



MDH provides healthy exchange of ideas and information



Client Situation

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) is one of the top state health departments in the country, serving nearly five million citizens, legislators, and agency and media partners with information that protects, maintains, and improves Minnesotans' health. Best known for its efforts in responding to disease outbreaks, promoting healthy choices and ensuring safe drinking water, MDH has expanded its focus. MDH has, in recent years, focused an increasing amount of energy and resources on increasing market transparency, providing better information, and engaging consumers to be more aware of healthcare issues.

To further their mission to protect, maintain, and improve the health of all Minnesotans, MDH wanted to utilize email to better keep citizens informed of critical health information and reduce printing and mailing costs on 10 to 15 specific newsletters that were costing the department in excess of \$315,000 per year. GovDelivery Digital Communication Management met the department's need to communicate time-sensitive information to citizens quickly and efficiently, while saving the department money.

Solution

In July 2004, MDH began to rely on the GovDelivery solution to offer a free subscription service to citizens and deliver automated, highly-targeted information to its audiences - cost effectively and quickly. "It's a great way to improve customer service and save money at the same time. We also hope it will help the general public become better informed about important public health issues," says John Stieger, MDH communications director.

MDH often shares information through traditional news media, and it uses GovDelivery email alerts to reach these audiences as well. During the 2009 H1N1 Flu outbreak, emails alerted local reports to weekly press conferences where they received accurate, up-to-the-minute information on the epidemic.

GovDelivery Digital Communication Management allows individual MDH subscribers to become health advocates. The "share" feature included at the bottom of each email message has become an important way for MDH to extend its reach, as it allows a subscriber to pass the message along to friends and family via their favorite social media outlets.

Results

MDH has dramatically increased its reach by cross-promoting related website content and subscription topics to its subscribers through the GovDelivery Network. The unique Web 2.0 Network allows the public to sign up for updates from multiple sources the first time they register as a subscriber. MDH has partnered with Disability.gov, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and U.S. Health and Human Services. Through such partnerships, citizens who are interested in the content that an MDH partner has to offer are automatically introduced to MDH subscription topics, allowing the department to leverage its partners' established audiences, in turn growing its subscriber base.

Since launching GovDelivery in 2004, MDH has found a cost effective way to send more than 11 million email updates to over 47,000 residents; the Facilities Compliance Section of the department alone has saved \$15,000 annually. The department offers a vast range of 143 subscription topics to its many stakeholder groups, allowing them to access the information they find most relevant. Subscription topics include the Got Your Shots? Newsletter, health reform announcements and events, influenza information for health professionals, and the Minnesota e-Health Update.

