

Communications PLAN





Table of Contents

1.	About Us	3
2.	Values, Vision, Mission, Board ENDS	4
3.	Purpose & Objectives	6
4.	Desired Outcomes: Alignment with our Core Values	7
5.	Our Audience	8
6.	Communications in Southern Health-Santé Sud: Our Approach	9
6.1	Strategic Considerations	9
6.2	Communications Tactics & Tools.....	10
6.3	Keys to Success.....	12
6.3.1	A Culture of Shared Responsibility	12
6.3.2	Local Presence in Communities	13
6.3.3	Patient and Public Engagement: a Regional Commitment.....	13
7.	Action Planning: Setting Strategies in Motion	15
8.	Monitoring, Reporting & Evaluation	16
Appendices		
A.	Sacred Moment	17
B.	Living our Core Values	18
C.	Spectrum of Participation.....	19
D.	Key Messages.....	20
E.	Environmental Scan.....	22
F.	Let's Talk: guidelines for integrating patient stories into your meetings.....	24
G.	Let's Talk: Sharing Your Patient Story	26

The Southern Health-Santé Sud Board of Directors has overseen and approved the principles and strategies within this Communications Plan (Board of Directors meeting: June 27, 2018). Communicated internally through orientation at various levels and other strategic opportunities, this document provides framework to the organization's leaders in implementing the region's culture of communications and supports staff in the context of creating a caring culture within Southern Health-Santé Sud.

1. About Us



Southern Health-Santé Sud is a designated bilingual regional health authority located in southern Manitoba (Canada), covering an area over 27 025 square kilometres wherein vibrant communities thrive including: 20 Rural Municipalities, 7 Municipalities, 4 cities, 4 towns, 1 village and 1 unorganized territory, 7 First Nation communities and many other cultures and communities including Métis, Hutterite, Francophone and Mennonite. With this rich tapestry of diversity, we are proud to serve approximately 201,025 residents, the fastest growing population in Manitoba.

In Southern Health-Santé Sud, people come first. We are proud to partner with the many communities in our region to deliver a spectrum of quality health care services. Our over 6 000¹ staff are inspired to put people at the very centre of their work, every day, creating a culture that provides a positive experience and, ultimately, together optimal health for all.



¹ 4 800 Southern Health-Santé Sud employees; 1 200 Affiliate & Community-Owned Not-for-Profit sites.

2. Values, Vision, Mission, Board ENDS

Our Core Values

These are the core values – what we believe at a deep level and are applied everywhere, all the time. Core values influence what we do, why we do it and, how we do it.

Respect
Compassion
Integrity
Excellence

Our Vision

Together leading the way
for a healthier tomorrow.

This is the vision – our preferred future or ideal. It is our vision of what success looks like.

Our Mission

Our mission is to support people and communities in achieving optimal health by providing innovative, sustainable and quality health care.

Together our Values, Vision and Mission are constant and weave a picture of Southern Health-Santé Sud's aspiration for the future. They define our identity as an organization and guide the decisions, behaviours and attitudes for which we are all accountable.

Our Board ENDS

Board ENDS are four broadly defined long-range goals indicating intended future outcomes of the health authority.

- Healthy People and Healthy Environment
- Accessible Health Services
- Safe, People-centred, Quality Health Care
- Sustainable Accountable and Responsive Health Organization

Finally, Strategic Directions outline the key issues to be addressed in developing action plans and objectives for the next year, guiding the organization for several years thereafter.

Together, these basic elements of our [Strategic Health Plan](#) provide direction in the pursuit of our commitment in achieving our purpose, with integrity, compassion, excellence and respect.

Our 'Family Portrait'

Similar to the family pictures that proudly reflects the heart of a household, a framed collection of visuals posted in each of our sites communicates the core of 'who we are' – a set of beliefs that endure and serve as a beacon for all who associate with our organization. We communicate this widely as an organization, this in a spirit of deep understanding that living our values is a shared responsibility.



3. Purpose & Objectives

Aligned with Southern Health-Santé Sud's Vision, Mission and Board ENDS and understanding that communication and community engagement are integral to the Board of Directors' governance model, this Communications Plan provides a framework for the delivery of effective communications to key audiences in Southern Health-Santé Sud in achieving objectives including but not limited to:

- a) Focused messaging aligns with provincial transformation directions as well as the region's [Strategic Health Plan](#), developed in partnership with the governing board, staff, leaders and the community.
- b) Community, stakeholders and staff are engaged and informed.
- c) An overarching framework of communication and [policies](#) guide the organization by providing principles, objectives, desired outcomes, strategies and effective tools and tactics.
- d) A structure to work coherently in managing communication workflow provides support where internal and external communications and community engagement are well coordinated, effectively managed and responsive to the diverse information and communication needs of the population.
- e) Strong message discipline reflecting:
 - *Clarity* – communicate concise messaging
 - *Consistency* – provide consistent messaging for all internal and external stakeholders to ensure a unified message and leadership
 - *Coordination & Alignment* – coordinate planning and messaging within the organization and in alignment with provincial directions to ensure all communications efforts are done strategically and effectively
- f) A reliable plan is in place to execute communications in situations of disasters and emergencies.

