



# Adjusting Communication Plans to the Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 Influenza Outbreak: US CDC

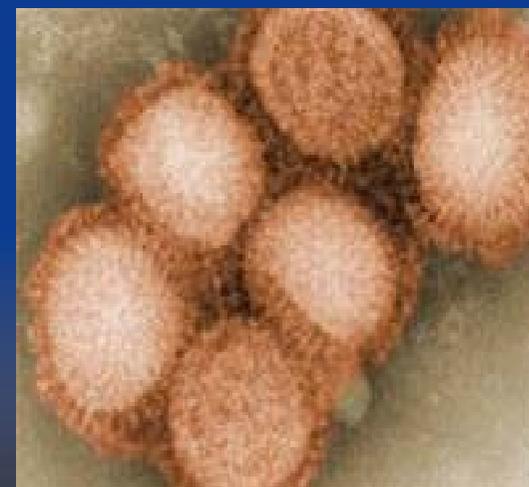
**Joanne D. Cox, MC**

Deputy Director

Emergency Communication System  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Atlanta, GA USA

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# What CDC Planned For



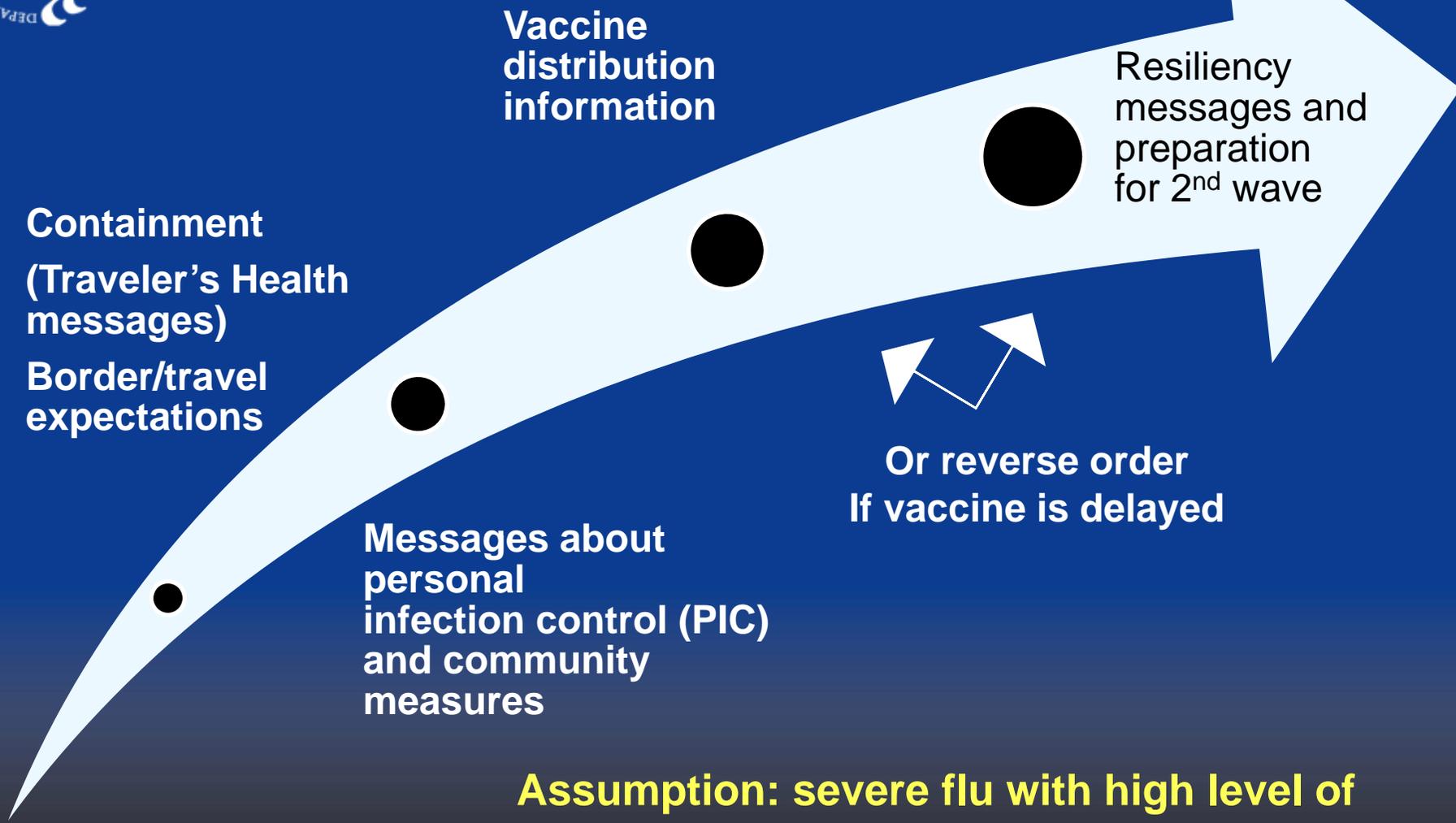
WHO Phases	Inter-Pandemic Period		Pandemic Alert Period			Pandemic Period		
	1	2	3	4	5	6		
USG Stages	New Domestic Animal Outbreak in At-Risk Country	Suspected Human Outbreak Overseas	Confirmed Human Outbreak Overseas	Widespread Outbreaks Overseas	First Human Case in North America	Spread Throughout United States		Recovery
	0	1	2	3	4	5		6

