



**NIH**  
**HEAL**  
**INITIATIVE**

HEALing Communities Study

Play 4:

## How to Plan and Organize Your Communications Around Key Topics and Events

Using a Campaign Calendar to  
Organize Your Community's Activities

# Get Started

## » WHAT?

A **campaign calendar** is a tool for planning and organizing communication activities around key topics and events over a specific period of time. It starts with a core theme for each month to help develop and select messages that can reinforce and build on each other. A campaign calendar also identifies national, state and local events like health observances, special activities, and holidays to keep content fresh, timely, and relevant.

## » WHY?

A campaign calendar allows you to organize your messages around a topic or theme. Focusing messages around a single topic allows them to work together to achieve your awareness, education, and behavior change objectives. You also don't want to miss important dates and events when you can share your own content in your community, such as during National Recovery Month or Brain Awareness Week. The calendar can help ensure that your messages are consistent and on topic, whether they are on social media, a community talk or workshop, an op-ed or letter-to-the-editor, or media interviews. A campaign calendar can help you anticipate and plan your communication and campaign distribution activities over the next several months.

## » WHO?

The HEALing Communities Study (HCS) Communications Workgroup created a *Communities that HEAL* Campaign Calendar of key topics and events related to opioid use disorder for you to use, adapt, and plan your communication activities. The team that creates and executes your distribution plan may find the calendar most helpful.

## » WHEN?

Use a campaign calendar during distribution planning and as you review your progress. Think about how you can tie in key themes and events when distributing campaign materials, or how a national observance might provide another opportunity to distribute campaign messages.

## » HOW?

This play outlines three steps to planning your communications around key topics and events.

- **Step 1: Plan.** Review the *Communities that HEAL* Campaign Calendar.
- **Step 2: Prepare.** Create your own version of the calendar to continually review and update and help inform distribution planning in your community. Identify opportunities to leverage as part of your distribution plan.
- **Step 3: Implement.** Put your calendar into action by sharing content that is aligned with key topics and events.

## STEP 1: PLAN

- Use the HEAL Campaign Calendar to get a sense of upcoming events and observances relevant to your campaign.
- Continue to refer to this calendar as you monitor your campaign's progress and update distribution activities.

When you meet to develop, discuss, and review your distribution plan, have participants review the calendar beforehand and use it during the meeting to help brainstorm ideas.

### REVIEW THE COMMUNITIES THAT HEAL CAMPAIGN CALENDAR

The campaign calendar (shown at the end of this document) highlights the HCS campaign's focus topics (e.g., naloxone, medications for opioid use disorder [MOUD], stigma), and health observances that can be leveraged to create a timely news and social media hook for HCS messages.

## STEP 2: PREPARE

- ❑ **Create and maintain your own campaign calendar.**
- ❑ **Use your calendar to inform distribution planning and related activities.**

### CREATE YOUR OWN VERSION OF THE CAMPAIGN CALENDAR FOR YOUR COMMUNITY'S DISTRIBUTION PLANNING

Your campaign calendar can start your thinking about how to use national observances as jumping off points or special events for the distribution of campaign materials. You can take this a step further by incorporating other timely opportunities to create communication activities to coincide with other events happening in your community, such as drug takeback days.

Review these tips to get started:

#### 1. Add your own local events

*Are there any events in your community that could provide an opportunity to distribute HCS materials?*

- **Research local events.** Talk with your coalition and search online to see if there are any health fairs, church groups, town meetings, corporate wellness events, or other local events where you can reach priority audiences over the next 6 months. Decide how your coalition will participate in each event (e.g., promote the activity, distribute materials, hold a training, have a table or booth set up) and add selected events to your community's campaign calendar.
- **Host your own event.** Most national health observances encourage communities to plan and host their own local awareness events (e.g., lunch 'n' learn, town hall, community gathering) and provide ideas and guidance on how to do so. See "Additional Resources" for a list of health observance toolkits with

event ideas, materials, and tips on how to promote awareness events.

#### 2. Consider your community's messengers

*What stories and spokespeople can you have on hand to tie in with newsworthy events?*

- **Curate community stories.** As you engage with your community, develop a process for capturing stories that show how residents are being impacted by opioid use disorder and getting involved in solutions. Make sure to get written permission to share someone's story before you use it in any communications. Document stories in one central location so that you can draw on them for news interviews, op-eds, speeches, blog posts, or other purposes and work them into your calendar as events/opportunities arise.
- **Engage local experts.** Identify opinion leaders in your community (e.g., elected officials, doctors, public health experts, first responders, community advocates) and ask if they are willing to speak at local events, write op-eds on monthly topics (e.g., naloxone, MOUD, stigma) that align with their experience/expertise, and participate in media interviews during events.

