

M I N T Z & H O K E

March 28, 2012

Dear Connecticut Health Insurance Exchange Board Members:

Everyone agrees that a successful launch of the Connecticut Health Insurance Exchange depends on an effective outreach campaign. In turn, the campaign cannot succeed without a clear and thorough understanding of the attitudes, perspectives and need states of the consumers who will benefit from the Exchange.

Mintz & Hoke is undertaking a rigorous, step-by-step process that will result in that understanding. We have completed most of the first phase of the initial engagement through discussion groups and one-on-one interviews with consumer advocates and representatives of small business, providers, insurers and agents and brokers. Armed with the findings from this phase, we are reaching out to a broad base of community-based healthcare providers, local advocates and community leaders.

The purpose is two-fold: to gain an understanding of the attitudes, perspectives and critical information of the people on the frontlines, who deal daily with the ultimate Exchange consumers. And to enlist their help in setting up direct outreach to those consumers in their communities.

In parallel, we are undertaking broad-based primary research of consumers less easily reached through community institutions and services. These include the all-important young, uninsured males, and the hard-to-reach "tweeners." To this end we are employing a multi-pronged approach involving – among other techniques – web-based research tools, mall intercepts, research facility databases and direct interviews with businesses operating at the community level.

One crucial finding of our first phase outreach with stakeholders is the vital need for a bridging communications program. The absence of communications coming from the Exchange has reinforced existing skepticism and distrust among healthcare advocates, but also other stakeholder groups – small business, providers and the insurance community. Although there are many details yet to be worked out, there is considerable information that can be shared. And must be if the credibility of the Exchange is to be preserved.

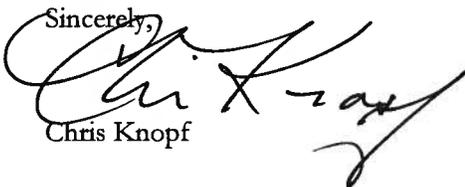
Mintz & Hoke has developed the strategy and tactics for this bridging program, which will involve regular, direct communications to every stakeholder, the Consumer Experience and Outreach Advisory Committee and made available to the public via the Exchange web site.

We hope the attached program write-up and graphic rendering bring clarity to our process, which we have successfully used to build communications programs in Connecticut for important public health and social issues for over 30 years.

We look forward to working closely with you to make the Connecticut Health Insurance Exchange Consumer Outreach Campaign an absolute success for our state, and a new standard of excellence for the nation.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Chris Knopf

Connecticut Health Insurance Exchange

Consumer Outreach Program Development – January 11 thru May 10, 2012

This document describes the step-by-step process Mintz & Hoke (M&H) is deploying to guarantee the following: all stakeholders have a voice in the development of the campaign; we have a comprehensive understanding of the attitudes, perspectives and concerns of the prospective consumers of the Exchange; the messages we ultimately develop will be the most relevant, compelling and effective for each targeted audience.

Attached is a chart that presents an at-a-glance view of the activities described below – each of the three major stages, with a timeline and scope of work.

Throughout this process, we never lose sight of the ultimate goal, which is to produce a consumer outreach campaign that drives the widest possible participation by the uninsured and underinsured the Exchange is designed to serve.

Stage One

Stakeholder Outreach – Discussion Groups and One-on-One Interviews

We have completed the bulk of these with consumer advocates, representatives of small business, providers, insurers and agents/brokers. We are enhancing the consequent findings by holding webinars and continuing to connect one-on-one with stakeholders.

This effort in no way constitutes a final product. Rather, it provides critical learnings that we use to inform all subsequent outreach initiatives.

Listening, “Experience Collecting” and Data Review

We are enlisting the expertise of professionals and their consultants from Massachusetts, Maryland, Kansas and other states engaged in developing Health Insurance Exchanges; reviewing all available proprietary and secondary research data to help create testable strategies and hypotheses for the Connecticut program. We are learning from others’ experiences, while recognizing that Connecticut has unique challenges and opportunities, which requires an evaluation of original ideas and strategies tailored to our special circumstances.