- Severe flu strain (Spanish Flu model and avian flu severity)
- Potentially lengthy process of vaccine development
- Intervals starting with outbreak overseas—disease characterized before reaching US
- Communication plans followed these assumptions
  - ◆ Messages and communication activities based on related USG stages
  - ◆ Pre-developed, tested, and produced messaging for first stages

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# Anticipated Message Trajectory

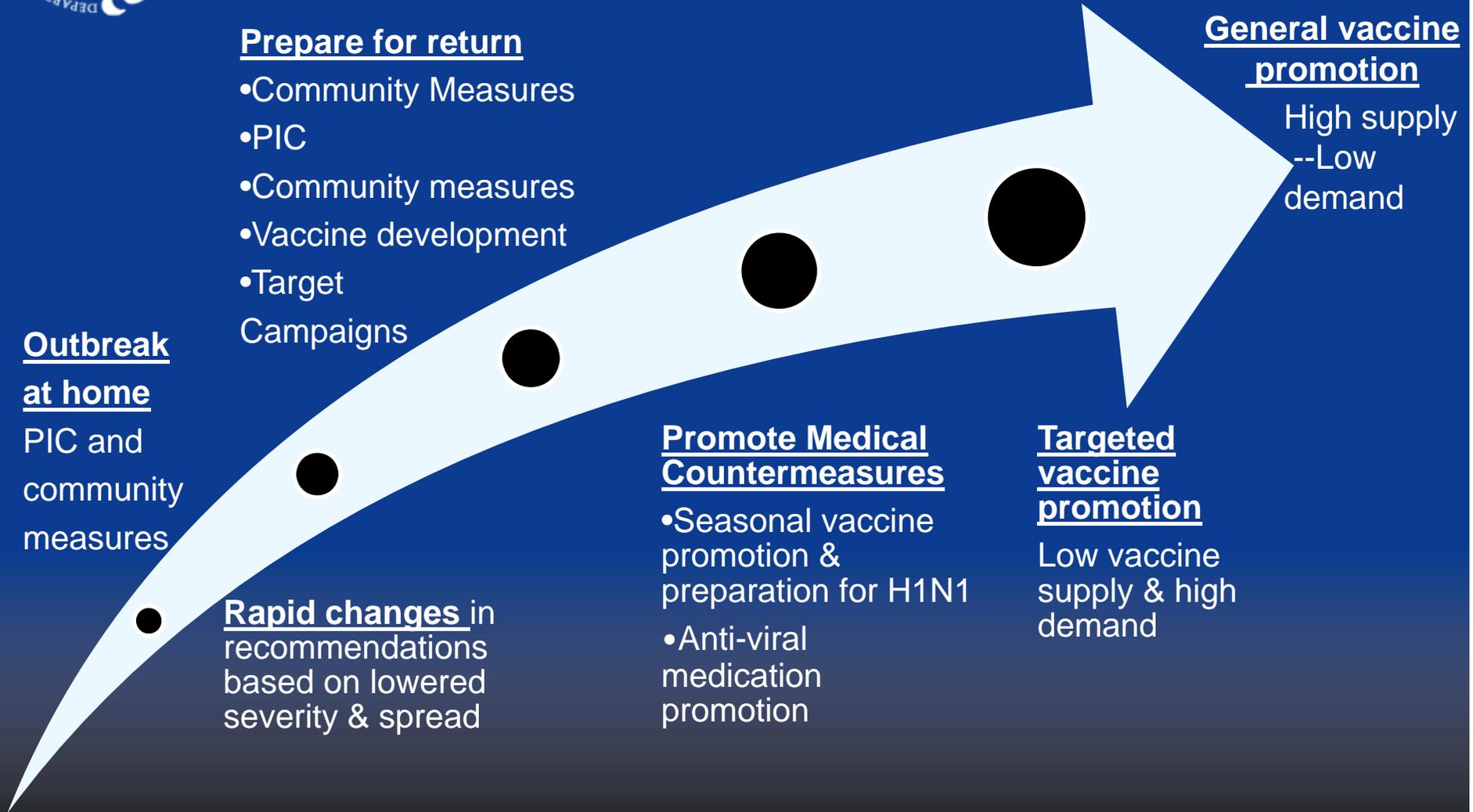


**Assumption: severe flu with high level of motivation for self/family protection**

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# Actual Communication Trajectory



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## Selected Challenges



