The Southern Center for Communication, Health, and Poverty (SCCHP)—a CDC-funded center of excellence in health communication—is committed to public health workforce development in communication to reduce health disparities. State and local health public information officers who are members of the National Public Health Information Consortium (NPHIC) were asked to complete an online survey to identify the training needs and preferences of PIOs. The needs assessed in this particular survey were focused specifically on communication to reduce health disparities. There was a total of 53 respondents (N=53).

FACTOID: PIOs report that 36% their work involves actual message preparation and production (i.e., writing press releases, helping to produce PSAs).

The top five training needs identified by NPHIC Members

- Understand how to tailor campaigns that will improve the well being of diverse individuals and communities
- Establish high credibility in diverse communities when disseminating risk messages
- Create websites that will be user friendly for members of diverse cultures and economic groups
- Conduct long-term strategic planning for and with culturally diverse populations
- Incorporate input from diverse cultural/racial/ethnic/linguistic/economic communities in planning and developing specific services and programs

Greatest challenges that PIOs reported facing with regard to health disparities in the communities they serve

- Difficulties connecting with minority communities/ lack of minority representation in planning phases
- Lack of funding/resources/time to devote to reducing disparities
- Difficulty developing culturally relevant materials/ literacy challenges/ difficulties communicating with diverse populations
- Lack of access by those facing health disparities to prevention and treatment services/ environmental and structural challenges/ advocacy issues
- Lack of vision about reducing disparities by leadership/ problems in managing and coordinating existing programs

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