

172nd SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Washington, D.C., USA, 26–30 June 2023

CE172.R3
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RESOLUTION

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS IN PUBLIC HEALTH FOR BEHAVIOR CHANGE

THE 172nd SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,

Having reviewed the concept paper *Strategic Communications in Public Health for Behavior Change* (Document CE172/16),

RESOLVES:

To recommend that the 60th Directing Council adopt a resolution along the following lines:

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS IN PUBLIC HEALTH FOR BEHAVIOR CHANGE

THE 60th DIRECTING COUNCIL,

Having reviewed the concept paper *Strategic Communications in Public Health for Behavior Change* (Document CD60/__);

Taking into account the excess of information that already exists on the Internet, both accurate and false, inaccurate or misleading, and the exponential growth of information about the COVID-19 pandemic over the past three years;

Recognizing that countries of the Region of the Americas have made significant progress in public information dissemination, strategic communications, and infodemic management;

Aware of the need to strategically update, develop, and better integrate policies and programs for behavior change in the health sector, informed by the behavioral sciences;

Considering that strategic communications to promote behavior change are key in the construction of resilient national health systems based on renewed and strengthened primary health care;

Recognizing that the pandemic has increased skepticism toward public health information and that higher levels of trust are necessary to increase the uptake of desired health behaviors,

RESOLVES:

1. To approve the concept paper *Strategic Communications in Public Health for Behavior Change* (Document CD60/__).
2. To urge Member States, considering their contexts, needs, vulnerabilities, and priorities, to:
 - a) recognize the need to strengthen strategic communication initiatives and behavioral science programs in the Region;
 - b) incorporate the concept of behavioral science in health as a cornerstone of health systems resilience;
 - c) strengthen the health components of behavioral science programs, especially Big Data analytics, online social behavior, infodemic management, scientific communications, health information management, public information dissemination (including through social media), digital literacy, and experimentation; and facilitate their integration into the implementation of public health policies and practices;
 - d) promote social participation in the development of communications strategies in order to increase public trust and customize messages to specific contexts and populations;
 - e) utilize multi-stakeholder and interdisciplinary mechanisms to share lessons learned and good practices in strategic communications and infodemic management programs implemented by governments and institutions throughout the Region, in particular during a pandemic.
3. To request the Director to:
 - a) support institutional, inter-institutional, multi-stakeholder, and interdisciplinary efforts to apply the behavioral sciences in public health, recognizing the particular contexts of Member States in the Region and taking into account that there are many ways to produce, manage, and disseminate evidence-based information;
 - b) provide technical cooperation to Member States on strategic communications to promote behavior change as a priority work area on the path toward universal health coverage in the Region;

- c) promote the systematic production of customized and contextualized information so that people and societies have a greater understanding of public health issues and the capacity to make more accurate decisions regarding their own health;
- d) promote the dissemination of lessons learned and good practices for strategic communications for behavior change in public health, based on progress made in the Region and at global level.

(Second meeting, 26 June 2023)