- Creating consistent messages about H1N1 prevention during rapid changes and over different stages
- Creating a coherent message between multiple H1N1 campaigns over the year
- Sustaining health protection vigilance over time.

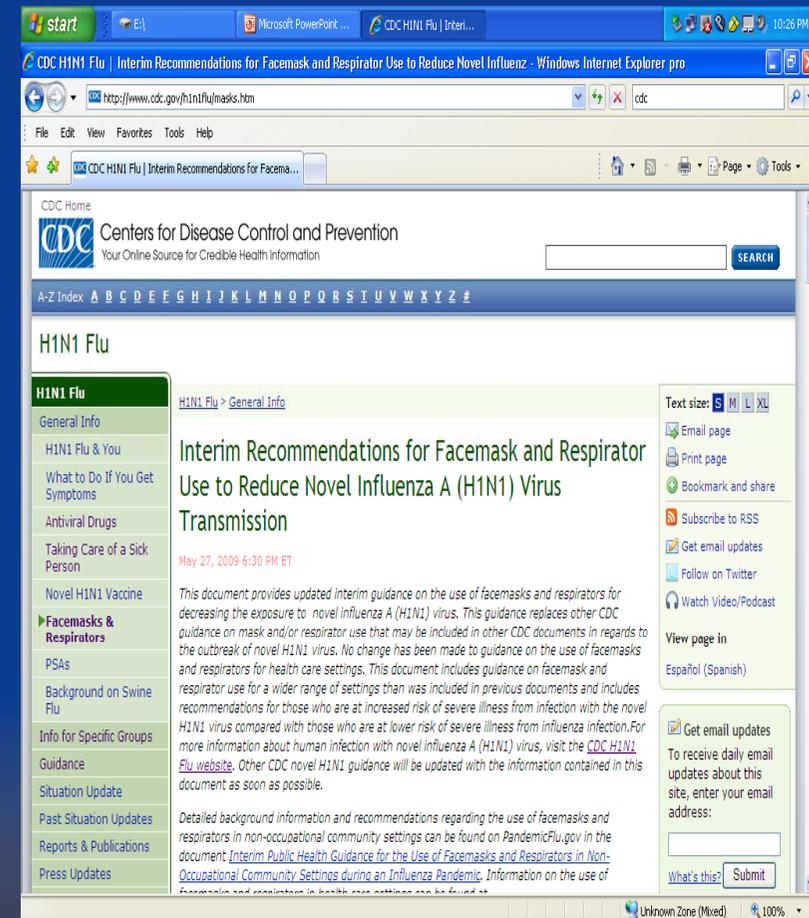
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# Consistency Challenges: Rapidly Developing and Changing Health Protection Guidance



- 41 guidance documents released in the first 2 weeks
  - ◆ 11 changed and were re-released within 2 weeks
  - ◆ 3 changed twice and were re-released twice within 2 weeks
- On a single day (May 1) 4 guidance documents were revised and reposted.
- (52 total guidance documents were created, 167 updates)



