

Promoting Preconception Health Observances Through Social Media

This job aid is designed to guide family planning agencies in using social media to promote preconception health via national health observances and awareness campaigns.

Social media is a powerful tool for engaging current and potential clients, and connecting them with health information and resources. Using social media to promote preconception health helps family planning agencies meet the Title X requirement to provide opportunities for community participation, education, and project promotion (CPEP); and to inform the community of the availability of their services.

Staff with some working knowledge of social media platforms and features—and familiarity with content and language relevant to their audiences—will benefit most from this tool. Ideally, your organization has established social media processes, but even beginners can take simple steps to engage in online campaigns to promote preconception health.

Key Steps and Considerations



1. Identify your “why.”

- Consider your agency’s priorities around preconception health.
- What topics are most relevant to the scope of your services and the needs of the populations you serve?
- What information and resources would be valuable to share?



2. Select health observances and awareness campaigns that align with your work.

- You can begin by exploring the [National Health Observances website](#) or [CDC’s list of observances](#) related to women’s health.
- The [RHNTC Preconception Health Counseling Checklist](#) offers preconception health related resources and ideas.
- Select topics that showcase your organization’s expertise and services. Focus on just a few observances every year.

Examples of Health Observances:

- Birth Defects Prevention Month (January)
- American Heart Month (February)
- Black Maternal Health Week (April)
- National Infertility Awareness Week (April)
- STD Awareness Week (April)
- National Women’s Health Week (May)
- Mental Health Awareness Month (May)
- LGBTQ+ Pride Month (June)
- National Domestic Violence Awareness Month (October)



3. Make a plan

Once you have selected health observances and awareness campaigns, prepare and plan your promotion activities.

- **Identify the group** leading or hosting the observance.
 - Do the missions, values, and messages of your organizations align?
 - If so, consider contacting the organization for ways you might collaborate.
- **Explore the resources** offered by the organization leading the observance.
 - Is there a social media toolkit that you can use?
 - Does their content align with the information you want to share?
 - What value will these resources bring to your clients and community?
- If this year's materials are not yet available, **browse last year's social media activity** (using the event's hashtag) to get a feel for what was shared.
- **Create a [content calendar](#)** with the observances and campaigns you'd like to join and promote.
 - Determine your level of social media involvement (see step 4).
 - Break down: how you will share messages; if you want to create some of your own content, and who on your team will do that; and if/how you will partner with other organizations.



4. Levels of social media involvement

Choose from three levels of social media involvement to participate in a health awareness campaign:

Level 1 - The Re-Sharer

The re-sharer reposts, retweets, or reshapes others' posts, graphics, and messages. This is an easy and effective way to join the online conversation. A re-sharer can:

- Utilize messages and graphics from a host organization's social media toolkit.
- Adapt this content for your own family planning agency's audience.

Level 2 - The Promoter

The promoter is an active participant in the observance campaign, and engages in more social media efforts than the re-sharer. A promoter can:

- Create a series of branded social media graphics and materials for you and others to share.
- Consider expanding the ways you engage with your intended audience(s). For example, join a [Twitter chat](#) on the topic, or spark a conversation on your [Instagram story](#) (using polls and other interactive features).
- Join the observance conversations using the host organization's hashtag to share your own messages and to link to your resources.

Level 3 - The Content Creator

The content creator may serve as the coordinator of the overall strategy and logistics of the health observance activities. We recommend that your agency's communications director take the lead on content creation. If you decide to host/co-host an awareness campaign:

- Connect with other organizations who may want to join you.
- Create a social media strategy and toolkit for the event. Include a hashtag, key messages, images, promotional strategy, and activities.
- Compile resources, partner links, and sample social media content into a landing page on your organization's website.
- Host your own event to highlight your organization's services, providers, and/or resources on the topic. For example, host a Twitter chat or [Facebook Live](#) panel with experts from your organization.

Resources

Communication Planning and Assessment

- [Communication Planning 101: How To Reach Your TPP Audiences Webinar](#) reviews the development of a simple communication plan to define the who, what, why, and how of reaching your audience.
- [Digital Channel Assessment tool](#) identifies what your organization does well with social media, and where there are opportunities for growth.
- [Digital Channels at a Glance: Best Practices job aid](#) shares best practices and considerations for using the most common digital channels (i.e., social media, websites, email).

Developing Messaging and Graphics

- [Tips for Using a Trauma-Informed Lens to Develop or Select I&E Materials job aid](#) explores the importance of a trauma-informed approach in communications to avoid inadvertently causing harm.
- [Counter Stereotype Imaging Agency Self Assessment](#) can help your agency think through the selection of images for social media content; this assessment tool is part of the [Cultural Competency in Family Planning Care eLearning](#).
- [Promoting Family Planning Services Social Media Toolkit](#) offers sample social media content and images that family planning sites can use to communicate with clients.
- Learn more about preconception health messaging in the the [Show Your Love Communications Toolkit](#).

Community Participation, Education, and Project Promotion (CPEP)

- [Using Virtual and Remote Outreach to Meet CPEP Requirements job aid](#) expands on Title X requirements for CPEP and presents best practices for providing outreach through virtual and remote strategies that do not require in-person participation.
- [CPEP Plan Template](#) provides a structure for Title X-funded agencies to identify objectives and actions they may undertake to engage and educate the community.
- [Comparing CPEP and I&E Tools job aid](#) discusses the differences between these two Title X Program requirements.