



CSTE Web-Based Occupational Health Success Stories HOW-TO GUIDE

Purpose: The intent of this project is to develop a repository of “success stories” from the state occupational health programs on the CSTE Occupational Health website. It is intended to be a dynamic site, with stories from the states added yearly. The audience for these stories is intended to be administrators, policy makers, the public, and the media.

“Success” is used in a broad sense of accomplishments, as one way of highlighting the impact and value of a program. For example, an important new partnership formed to respond to an issue may be a “success,” and formal impact evaluation results are not required. The concept of a “story” means the emphasis is on a narrative that has a human “face” to it, rather than a listing of program accomplishments or a focus on data.

There are several good CDC guidance documents about how to write success stories, if you want to read more about this approach, please consult the following:

- http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/stories/pdf/howto_create_success_story.pdf
- http://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/publications/library/pdf/success_story_workbook.pdf

Style Guidelines: Keep your story to **one page**. Consult the Microsoft Word [template](#) for further details such as font sizes and so on.

- Title: Hopefully catchy and short enough so that the text stays on one line
- Introductory paragraph: If possible, start with a short paragraph with something to capture the reader’s interest – a “hook.” It might be a quote from someone, or the story of something that happened to someone. Names of real people (so long as they have given consent) are a plus. If you don’t have a good hook, then skip this and go right to the first section.
- Then three sections:
 1. The Challenge: What the hook meant for public health; the story’s challenge to public health.
 2. The Response: What actions your program undertook to address the challenge.
 3. The Impact: What your activities accomplished. Also what still needs to be done. Lists of numbers of fact sheets sent, etc., are not of interest, unless you can provide a human face to those numbers (e.g., someone thanking you and making a change because of the mailing).
- Include a visual, if possible. Consider using a staged, public domain, or stock photo related to the topic.
- One or two references (functioning web link) for more information, if appropriate.
- Contact information for the program.

Other Style Considerations:

- Keep each section above to one or two paragraphs, and each paragraph should be no more than three or four sentences.
- Stick to the facts. Don’t interject an opinion unless you attribute it to someone.
- Avoid using “passive voice (e.g., “trainings were provided”). Use active voice and be clear about who is doing the action.
- Include direct quotes if they strengthen the story or are testaments to the impact.
- Try to avoid acronyms (or at least spell out first time) and long, bureaucratic organization names.
- Use plain language. (see <http://www.plainlanguage.gov/whatisPL/index.cfm> and <http://www.plainlanguage.gov/>)
- Avoid jargon – a primary audience is those *outside of* occupational health.
- Keep messages simple and concise.