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# Consistency Challenges

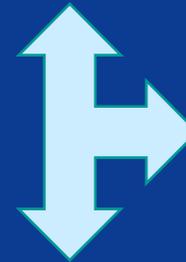
Every Change to Guidance Cascaded through Multiple Message Chains



## Talking Points for Media



Key messages



Partners for message coordination

Guidance Documents

- Fact sheets
- PSAs
- Posters
- Podcasts/Videocasts
- Health Alerts
- Twitter Messages
- Hotline scripts
- Listserv content

Foreign Language Translations







# Challenges of Changes: External Inconsistency



- Rapid changes in guidance caught some partners by surprise
  - ◆ For example, schools complied with closing, following release of May 1 School Dismissal Guidance
  - ◆ On May 4, CDC issued changed guidance focused on isolation of ill children, rather than school closings
- Guidance changed in some cases more rapidly than public and stakeholders could follow.

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# Consistency Challenges: Vaccine Messages 2009-2010

## Changing Dates, Types, Recommended Groups, Doses



### Aug-Sept: Seasonal Flu Promotion

- 65+
- Pregnant women
- Children under 5
- People with chronic conditions
- People who care for old, young, ill

### Oct-Dec: H1N1 Flu Targeted Promotion

- Pregnant Women
- Caregivers for under 6 month olds
- Health care providers
- 6 months-24 years old
- Adults with chronic conditions
- Varied localities prioritized these groups differently

### December-March: General Promotion for whose population

- Including 65+
- Different localities started this promotion at different times

### Different Types and Doses

#### Nasal Spray

- OK for 2-49 year olds who are not pregnant

#### Injectable (with and w/o thimerosal)

- OK for 6 months and above
- OK for pregnant women

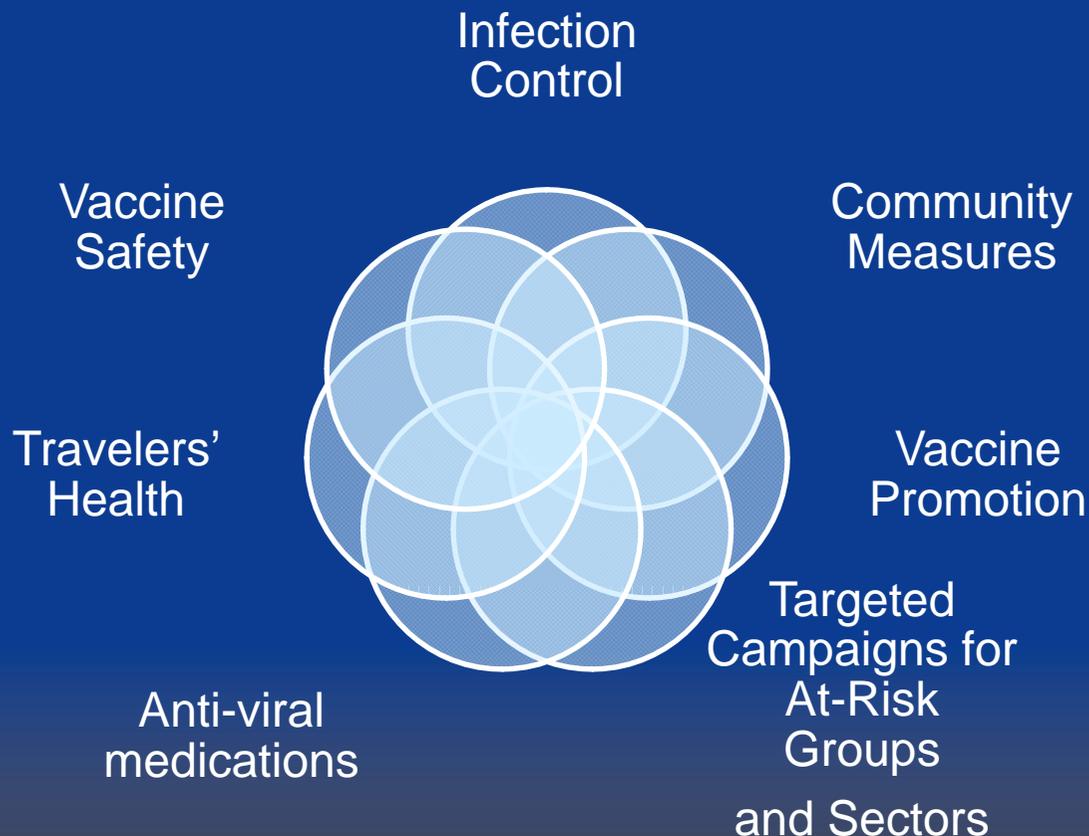
#### Doses (H1N1)