#### 3. Identify your community's distribution channels

*What channels will be most effective for reaching priority audiences during key events?*

- **Choose your distribution channels.** For each of the topic themes and events in your campaign calendar, think about the most effective channels for delivering the message to priority audiences in your community (e.g., social media, printed handouts, posters, news media, blogs, in-person events).

## MONTHLY CALENDAR EXAMPLE

Below is an example of how you might adapt the *Communities that HEAL* Campaign Calendar for your coalition.

Maintain your campaign calendar as a separate document from your distribution plan so that everyone can easily see what events occur in each month. Your calendar should be easily accessible for all coalition members and serve as a tool that is continually updated. Your calendar can include coalition meetings and special meetings that may or may not include distribution of materials.

### [COMMUNITY COALITION] CAMPAIGN CALENDAR: JUNE 2020 – STIGMA

DATE	ACTIVITY	AUDIENCE	MESSENGERS/ CHANNELS	MATERIALS TO DISTRIBUTE <i>(priority group, focus topic)</i>
June 1–15, 2020	Run Facebook ads	Health care providers in [county]	[County] Hospital's Facebook Page	Facebook Newsfeed and Right Column Ads (provider, stigma)
June 4, 2020	Coalition workshop on combating stigma in health care settings	Health care providers in [county]	[Local doctor] will give a presentation at [county] hospital	PowerPoint presentation, print ads and palm cards (provider, stigma) to leave in hospital breakrooms
June 7–8, 2020	Distribute materials to faith-based organizations, community-based organizations, and jails	Opinion leaders in [county]	Coalition members will sign up to distribute materials in different parts of the county	Print ads and palm cards (opinion leader, stigma)
June 10, 2020	Blog highlighting stories of men in recovery for Men's Health Week	People with lived experience in [county]	Post on [organization]'s blog, share in coalition newsletters and social media pages, and pitch to local media	Blog post and local news articles
June 20, 2020	National Safety Month event with [county]'s top employers	Employers in [county]	Two coalition members will volunteer to staff a booth and hand out materials	Palm cards (opinion leader, stigma) and coalition tip sheet on creating a recovery-friendly workplace

## STEP 3: IMPLEMENT

- Continue to identify and add new events and observances to your calendar on an ongoing basis.
- Keep the campaign calendar in an easily accessible location for coalition members.

### SHARE CONTENT THAT IS ALIGNED WITH KEY EVENTS

Continue to refer to your campaign calendar and consider how you can use local events you discover to support campaign distribution.

Follow these tips as you implement activities:

- **Online: Coordinate messaging across digital channels.** One benefit of focusing on one topic each month is that you can coordinate with partners to shape the online conversation together. Think about how you can incorporate each month's topic across partner blogs, social media channels, and newsletters. Alert partners as new content is posted so they can share it on their channels and amplify your reach.

- **In Person: Collaborate with local organizations.** As you plan communication activities, think about which community-based organizations (e.g., churches, community centers, non profits, employers) can help you promote your messages to priority audiences, offer a space for events, provide volunteers, and contribute other types of in-kind support.
- **News Media: Pitch media contacts regularly.** The relationships you've built with your media gatekeepers (editors, reporters, social media content producers) will come into play as you promote the topics and events from the calendar as part of distribution activities. Offer fresh content to media contacts through op-eds and letters to the editor reflecting each month's focus topic (see *Play 3*). As you host and participate in events, invite local media to attend and offer credible spokespersons for interviews.

*"Look at the world around you. It may seem like an immovable, implacable place. It is not. With the slightest push—in just the right place—it can be tipped."*—Malcom Gladwell

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Use these resources as guides for how to plan a campaign.