Southern Health-Santé Sud is on a continuous journey to put people first. When we think of moving forward as an organization, we envision doing this in partnership with the province, our clients, stakeholders and staff. Whether that's making sure the public knows [where to find services](#), learning about a client's [health care experience](#), sharing a Sacred Moment (see [Appendix A](#)) or working with communities: success hinges on moving forward together.

4. Desired Outcomes: Alignment with Our Core Values

Integrity, Compassion, Excellence, Respect serve as the basis for all our decisions and actions. These values are the compass that guides the organization, setting the culture and the tone. We know that *words matter* and we intently share 'what living our core values' means in the context of orientating all new staff. (See [Appendix B](#)). Appreciating that core values provide a strong foundation on which to build our organization, the virtue in aligning and integrating our values with 'all that is Southern Health-Santé Sud' is the means by which we successfully attain our vision and mission.

Indeed alignment with our core values stands true for 'all that is communications'.

Fundamentally, communication is the basis for people to understand what the organization is all about and the foundation for building and maintaining relationships. It is a means to promote our core values. Embedded in each of the core values lie defined principles which resonate in our communication:

Communicating and engaging with integrity means:

- being transparent when sharing information, behaving with honesty, openness and truth and providing balanced, clear, consistent and objective information
- responding to internal and external communications to enquiries in a timely fashion, including media enquiries
- being intentional and valuing diversity in engagement activities

Communicating and engaging with compassion means:

- using 'communication tools' to enhance human relationships: not to *replace* relationships
- observing principles of plain language and accessibility in communication, acknowledging that 'health' is a complex and vast sector where health terminology is an important part of sharing information
- listening to people without judgment or defensiveness

Communicating and engaging with excellence means:

- aligning communications and strategic directions with provincial developments regarding transformation of health care in Manitoba
- sharing the responsibility of 'communications' and community engagement; this requires the support, cooperation and interaction of various staff throughout the organization, involving staff at all levels who must carry out the requirements of this Plan in all aspects of their work. Sites, programs and services must integrate communications and community engagement into processes and procedures

- recognizing that 'communications' is indeed a spectrum of public participation which encourages use of best practices to inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower ([Appendix C](#)).
- ensuring communications activities are meaningful
- recognizing the importance of learning from best practice

Communicating and engaging with respect means:

- understanding and embracing diversity, inclusivity and equity, i.e. providing access to information and education using different communication strategies to target different groups
- encouraging two-way communication and feedback
- responding to our legislative responsibility to support the delivery of bilingual health care services according to the Province's French Language Services Policy/RHA Act

5. Our Audience

Southern Health-Santé Sud communicates with a wide variety of stakeholders who may have different levels of awareness of the Region's work. Messaging needs to be tailored to the audience and is aligned with the region's culture and key messaging ([Appendix D](#)).

While the region speaks with one voice, spokespersons are identified across the region based on their expertise, guided by policy, mentored by Senior Leadership and supported by Corporate Communications. Although much work has been undertaken to better understand the interests and communication needs of our stakeholders, it is an evolutionary and continuous process.



A broad grouping of key stakeholders includes:

Internal	External
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Board of Directors- Local Health Involvement Groups- Staff- Physicians- Volunteers, Auxiliaries & Foundations- Committees & Teams- Affiliate Health Corporations- Board-privileged professionals- Shared Health, Manitoba Health, Seniors & Active Living (MHSAL), regional health authorities and other health organizations including Communications Services of Manitoba- Provincial agencies & partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- General Public- Prospective Staff- Governments – municipal; provincial; federal- Stakeholder groups may include but are not limited to: school divisions, universities, First Nation Communities/Manitoba Métis Federation, Santé en français, Francophone Affairs Secretariat- Community organizations may include but are not limited to: civic groups, business community, daycares, schools, friendship centres, seniors' centres, recreation centres, Réseau communautaire, Settlement Services branches- Unions & Union Officials- Media

6. Communications in Southern Health-Santé Sud: Our Approach

Supported by many current attitudes and trends as listed in our Environmental Scan ([Appendix E](#)), Southern Health-Santé Sud focuses a communications approach with an emphasis on transparency, two-way communication and community engagement.