- One dose for adults
- Two doses for children under 10

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# Message Coherence Challenges: Overlapping Segmented Communication Campaigns



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# Coherency Challenges Multiple Segmented and Overlapping Campaigns



## Campaign for Traveler's Health

### Key Messages:

- ◆ Don't travel if you are sick.
- ◆ Stay home if you are ill.
- ◆ Stay put if you become ill while traveling.
- Target audiences
  - ◆ International travelers
  - ◆ Travel industry
  - ◆ Health care providers
- Channels and Materials
  - ◆ PSAs
  - ◆ Airport posters and flyers
  - ◆ T-HANs
  - ◆ Fact sheets
  - ◆ Purchased media time
  - ◆ Mobile device messaging

Prevention can be  
**Travel-sized.**

Do your part to stay healthy this flu season.  
For more information go to [cdc.gov/travel](http://cdc.gov/travel)

- Travel only when you feel well.
- Get your flu vaccine.
- Wash your hands often.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes.



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# Coherency Challenges: Segmented Campaigns-- Social Media Initiative for Personal Infection Control (PIC)



## Messages:

- Cover your cough and sneezes
- Stay at home if you are sick.
- Wash your hands often.

## Challenges:

- Limited data on PICs that decrease transmission
- Many PICs lack personal incentives
- Behavior change requires more than awareness

## Tactics and Channels

- Repetition
- Multiple Innovative Media
- Partnerships



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# Roll out for H1N1 Business Guidance August-October 2009



Aug 31 National Preparedness Month kick-off conference to engage small businesses in upcoming events

October--National Cybersecurity Awareness Month  
kick-off: Public-private national dialogue on  
Cybersecurity in business plans for H1N1,

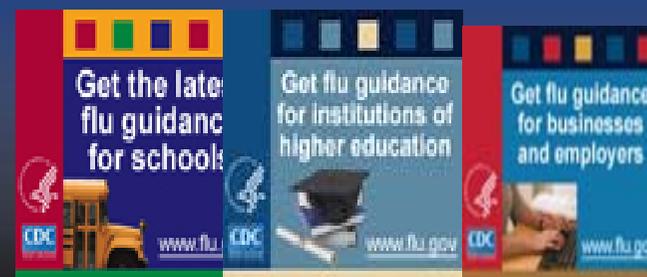
Oct 15

Sept 7-- Labor Day – Interagency  
Incorporation of H1N1  
workforce protection  
messaging into government  
events.

Aug 17-21 Small  
business discussions

Aug 17--Calls with private sector trade  
Associations to provide information and discuss  
school guidance and impacts on business operations

August Release of Small Business Guide



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# Coherency Challenges: Multiple Simultaneous Targeted Campaigns

Focus Groups, Conference Calls,  
Web site Home pages



- People 65 Years and older
- Children under 5
- Pregnant women who work in Education Child-Care and Health Care
- People with HIV/AIDS
- People with Severe Immunosuppressant
- People with Diabetes
- People with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
- People with Cardiovascular Disease
- People with Asthma
- People with Arthritis
- African-Americans
- Hispanics
- Cancer Patients and Survivors
- Non-English speakers
  - ◆ Spanish
  - ◆ Vietnamese
  - ◆ Korean
  - ◆ and others
  - Hindi
  - Chinese
  - German

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# Multiple Channels to Reach Many Audiences on Many Topics



