final evaluation of my capstone project lies in the effectiveness and inclusiveness of the call to action for Local Health Departments and other public health officials in the utilization of social media to positively affect the health of the community. In order to disseminate this timely and pertinent information on a broader basis I would like to make the inf1 time byn information 36 in

7. Course Requirements

The following is the chart of project deliverables and when they will be completed.

Throughout this capstone project, I will develop the following competencies:

Communicate effectively to diverse professional and lay audiences regarding public health issues.

Apply basic theories, concepts and models from social, scientific, and behavioral disciplines that are used in public health research and practice.

Apply the basic public health sciences (including, but not limited to biostatistics, epidemiology, environmental health, public health administration and social and behavioral sciences) to public health policies and programs.

Develop public health interventions and strategies responsive to the diverse cultural values and traditions of the communities being served.

E. Responsibilities

Student responsibilities in carrying out the project:

1. Develop and submit a proposal for the Capstone Project to the faculty advisor and program coordinator for review and approval.

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