6.1. Strategic Considerations:

Our approach is built on a platform of best practices and proactive processes, for example:

- work collaboratively with the province, Shared Health and other health organizations to deliver consistent messaging and support with transformation and change management
- continue to enhance community confidence and trust in Southern Health-Santé Sud sites, programs and services – information, education and engagement
- maintain solid working relationships with the news media

- leadership at all levels support the overall goals of the Vision, Mission and Core Values to make them real to staff
- help staff understand what the Vision, Mission and Core Values mean and the intended outcomes or results we expect to achieve along the way
- increase awareness, understanding and participation of staff and the public in the Southern Health-Santé Sud core culture (see sidebar) priorities and activities of the region
- expose leaders to strategic information earlier than most staff, allowing sufficient time to process and understand the strategic directions, intended goals and corresponding issues
- maintain a strong brand and positive image for Southern Health-Santé Sud
- observe principles of equity and accessibility related to [Informational and Communication Barriers](#)
- build corporate pride among staff and positive identification with Southern Health-Santé Sud as a whole
- move proactively and quickly with communication – with a focus on planning ahead
- establish frequent pro-active communication as this pre-empts hearsay, rumours and distractions
- move beyond organizational charts and focus more on new and improved business processes achieved through synergies, collaboration, cooperation and relationships
- manage communications related to disasters and emergencies per the Emergency Incident Command System procedures (available on the Internal Portal Service/Administrative Library/Disaster Management/[Regional Operating Centre](#))

**Southern Health-Santé Sud
Principles on Building Core Culture**

- 1. People-centred, purposeful and values-based leadership
Integrity, Compassion, Respect and Excellence
- 2. A healthy workplace to grow and perform
- 3. Achieving excellence with a positive spirit through teamwork
- 4. Innovations and quality improvement through employee creativity and evidence-informed criteria
- 5. Partnership with patients, clients and residents in their care
- 6. Shared responsibility and ownership in alignment with regional and provincial goals

Southern Health Santé Sud

6.2. Communications Tactics & Tools

Southern Health-Santé Sud uses multiple communication tactics and tools with due consideration to 'reach and frequency' (who we reach out to and how often) to ensure our messages reach their intended audience in a timely fashion. Where and how the messages are distributed are based on many factors including fiscal considerations, budget, resources, nature of communication, intended audience, etc. The following tactics and tools are shown as internal and external in their focus and include but are not limited to:



Communications Tactics & Tools	Internal	External
Meetings (Board of Directors; Senior Leadership; Regional Leadership; local, stakeholders/ community, Local Health Involvement Groups, Annual Public Meeting, etc.)	✓	✓
Staff Newsletter	✓	
Site Bulletin Boards	✓	
Staff – memos/emails	✓	
Southern Health-Santé Sud public website	✓	✓
Health Providers' Site	✓	
Shared Health website	✓	✓
Transformation Website	✓	
Presentations/automated presentations	✓	✓
Print pieces (i.e. posters, handouts, etc.)	✓	✓
Mail drop off/Canada Post	✓	✓
Link to Community websites	✓	✓
Release by – Media Conference/Scrum	✓	✓
Release by – Teleconference/Scrum	✓	✓
Information Bulletins	✓	✓
<i>Sharing our Stories</i> – prompted emails/calls for media interviews	✓	✓
Goldenwest Radio morning show	✓	✓
Advertisements – paid TV, radio, newspaper ads and paid online ads – <i>Pembina Online, Portage Online, Steinbach Online</i> – reserved for emergencies	✓	✓
Public Service Announcements (PSAs)	✓	✓
Various feedback mechanisms (website, LHIGs, stakeholder groups, survey/polls, etc.)	✓	✓
Events Planning & Coordination	✓	✓

Events Planning & Coordination

While the above noted tools and tactics are used in the context of messaging, they are also the moving parts that help to coordinate events planning. Events planning, initiatives and campaigns require a consistent and coordinated communication strategy which aligns with provincial guidelines and directions. Our approach aligns with our 'together' approach whereby sites, programs and services work collaboratively with the Communications Team which supports assigned regional leads to mobilize a communications strategy. Examples of this collaborative approach include: announcing initiatives, ceremonies, events and campaigns, to name a few. The execution of the communication strategies for various regional initiatives is ongoing.



6.3. Keys to Success

6.3.1 A Culture of Shared Responsibility

In Southern Health-Santé Sud, we know that the Governing Board and staff at all levels are highly-influential sources of information for the public and carry out their unique role in supporting the delivery of good and effective communications. Accordingly, who, how and when we communicate depends entirely on what needs to be communicated. Communications are primarily shared through meetings or presentations (in person and teleconference), in written form (website, staff notices on Health Providers' Site, memos, staff newsletter, information handouts) and/or through media in 'Sharing our Stories'. Regional communications regarding health care services (access, information and/or education) are identified and initiated by:

- Provincial partners including Shared Health or Manitoba Health, Seniors & Active Living
- Governing Board
- CEO
- Senior Leadership Team and/or
- Regional Leadership Team... *who holds the responsibility to cascade information across the organization as a whole*