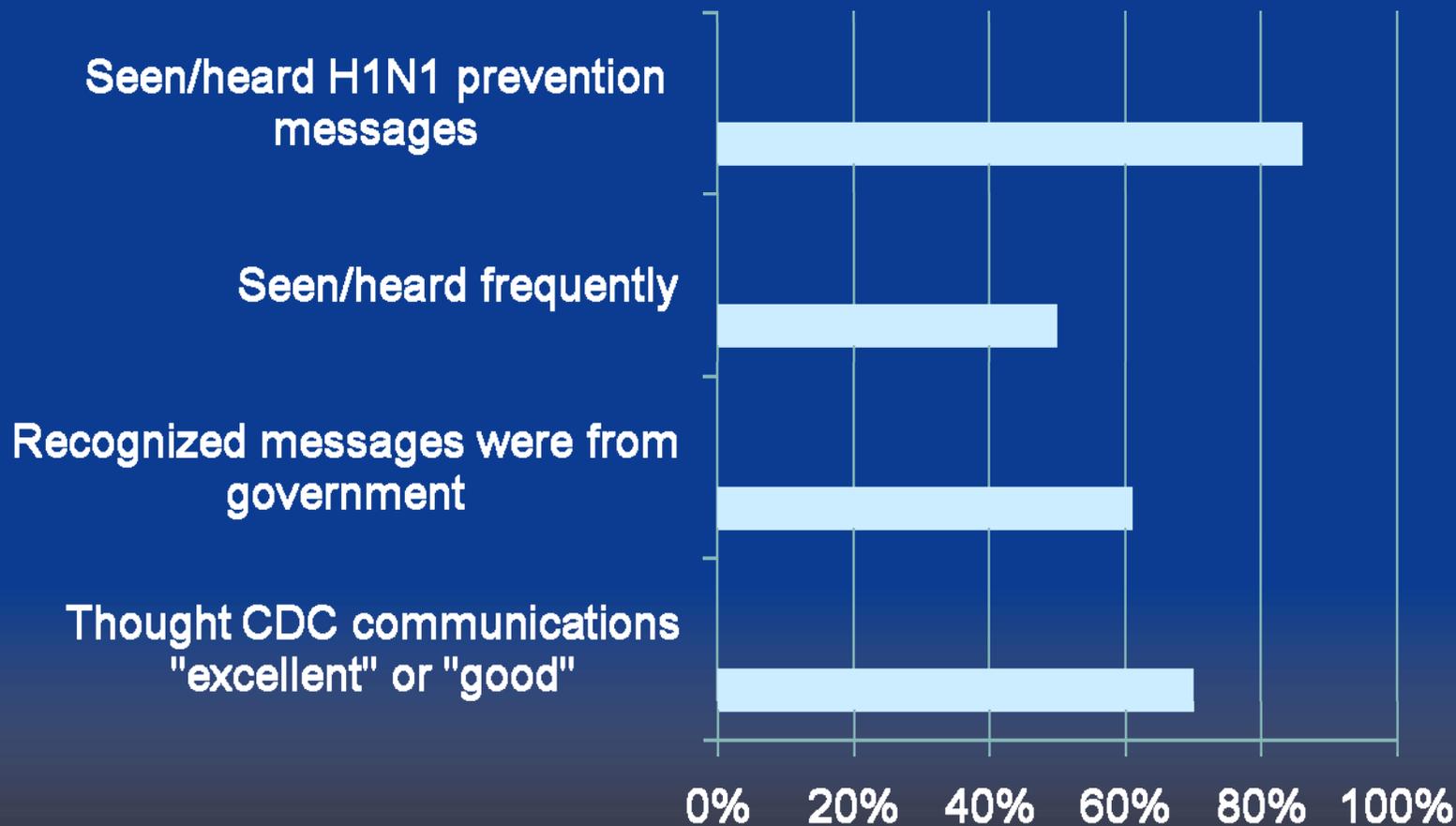
CHANNEL	EXAMPLES OF OUTREACH USED FOR EACH CHANNEL			
News media	Broadcast	Newspaper	Radio	PSAs
Telephone	CDC INFO	Community Voice Mail	Reverse 911	Medical hotlines
E-mail	CDC INFO	GovDelivery	Partner listservs	Clinician e-mail
Partner Channels	State/local agencies	Faith-based Organizations	Community Organization	Sectors
Print	Posters	Flyers	Fact sheets	Direct mail
Online	Web	Web syndication	RSS feeds	Podcast
Social Media	Blogs/ Twitter/FB	Mobile	Social networks	Buttons Widgets



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# High Level of Public Awareness