#### General Resources

- [Toolkit for Collecting Community Stories](#), Community Catalyst

#### Health Observance Toolkits

- [National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week - Opioids & Other Prescription Drugs Event Toolkit](#), National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)
- [National Minority Health Month – Partner Toolkit](#), Office of Minority Health
- [National Public Health Week Toolkit](#), American Public Health Association (APHA)
- [National Prescription Drug Takeback Day – Partnership Toolbox](#), Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)
- [Mental Health Month Toolkit](#), Mental Health America
- [Occupational Health and Safety Week – Resources and Event Suggestions](#), American Society of Safety Professionals
- [National Prevention Week – Toolkit for Planning Your Event](#), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES *(Continued)*

- [National Women’s Health Week – Social Media and Promotional Tools](#), Office on Women’s Health (OWH)
- [National Safety Month Materials](#), National Safety Council
- [Men’s Health Week Toolkit](#), Men’s Health Network
- [National EMS Week Event Ideas](#), EMS Strong
- [National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month Graphics](#), Office of Minority Health
- [National Health Center Week Tools & Resources](#), National Association of Community Health Centers
- [International Overdose Awareness Day Resources](#), Penington Institute
- [National Recovery Month Promotional Materials](#), SAMHSA
- [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline Media Resources](#), National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
- [World Suicide Prevention Day Materials](#), International Association for Suicide Prevention
- [National Farm Safety and Health Week Materials](#), National Education Center for Agricultural Safety
- [American Pharmacists Month Event Ideas and Promotional Items](#), American Pharmacists Association
- [National Mental Illness Awareness Week Resource Toolkit and Outreach Activities for Faith Communities](#), National Alliance on Mental Illness
- [National Primary Care Week Event Ideas and Materials](#), American Association of Family Physicians
- [Physician Assistants Week Resources](#), American Association of Physician Assistants
- [Red Ribbon Week Promotional Materials](#), Red Ribbon Campaign
- [Social Work Month Materials](#), National Association of Social Workers
- [Brain Awareness Week Outreach Tools](#), Dana Foundation
- [World AIDS Day](#), HIV.gov

## EXAMPLES OF PAST AWARENESS DAY ACTIVITIES

### New York

- [Black Balloon Day raises awareness of the consequences of substance use disorder](#)
- [Several Events Highlight International Overdose Awareness Day](#)
- [Clean out your cupboards: Erie County Department of Health promotes 'Drug Take Back Day' event Oct. 24.](#)

### Kentucky

- [ISC Department Faculty, Students Help Plan UK’s 1st Opioid Awareness Day](#)
- [U.S. Attorney Duncan Promotes 19th National Prescription Drug Take Back Day](#)

### Ohio

- [Chalk the Walk Event Held to Remember Those Who Died of Overdose](#)
- [Lorain County putting focus on overdose awareness, suicide prevention](#)
- [Cincinnati to Light Up Turquoise for Recovery](#)
- [National Prescription Drug Take Back Day Aims to Curb Addiction](#)

### Massachusetts

- [Massachusetts Opioid Screening and Awareness Day](#)
- [City of Boston recognizes National Recovery Month, fights stigma surrounding substance addiction](#)

## KEY HCS TOPICS AND MATERIALS TO HIGHLIGHT

FOCUS TOPIC	CAMPAIGN MATERIALS TO DISTRIBUTE
<p><b>Naloxone</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outline how naloxone can be used in overdose emergencies and promote local naloxone trainings.</li> <li>• Share statistics and evidence about the effectiveness of naloxone.</li> <li>• Educate residents about Good Samaritan laws in your state.</li> <li>• Feature stories of first responders and ordinary people who have saved a life by having naloxone on hand.</li> <li>• Emphasize that anyone can learn to administer naloxone for a loved one, friend, co-worker, or neighbor, and encourage residents to ask their doctor or pharmacist about it.</li> </ul>	<p>The following print and digital materials are available for people with opioid use disorder (OUD) and their families, providers, and community leaders.</p> <p><b>Digital Ads</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facebook Newsfeed Ad (1200 x 628 px)</li> <li>• Facebook Right Column Ad (1200 x 628 px)</li> </ul> <p><b>PRINT ADS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poster (11 x 17 in.)</li> <li>• Palm Card (6 x 4 in.)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stigma</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dispel myths about OUD that lead to stigma (e.g., that it's a moral weakness, that recovery is not possible).</li> <li>• Compare OUD with other chronic diseases like diabetes and explain that there are effective medical treatments available.</li> <li>• Show that anyone can develop OUD—it does not discriminate across race, gender, age (exemplify this using community stories featuring a range of diverse people).</li> <li>• Encourage the use of first-person language that puts people before their diagnosis (e.g., “person with opioid use disorder” instead of “addict”).</li> <li>• Share tips for creating a stigma-free environment in workplaces, health centers, churches, and other local organizations.</li> <li>• Give advice for how to talk to a loved one about OUD and support them in seeking help.</li> <li>• Celebrate community members who are in recovery and provide a message of hope that people can and do recover. The following print and digital materials are available for people with OUD and their families, providers, and community leaders.</li> </ul>	<p>The following print and digital materials are available for people with OUD and their families, providers, and community leaders.</p> <p><b>Digital Ads</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facebook Newsfeed Ad (1200 x 628 px)</li> <li>• Facebook Right Column Ad (1200 x 628 px)</li> </ul> <p><b>Print Ads</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poster (11 x 17 in.)</li> <li>• Palm Card (6 x 4 in.)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Medications for Opioid Use Disorder</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share statistics and evidence about medications for opioid use disorder’s (MOUD’s) effectiveness compared with no medication and other treatments.</li> <li>• Provide information/training/practice examples for providers thinking about obtaining the buprenorphine waiver.</li> <li>• Feature MOUD success stories from people in recovery and the organizations that support them.</li> <li>• Dispel myths about MOUD (e.g., that it’s trading one drug for another, that it’s not effective in the long term).</li> <li>• Direct people to local MOUD treatment providers.</li> </ul>	<p>The following print and digital materials are available for people with OUD and their families, providers, and community leaders.</p> <p><b>Digital Ads</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facebook Newsfeed Ad (1200 x 628 px)</li> <li>• Facebook Right Column Ad (1200 x 628 px)</li> </ul> <p><b>Print Ads</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poster (11 x 17 in.)</li> <li>• Palm Card (6 x 4 in.)</li> </ul>



