

How to talk to your aunt and uncle about public health

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TOPIC/TARGET AUDIENCE: Public Health Professionals

ABSTRACT: Public health officials have been historically challenged in communicating the vast array of what public health departments do every day to protect and improve the health of their communities, evident by the 48% of Oregon voters that are not familiar with their local health department. Public health departments prepare communities for emergencies, prevent and respond to disease outbreaks, collaborate with community partners to create opportunities for health, and in some communities provide direct services to families—all things that contribute to a healthy and vibrant community. In transforming and resource-strained environments, it is essential that the public and their elected officials understand the valuable role governmental public health plays in protecting and promoting the health of every community. As part of a two-year grant-funded project, a public opinion poll of 500 Oregon voters was conducted to better understand the public perception and values placed on governmental public health departments and the services they provide. This session will review the most salient data, their implications, and communication strategies public health professionals can employ to help convey the value and importance of governmental public health the next time they're at a dinner party, a family gathering, or sitting in their Legislator's office.

OBJECTIVE(S):

- Describe data related to public perceptions of governmental public health services
- Explain the implications of public perceptions of governmental public health services on policy decisions
- Describe strategies and tactics to effectively communicate the value and importance of public health services.

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