Harvard Opinion Research Program, Harvard School of Public Health, June, 2010

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# Incomplete Comprehension



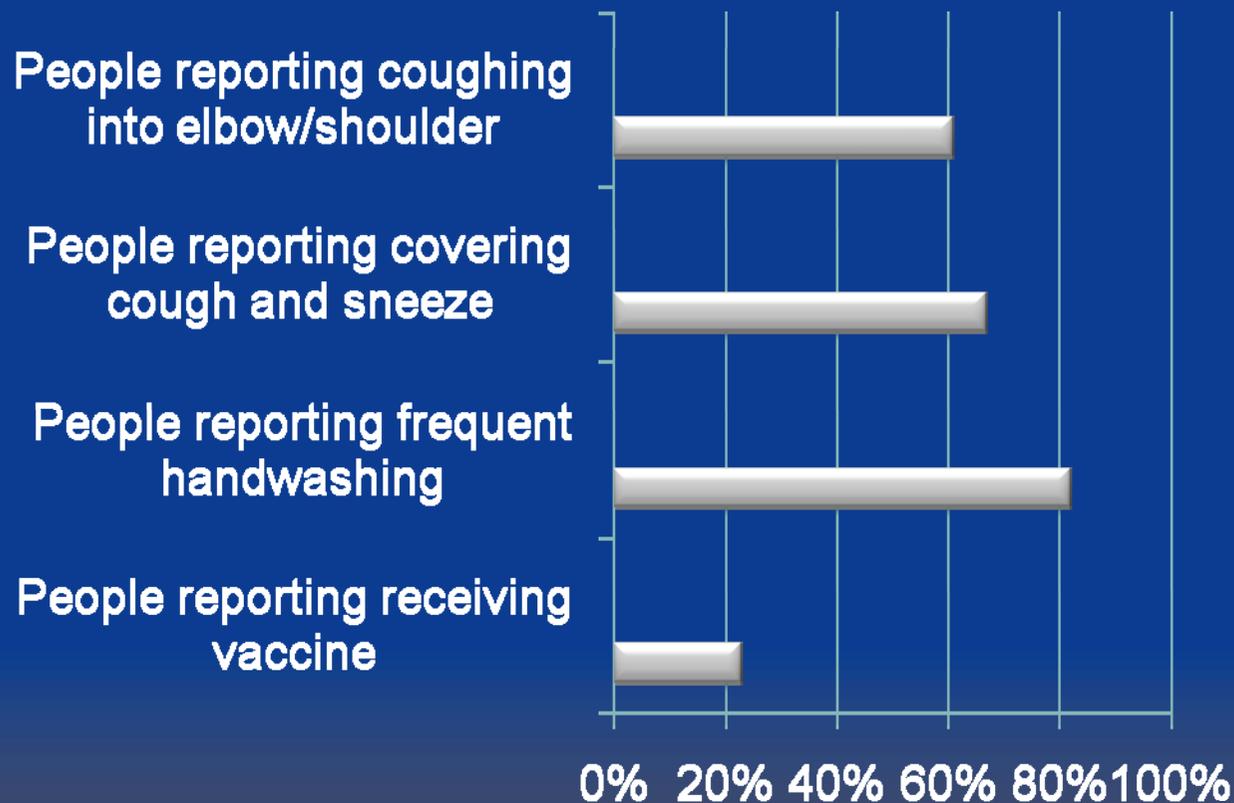
Enacting Guidance: Stay at home if you are sick. What does it mean?

- 47%-- people with H1N1 and a fever should stay home “until at least 24 hours after their fever has gone away,”
- 41%--people with H1N1 and a fever should stay home “until they feel well enough to participate in work, school, or other activities, whether or not they have a fever.”
- Among those who identified the proper measure of time for sick persons to stay home, only about a third of that group (32%) said that persons trying to determine whether or not they still have a fever “should not be taking any fever-reducing medicine” while doing so.

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## H1N1 Behavior Change Results



Harvard Opinion Research Program, Harvard School of Public Health, June, 2010

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# Lessons Learned



- It *is* possible to rapidly issue and disseminate broad public health guidance.
- Prepare the public for change in guidance – foretell that it may change as more information about a virus and its effects are known.
- Expect the unexpected. It is vital to plan for a pandemic, but prepare to adapt to events as they unfold. The “playbook” may have to go out of the window.
- An overarching, united, and long-term communication strategy is the ideal, but it is difficult to do during a rapidly changing event.

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[jdcox@cdc.gov](mailto:jdcox@cdc.gov)

+1-404-639-2559

<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>

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