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Manchester-by-the-Sea Community Engagement through Continuous Public Health Communication

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Introduction: The Manchester-by-the-Sea Board of Health (MBTS BOH) has not previously sought to grow its social media presence within the local community. Most communications focused on specific populations, public health notices and activities. Social media posts and informational flyers are health education tools that can raise awareness and increase knowledge about key public health issues. Increased social media presence can foster strong community engagement, build trust, and promote health informed decisions which ultimately supports the BOH's mission.

Methods: A MBTS BOH health communication slide deck and logo were developed using the design platform, Canva. The logo was created incorporating the Town's seal and icons representing public health. This logo is intended for use on all non-regulatory BOH communications. Implementation requires an internal approval process by the BOH and the Town Administrator.

The health communication slide deck includes a social media post and an informational flyer for each topic selected by the BOH director and staff. It included engaging public health graphics and information that aligned with seasonal community concerns and monthly awareness messages. Social media communications were reviewed in coordination with the Town's Communications Director.

Results: The developed shield logo incorporates the town seal and includes the universal health symbol, and familiar icons. A house, community unity, and an ocean scene that represents the local environment are icons based upon the tight-knit MBTS community that has many beaches, green spaces, and commercial fishing. The health communication slide deck consists of 27 topics that range from sun safety to tick-borne illness and includes both a social media post and a flyer with further information. The flyer will be linked in the caption of the social media post for easy access. The flyers will also be available on the MBTS BOH's webpage.

Conclusions: Enhancing health communication and raising awareness about the MBTS BOH is important to promote the overall health and well-being of the community. This project targets residents in the 25 to 55-year-old age bracket who are less likely to search the town website for health information. The health communication slide deck introduces community members to a wide range of public health topics. Disseminating engaging public health infographics and information that aligns with seasonal concerns ensures communication relevant to the evolving needs of the community year-round. Through the rollout of these health communications, the BOH seeks to increase visibility and impact within the MBTS community. The BOH strives to support all residents with its mission. The enhanced health social media presence will encourage engagement between community needs and public health.