## KEY HCS TOPICS AND MATERIALS TO HIGHLIGHT

FOCUS TOPIC	CAMPAIGN MATERIALS TO DISTRIBUTE
<p><b>Stay in Treatment with Medication for Opioid Use Disorder as Long as You Need It</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledge that there is no predetermined length of time for a person to receive treatment for OUD with medication.</li> <li>• Recognize that the duration of treatment for OUD with medication will vary among people, with some people needing medication much longer than others.</li> <li>• Identify challenges faced by people taking medication for MOUD in your community and demonstrate solutions or point to resources available to facilitate treatment.</li> <li>• Urge thought leaders in your coalition to write opinion pieces about the impact of OUD on your community and how stakeholders can improve outcomes by promoting policies that assist people taking medication for MOUD with employment, housing, and transportation.</li> <li>• Ask providers who are prescribing medications for OUD to share insights they may have regarding the challenges faced by people undergoing long-term treatment with medication.</li> <li>• Highlight stories from your community about how different groups are encouraging and supporting people with OUD who are taking medications (e.g., a group that organizes transportation for people to receive MOUD, employers who have policies that allow employees flexible work hours to attend treatment sessions, local hospital that starts all patients with OUD on medication before they are discharged).</li> </ul>	<p>Video PSAs (currently in development)</p>

## CALENDAR OF RELEVANT OBSERVANCES AND EVENTS

MONTH	HEALTH OBSERVANCES TO TIE IN MESSAGING
<p><b>January</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>New Years:</b> Make it a resolution to reduce opioid overdoses in your community and lay out your coalition's plan for the next year to increase availability, access, and longer term use of medications to treat OUD.</li> </ul>
<p><b>February</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">National Patient Recognition Week</a>: Give patients with OUD who take MOUD a voice by enabling them to share their experiences. Provide opportunities for health care providers to find ways to better care for their patients with OUD.</li> </ul>
<p><b>March</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Social Work Month</a>: Celebrate social workers in your community who are on the frontlines of the opioid crisis and equip them with the tools to help their clients navigate a path to stay in treatment and support long-term recovery.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Black Balloon Day</a>: Bring awareness to overdose deaths by joining families in remembering and celebrating the lives lost to overdose.</li> </ul>

**CALENDAR OF RELEVANT OBSERVANCES AND EVENTS** *(continued)*

MONTH	HEALTH OBSERVANCES TO TIE IN MESSAGING
<p><b>March</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Brain Awareness Week</a>: Provide facts about how opioids affect the brain. Explain that OUD is a chronic brain disease that can be managed with proper medication.</li> <li>• <a href="#">National Doctors Day</a>: Recognize outstanding efforts of doctors in your community who have been at the forefront of addressing the opioid epidemic.</li> </ul>
<p><b>April</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week</a>: Shatter the myths about OUD and highlight facts about effective treatments.</li> <li>• <a href="#">National Minority Health Month</a>: Explain how your community can support minorities who are disproportionately impacted by opioid overdoses.</li> <li>• <a href="#">National Public Health Week</a>: Showcase how your coalition is improving public health by increasing access to naloxone and medications for OUD.</li> <li>• <a href="#">National Prescription Drug Take Back Day</a>: Collaborate with drug disposal collection sites to distribute information about OUD treatment options.</li> </ul>
<p><b>May</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Mental Health Month</a>: Explain how OUD stigma negatively impacts mental health and prevents people from accessing MOUD treatment.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Occupational Safety and Health Week</a>: Outline steps for creating a recovery-friendly workplace and provide naloxone training to local organizations.</li> <li>• <a href="#">SAMHSA National Prevention Week</a>: Share examples of how your community is preventing opioid overdoses with naloxone.</li> <li>• <a href="#">National Women’s Health Week</a>: Feature stories of women in recovery/fighting OUD stigma, and offer local experts on treatment during pregnancy.</li> <li>• <a href="#">National EMS Week</a>: Feature stories of local emergency medical services workers who are saving lives with naloxone.</li> </ul>
<p><b>June</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">National Safety Month</a>: Share stories of residents who are improving safety by storing naloxone in various community settings and training people to use it.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Men’s Health Week</a>: Feature stories of men in recovery/fighting OUD stigma.</li> </ul>
<p><b>July</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Minority Mental Health Awareness Month</a>: Feature stories of people who are tackling OUD stigma and removing barriers to treatment for minorities who may be disproportionately impacted.</li> </ul>
<p><b>August</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">National Health Center Week</a>: Recognize a local health center that is providing exceptional care for people with OUD or implementing policies to reduce stigma for patients and families.</li> <li>• <a href="#">International Overdose Awareness Day</a>: Explain how stigma and shame can lead to overdoses. Encourage loved ones to have naloxone on hand and provide links to information about Good Samaritan laws.</li> </ul>

CALENDAR OF RELEVANT OBSERVANCES AND EVENTS *(continued)*

MONTH	HEALTH OBSERVANCES TO TIE IN MESSAGING
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">National Recovery Month</a>: Feature stories of people in recovery who are living healthy and rewarding lives after being treated for OUD.</li> <li>• <a href="#">National Suicide Prevention Month</a>: Spread awareness of the role each of us can play to reduce stigma and end suicides from opioid overdoses.</li> <li>• <a href="#">World Suicide Prevention Day</a>: Raise awareness of the scale of opioid overdoses in your community and the role each of us can play to prevent it.</li> <li>• <a href="#">National Farm Safety and Health Week</a>: Bring attention to the opioid epidemic in farm country and provide information and resources to help farmers and ranchers struggling with opioid abuse.</li> </ul>
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">National Substance Abuse Prevention Month</a>: Educate youth and youth-serving adults about how they can help prevent OUD and overdoses.</li> <li>• <a href="#">American Pharmacists Month</a>: Highlight the important role that pharmacists play in OUD prevention and treatment efforts in your community.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Mental Illness Awareness Week</a>: Raise awareness about treatment options for people with co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders.</li> <li>• <a href="#">World Mental Health Day</a>: Share how community stakeholders can take action to support people with mental health and substance use disorders.</li> <li>• <a href="#">National Primary Care Week</a>: Showcase primary care providers who are expanding access to MOUD.</li> <li>• <a href="#">National Physician Assistants Week</a>: Lift up the efforts of local physician assistants to address the opioid crisis and help them get waived to prescribe buprenorphine.</li> <li>• <a href="#">National Health Education Week</a>: Honor local health educators addressing the opioid crisis and invite them to partner with your coalition.</li> <li>• <a href="#">National Prescription Drug Take Back Day</a>: Collaborate with drug disposal collection sites to share information about MOUD.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Red Ribbon Week</a>: Reach out to local schools to see how your coalition can get involved in Red Ribbon Week activities.</li> </ul>
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day</a>: Bring together people who have lost loved ones to suicides related to opioid use to find connection, understanding, and hope through their shared experience.</li> </ul>
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">World AIDS Day</a>: Highlight how your community can address the intersection between HIV/AIDS and OUD for people who use injection drugs.</li> <li>• <b>Holidays</b>: Tie into family togetherness during the holiday season. Share how friends can become family for people who feel alone during the holidays, supporting ongoing treatment for the long term.</li> </ul>