Stage Two

Connecting with the Community

This involves broad-based outreach to community-based health professionals, health advocates, small business and community leaders. In essence, connecting with the people who operate between the stakeholders we’ve been researching, and the ultimate consumers. These are the grassroots operatives who are the most knowledgeable of the day-to-day realities our prospective consumers face, and as importantly, help us access that population for the most important research of all: the hopes, fears and perceptions of the people the Exchange will be designed to serve.

Primary Consumer Research (will extend into Stage Three)

We have developed a research program designed to dramatically expand our research. The objective is to test messages and brand identity concepts with every potential audience segment. This stage will lead to a final expansive quantitative research study (after actual creative has been developed) that will ensure messaging is clear and compelling to all audiences and that the right methods for reaching all audiences have been identified.

- Subcontract with a market research consultant who will: advise on messages and concepts, since their purpose at this stage is to provide research materials for consumers to respond to; design research protocols, develop multi-pronged qualitative/quantitative program; develop recruitment strategies, which will include leveraging relationships with local community centers and leaders to gain access to their constituents, intercepts at local shopping centers or other venues within communities, posters/flyers in communities and web-based recruiting.
- Subcontract with research firms for assistance in working with various ethnic communities.
- Hold interviews and small focus groups to evaluate brand concepts and provide feedback to be used in concept refinement.
- Extend face-to-face research with web-based interview sessions (this will involve sample sizes consistent with quantitative standards.)
- Findings will be used to refine brand and message concepts further. Upon refinement, concepts will again be shared with stakeholders, local community leaders and individuals for evaluation through quantitative survey studies.

Brand Identity and Message Strategy Creation

Creation of alternative name and identity concepts for the Connecticut Health Insurance Exchange that can be evaluated and tested with consumers. It is important to put an identity on the program to be able to take it beyond a “concept,” making it tangible enough to generate focused opinion and guidance. M&H will work with culture-specific consultants to assure cultural and linguistic nuances and sensitivities are addressed.

Consumer Experience and Outreach Advisory Committee (Stage Two into Stage Three)

Mintz & Hoke will work closely with the Committee in developing communications/media plans and proposed branding and messaging throughout the full development process. We will employ the experience and expertise of the Committee every step of the way. We will begin this process with a presentation of initial findings, strategic implications and initial brand identity and message concepts for their direction prior to consumer research. This will be followed up with a strategic planning session and ongoing consultation on message development.

Stage Three

Bridging Communications Plan

Our first phase stakeholder outreach has made it abundantly clear that we need to begin communicating now to keep stakeholders, advocates and the public informed about Exchange initiatives and progress, build momentum leading up to launch and avoid negative perceptions often generated when there is a void in publically available information.

- Message points to focus on elements of the ACA and Exchange that are solidified and will not change, progress being made by Exchange efforts, upcoming Exchange activities, milestones achieved and anticipated.
- Tactics will include regular email periodical to stakeholders, press releases, setup of interviews with media influencers (reporters, journalists), social media audit, identification of relevant social media voices, distribution of information on social networks, interim microsite (small website) to house relevant updates, materials and educational information.

Ambassador Network

Build on the community-based research to develop a network of influential people and organizations for ongoing communications and research recruitment at the grassroots level. It is vital that once we have engaged with these key players that we continue the relationship, converting them from merely interested parties to true ambassadors for the Exchange. In addition to garnering endorsement from influential people, and establishing a strong ongoing communication channel into communities, this network can play a role in the ongoing evaluation process as mandated by the ACA.

Audience Mapping

Develop a map of Connecticut that pinpoints the highest concentrations, and general distribution, of our prospective consumers. This will provide the underpinning for the ultimate media plan, as well as inform ongoing research. The objective is to determine: where they live; what they think and feel; how to reach them with marketing messages.

The supporting data for this exists, though not in a single place. This initiative, currently underway, will be to uncover, cross-reference and focus existing databases in the service of our concentration on the uninsured and underinsured.

Communications Plan

The consummation of the above initiatives is a comprehensive marketing communications plan that will delineate: the most compelling and relevant messages to project statewide, and to each distinctive constituency; the media vehicles best to deliver these messages – both mass media and targeted to sub-populations; media weighting – how to distribute budget dollars to each of the chosen media channels; performance measurements – how we'll track effectiveness and build in course corrections over the run of the campaign.

CONNECTICUT HEALTH INSURANCE EXCHANGE— CONSUMER OUTREACH DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM