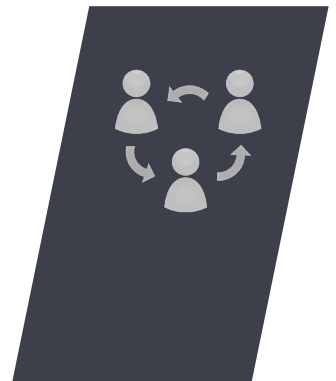
This culture of communication and the focused intent to cascade information requires the support, cooperation and interaction of various staff throughout the organization, involving staff at all levels who must carry out the requirements in all aspects of their work. Sites, programs and services must integrate communications into processes and procedures. As a region, we maintain transparency and continuously communicate with our staff and stakeholders in various ways.

Our mantra is to “*reach versus frequency*,” that it is reaching the maximum number of people (reach) as often as we can (frequency) with ongoing and regular messages in support of the goal and objectives of this plan.

It is recognized that relevant trends in the external environment have a significant impact on the way we do business and potential new directions related to established priorities and strategies.

6.3.2 Local Presence in Communities

Southern Health-Santé Sud is a designated bilingual regional health authority covering an area over 27 025 square kilometers. We are a very large, vast and diverse region which necessitates intent approaches to ensure effective communications.



The key to successful communication across this large geography is embedded within Southern Health-Santé Sud's organizational structure, intentionally designed to ensure a local presence in the community. This approach helps to build and maintain healthy relationships with people, communities and key stakeholders. Within the Region's overall boundaries, the responsibility for oversight of operations and administration of health services is allocated to four defined administrative geographic areas. In addition to overseeing programs and services, a Senior Leader provides leadership for each of the four areas.

Always with a lens to engage with the community, formal local/community stakeholder groups are in place (including RHA representation) and enable and empower communities to positively and successfully engage with the organization. Through local stakeholder groups, communities can take up issues themselves, thus creating strong local voices.

6.3.3 Patient and Public Engagement: a Regional Commitment

Health organizations across Manitoba work hard to build a health care system that meets the needs of the individuals and families we serve. We believe that we need to build a health care system together with the people we serve to ensure that the needs and preferences of individuals and their families are at the centre of all care strategies we do through patient and public engagement.

Patient and public engagement is the way we express our commitment to patient and family-centred care. It refers to opportunities where individuals, families and members of

the public are encouraged to be active members in all levels of the health system this: in their own clinical care and self-management, as well as providing input into decisions that shape health programs, policies, evaluation and research.

Research confirms the benefits of patient engagement which improves quality and safety, enriches the patient experience, increases satisfaction among individuals, family and staff and improves health outcomes. Aligned with our organizational structure, the Regional Leadership Team is supported to develop a culture of patient experience with different tools and by integrating individual's stories into our culture of communication (see [Appendix F](#)).

We have several engagement opportunities based on any stakeholder's area of interest, lived experience and availability. Some examples include:

- [Local Health Involvement Groups](#)
- CancerCare Hub Patient Experience Advisors
- Mental Health Advisory Committee
- Sharing Your Patient Story ([Appendix G](#))
- Participating on quality project teams
- Document review group
- [Manitoba Institute for Patient Safety Volunteer Program](#)
- Local Stakeholder Groups

Through patient and public engagement, we intently work together towards our shared goal of making our population healthier using evidence-informed approaches.



7. Action Planning: Setting Strategies in Motion

The Communications Team provides leadership, advice and guidance to support sites, programs and services. It has a lead role in protecting Southern Health-Santé Sud's brand and reputation, developing communication approaches and public relations tools and managing media relations. As an overarching practice in Southern Health-Santé Sud, this team provides regional standards, practices, tools and guidance to the region as a whole and oversees:

- corporate identity and branding
- [graphic design and support](#)
- [media relations](#), monitoring and training
- [public website management](#)
- regional photography and regional digital photo library
- [staff newsletter publication](#)
- [events planning](#), initiatives and public campaigns (i.e. openings, new program announcements, etc.)
- communication aspects of Disaster Management, Crisis Readiness and Emergency Preparedness

The Communications Team's roadmap, the Team Action Plan, aligns with regional Strategic Directions and integrates formal processes to incorporate risk mitigation and quality assurance. The Communications Team Action Plan is developed annually by the team and for the team. It is 'kept live' on a collaborative electronic platform for ease of updating.

Engagement is led by the Community Engagement Planning Committee of the Board of Directors. As such, this committee has an annual plan to ensure sustainability, regardless of membership change. This committee also has a reporting structure embedded in the governance plan of the Board of Directors for regular monitoring and evaluation.

8. Monitoring, Reporting & Evaluation

Southern Health-Santé Sud uses a variety of tools and mechanisms to assess the environment in which it operates and, more importantly, to ensure we hear the voice of our staff, individuals and families.



We do this through formal and informal methods of gathering input from the public. Examples of integrated mechanisms include the Acute Care Patient Experience Survey (developed through CIHI), the Disclosure Guidelines, Local Health Involvement Groups and an extensive critical incident and complaints monitoring process. Each of these mechanisms have feedback loops, monitoring and evaluation components built in so individuals receive responses and the organization can continue to monitor and make changes to processes as necessary. Additionally, the governing body, along with Senior Leadership, receives monitoring reports in the form of 'dashboards' and regular presentations to ensure that we meet the mandate and strategic direction of community engagement. A Community Engagement Planning Committee regularly reviews and provides input into regional engagement efforts, with members also taking a leadership and participant role with Local Health Involvement Groups.

Throughout the cycle, Southern Health-Santé Sud monitors and evaluates the tools and mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of its communications and communication environment – this includes formal and informal processes including surveys (staff newsletters), citizen feedback (central intake or received across the region) and media monitoring, to name a few. Ongoing monitoring of the effectiveness of communications and associated data is documented in the Communications Team Action Plan and evaluated through a variety of mechanisms including Team meetings and/or indicator and dashboard reporting – this to achieve the ultimate goal of continuous improvement and desired outcomes.

This Plan is adaptable, evolving and an ongoing template that requires continuous updating, at minimum every three (3) years, to reflect provincial and regional transformation, ensuring continued relevance within an evolving environment. The basic elements of this Communications Plan (including purpose and objectives, desired outcomes as well as our overall approach including strategic considerations, tactics and tools and keys to success) provide Southern Health-Santé Sud with direction in the pursuit of our commitment in achieving our purpose, with integrity, compassion, excellence and respect.

Appendix A – Sacred Moment

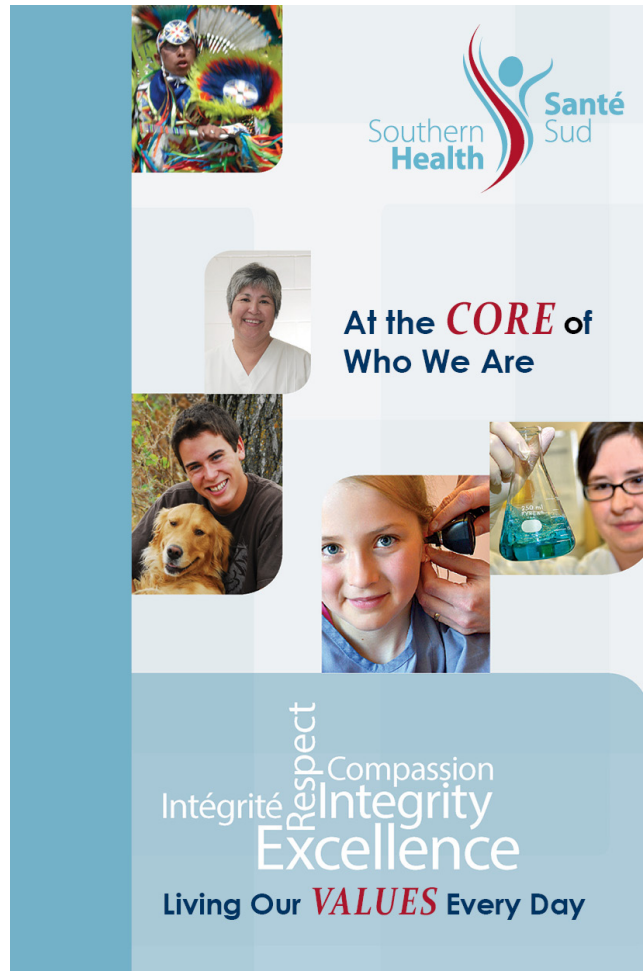
A Sacred Moment is practiced in some health care settings where providers establish a dedicated time to talk with clients about their concerns and to create a meaningful patient experience through compassionate acts of care. At a Board workshop in 2014, the Southern Health-Santé Sud Board of Directors reflected on how they could adapt this approach in their work even though they would not be involved in a direct client encounter. The Board decided to have a dedicated moment embedded in its agenda to reflect on its Values, Vision & Mission and to reinforce a culture of people-centredness in a broad organizational context. At the beginning of each regular board meeting, the Board purposefully takes a special moment to pause and reflect on the people they serve throughout the region and to distance themselves from the pressures of the day. The Sacred Moment is fundamentally about seeking to humanize the work of the Board, to focus attention on the present, to consider and look at the consequences when making changes and decisions and to be aware of how it affects people. In applying this practice throughout our organization's leadership, it is important to consider that this "Moment" can happen at any time and in vulnerable moments or it can be a planned approach in meetings or huddles by expressing with others the significance in understanding the human experience in your encounters and in your daily work. Although it only takes a "moment" in the overall scheme of things, it can instill a sense of purpose with what is happening and a special shared opportunity to make a meaningful connection with our core values.

A few ideas:

1. Sacred moments need only take three-five minutes. They can include anything meaningful to the presenter: a poem, a quote, a short personal story, a video with explanation, or a discussion.
2. The sacred moment does not need to be connected to health specifically – but rather around the core values.
3. Sacred moments need not be complex. Just something that is important or inspires. Studies underscore the concept that there is a significant positive connection between well-being and taking a time-out in our busyness during the day to be more present.
4. A huddle with co-workers when the team is most vulnerable, possibly after a difficult experience.
5. A sacred moment gives gratitude and makes a sincere connection.

Appendix B – Living our Core Values

(Click image below to view booklet.)



Appendix C – Spectrum of Public Participation

IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation



IAP2's Spectrum of Public Participation was designed to assist with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public's role in any public participation process. The Spectrum is used internationally, and it is found in public participation plans around the world.

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION					
	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

© IAP2 International Federation 2018. All rights reserved. 20181112_v1

Appendix D – Key Messages

Acknowledging that all key messages align with provincial developments regarding transformation of health care in Manitoba, following are examples of 'key messages' that help to weave our core values in our communications with the Southern Health-Santé Sud audience:

Respect
Compassion
Integrity
Excellence

Integrity

- Living our core values of putting people first – achieving together what we believe individually – is the compass that guides our commitment to delivering excellent care to everyone.
- Doing the right thing in the face of adversity.

Compassion

- Driven by our mission, we proudly serve our communities by delivering services with high standards and compassion.
- We focus on providing safe, people-centred, quality health care.
- At Southern Health-Santé Sud - it is about you... we want your care to be exceptional and your experience to be positive.
- Continuing to put people first, together leading the way in promoting and improving health within our communities.

Excellence

- Believing in our passion for excellence is key in delivering the best quality care possible.
- Developing and nurturing partnerships is crucial to achieving our goals.
- Collaborating with our partners to address the needs of the communities we serve and to build a strong, integrated system for rural health care delivery is vital to our planning.
- Partnering with our clients and their community needs, we continue to move forward to provide and enhance health services in the region.
- We want to keep you informed with a focus on promoting the highest standards of transparency, accountability and sound governance within our organization.
- We want to develop a culture of providing health information and access to services to motivate behavior and lifestyle changes: healthier people = healthier communities.
- Identifying and responding to changing and emerging health needs helps is to meet tomorrow's challenges.
- We encourage and promote innovation in all efforts – this to achieve a sustainable, accountable and responsive organization. It's about mutual accountability and finding new solutions in decision-making as we move forward.

- Southern Health-Santé Sud promotes teamwork, valuing the contribution of all staff, physicians, volunteers and clients – working together in cooperation towards a healthier tomorrow.
- Developing our workforce to support and believe in our ambitions. Their career choice does indeed contribute to our common goal for a healthier tomorrow.
- There are so many career opportunities in Southern Health-Santé Sud. Consider the many possibilities for rewarding careers as this is truly a great place to work. You will find new adventure, caring communities, diversity, and a great lifestyle!

Respect

- Ensuring accessibility of health services is our goal – providing the right service, at the right time, in the right language.
- It's about developing innovative services and care pathways which meet the needs of our diverse, population across the region as a whole.
- We strive to ensure that all people feel valued, respected and treated with dignity by continuously, fostering a safe, caring environment.



Appendix E - Environmental Scan

Current Attitudes & Trends... Internal

Over the years, Southern Health-Santé Sud has made significant progress in establishing a recognizable, authentic and cohesive corporate identity to assist stakeholders in identifying and accessing regional programs, services and information. This has been incorporated in many of the activities and tools the region has since developed.

- Southern Health-Santé Sud Values, Vision and Mission bilingual signage is posted in sites across the region.
- The Southern Health-Santé Sud Five-year Community Health Assessment and Strategic Health Plan serve as vital foundation/framework for all communications efforts.
- A [Graphic Standards Manual](#) is an important reference for the creation of visual materials that support Southern Health-Santé Sud bilingual identity as well as its Values, Vision and Mission. Clear Print Guidelines are incorporated in the Graphic Standards Manual to address information and communication barriers to Accessibility.
- A monthly [staff newsletter](#) is published, reaching over 6 000 employees.
- A scheduled Health Promotion-Prevention campaign provides messaging through [media partnerships](#) and online coverage.
- Monthly information bulletins featuring highlights of the Board of Directors meetings are vetted through the media who feature timely stories related to Southern Health-Santé Sud.
- Southern Health-Santé Sud provides timely and appropriate information regarding its health and services to the public.
- Listings in the White Pages of the MTS Phone Listings provide a strong presence of our bilingual name to nearly 60 communities.
- The Public Website provides access coordinates information and education with subscribe options to news, stories and career options. The public website address is posted in sites to direct the public on where and how to access timely health information.
- The Health Providers' Website (internal portal) provides access to a wide spectrum of education, information, stats & facts and staff resources including the option to subscribe to job postings, learning opportunities and staff notices.
- Given the landscape of the geography of our region resulting in greater distances between staff and managers, we use multiple means to communicate with staff.
- Formalized cascading of 'internal communications' involving staff at all levels where sites, programs and services integrates communications into processes and procedures is the essence of our shared responsibility of communications.
- Formalized efforts and processes relative to media relations ensure compliance with principles enunciated in Board Policy EL-9 Communication and Support to the Board.
- [Public events](#) are coordinated throughout the year including ribbon-cutting ceremonies and official openings as well as media documentaries.

- Established Disaster Management practices, processes and protocols ensure a dedicated resource and support from Corporate Communications.
- [Corporate Communications Policies](#) provide direction and support to operations.

Current Attitudes & Trends... External

The following is an overview of current state, relevant trends in the external environment that are likely to have a significant impact on the way we do business and potential new directions relating to strategy vis-à-vis to Southern Health-Santé Sud Corporate Communications.

- Manitoba Health System Transformation is resulting in bold changes to the health system that will make it more patient-focused, operate more efficiently and ensure it is safe, affordable and sustainable in the long term. This includes the creation of a provincial health organization, Shared Health, which will enable provincial planning and integration of services, improve patient care and provide coordinated support to regional health authorities across the province - including the recruitment and retention of health professionals - and establish provincial standards of care for all Manitobans.
- There is a formalized structure in place to liaise between provincial and regional communication efforts to ensure alignment.
- Through transformation efforts, there is greater provincial involvement with RHAs in various aspects including events planning and sensitive community issues.
- There is greater reception and established structures by the system to hear the individual's voice.
- Southern Health-Santé Sud participates in a substantial number of community-based stakeholder groups across the region. Local stakeholder groups have enabled and empowered communities to positively and successfully engage with the regional health authority. Through local stakeholder groups, communities have created strong local voices.
- Additionally, Local Health Involvement Groups and patient experience groups provide input and perspectives to Southern Health-Santé Sud Board of Directors on health and health services.
- With technology and the Web being more accessible to all generations, clients are more informed and educated, taking more ownership, having greater expectations for involvement and being more vocal regarding matters related to their health.
- The Southern Health-Santé Sud audience is younger (staff and public) and perhaps less traditional than previous; this has had a direct impact on the required style and approach to communications as well as the health messaging (i.e. mental health, reproductive health).
- The Region's 'equity vs. equality lens' is people-centred – a lens that has direct impact on our communication approaches.
- There is greater diversity in the population which brings new considerations and requirements for added supports and processes.
- Language Access Interpretation Services are available.
- Impact of recommendations from Accreditation Reviews impact 'how we do business' and inspire best practices.
- Southern Health-Santé Sud is well served by a strong media network. In general, local media tends to be knowledgeable and cooperative. The media plays a strong role in supporting the work of the Region.

Appendix F – Let’s Talk:

Guidelines for integrating patient stories into your meetings

Storytelling is the essential human activity.

The harder the situation, the more essential it is. —Tim O’Brien

Benefits

Research is telling us more and more about the benefits of patient engagement:

- improves quality and safety
- enriches the patient experience
- increases satisfaction among patients, families and staff
- improves health outcomes.

How do you find patients to participate?

Everyone has a story or experience to share.

Deep learning can take place from both positive and/or negative experiences.

Don’t worry about it being the “perfect” story to match your meeting. Most people are willing to share their story when asked directly. Recruit participants through your colleagues and team members who work directly with patients.

In-person opportunities are considered the most valuable. However, when the time or interest level of the patient doesn’t allow for in-person presentations, consider asking them to write out their story or send you a video that you could share.

Always consider how a patient’s story will benefit both the patient and the audience. Difficult experiences are hard to listen to but they are even harder to share. Create a safe space for learning by being prepared.

Tips for preparing the audience

If having a patient at your team table is new, here are a few things to help your team prepare:

- Sharing a personal health story makes the speaker and the audience very vulnerable. Encourage your team to be supportive to all patients and to one another.
- Ask them to shut off all devices (close computers and put phones away) while the patient is present and to focus on the learning that can take place.
- If people have to leave during that part of the agenda due to other appointments, meetings, let the organizer know ahead of time.
- Let your team know that emotions are perfectly acceptable and expected during patient stories. If it becomes too difficult, they can always excuse themselves from the room.
- If there is time for questions, make sure the questions focus on some of the learning that can take place from the story. Commentary about details or personal anecdotes can take place later during the team debrief.

Considerations for story day:

- Have a designated person available to meet the patient upon arrival and to walk them out and debrief if necessary.
 - Make sure a support person or someone the patient trusts is seated nearby.
 - Let the patient know if someone has to leave during his or her talk.
 - If any questions came up during the story, make sure to follow-up and respond in a timely manner.
 - A team debrief after a patient story is incredibly valuable. Make sure to schedule time immediately following whenever possible.
- Focus the discussion on what your team can learn from the story. Avoid being caught up in the details or allowing people to justify certain actions that were taken. This becomes unproductive. If actions need to be taken, create a quick action plan with follow-up at future meetings.
 - Contact the patient within 24 hours with a sincere thank you for their contribution to your team meeting.
 - If you are aware of any relevant impact from their contribution, make sure to relay that back to the patient.

Pre-invitation Worksheet

Thinking through and planning for the items below will contribute to a positive experience for your team and for the patient.

Audience

- Who is the intended audience?
- How many people will be there?
- What are their roles in the organization?
- Will anyone linked to the patient's story be in the room? (If yes, inform patient ahead of time.)

Logistics

- Where/who should the speaker be meeting upon arrival
- Suggested length of time/placement of agenda
- Will anyone from the media attend? (If yes, inform patient ahead of time.)
- What will the physical layout of the room be like?
- Will the patient be expected to stand/sit when speaking?
- Will there be a podium or a table?
- Who will walk out/debrief with the patient afterwards?

Considerations

- Is there a theme or angle of their story you would like the patient to focus on?
- Do you want time for audience questions? (If yes, ask the patient if there are any off-limit topics/questions.)
- Is it ok if the patient brings personal items?
- Is it okay if the patient brings a support person? Any limitations on who could/could not be?
- Have you personally heard this patient story? (If not, you might want to consider asking to hear it ahead of time to avoid any surprises.)

Special acknowledgement to the Patient Experience Local Health Involvement Group for its efforts in the creation of this document.

Appendix G – Let’s Talk:

Sharing Your Patient Story

As someone with personal health care experiences, (either your own or that of a loved one), you are in a unique position to offer understanding and vital information to others. At the same time, it is important to carefully consider the potential impact of your message on others, as well as on your personal well-being. An individual sharing their story may be left feeling exposed, vulnerable and/or emotionally overwhelmed. Below are strategies to help you present your story in a genuine way while protecting your personal well-being. Whether you are sharing your story during an interview, in a written piece, or in front of an audience, here are some suggestions to guide you.

Remember your reason for speaking

Before sharing your story, carefully consider your motivations for doing so. While it may be personally rewarding to be honest and open about your experience, remember that you have an important opportunity with your audience. Make sure you leave your audience with the message that patients' stories and experiences are an essential element of all health care-based decisions.

Be prepared

Details are important. Make sure you find out who will be in the audience, how much time you're expected to speak, what the physical layout of the room will be, if you can bring personal items, etc. Don't be afraid to ask questions of the organizer prior to agreeing to participate and don't be afraid to make requests for things that will

make the experience easier for you. For example, will having someone walk out with you to debrief afterwards be helpful? The more prepared you are with details ahead of time, the more you can focus on your talk when you arrive.

Recognize your limits

Telling your story is very personal. Showing emotion is completely understandable and expected but you need to recognize if your emotions will prevent you from telling your story effectively. Rehearsing your story ahead of time or writing it out so you can read it may help with this. Be prepared that your audience may show emotion as well when listening to your story.

Know what you are and are not willing to share

Just because you've taken this step to share your story does not mean you have to disclose every aspect of your experience. Keep a commitment to yourself not to disclose more than you are comfortable with. Be armed with phrases such as "That is more than I am willing to share" or "I believe you have enough understanding without talking about _____." This will help protect you should questions arise that you are not comfortable answering.

Be ready for assumptions, questions and comments

Remember that the extent of knowledge and preparation will vary widely within and between audiences. Even with people's very best intentions, they may say something that could be interpreted as hurtful or too personal. Never feel obligated to respond to comments you don't feel comfortable with. If you would prefer not to answer any questions, make sure you let the organizer know that ahead of time.

Consider bringing a spouse or good friend along

Having someone to wait with, sit beside you during your talk and debrief with afterwards can be incredibly helpful. Make sure your companion has heard your story ahead of time in its entirety so they don't become overwhelmed with emotion as well.

Special acknowledgement to the Patient Experience Local Health Involvement Group for its efforts in the creation of this document.

Adapted from the National Eating Disorders Association's tips on Sharing Your Story Responsibly.





For more information, contact:

Lorraine Grenier

Regional Director – Communications & French Language Services

T 204-248-7254

Email: lgrenier@southernhealth.ca