

Communicating public health recommendations based on modeling and analytics

Practical Modeling Concepts for Public Health

Apply standard communication techniques

- Focus on the **public health problem**—modeling is just the tool.
- **Distill your message** to a single overriding communication objective (SOCO).
- Be clear about what you do and do not know.

Add in specific nuances for modeling results

- Explain why models were needed.
- Avoid overly specific results.
- Note limitations in underlying data.
- Discuss major modeling assumptions.
- Identify what might change your assessment.

Consider your audience

- Your audience will help you shape your modeling question and approach, as well as the way you communicate results.
 - i.e., consider your audience at all phases, not just after you have results
- In communicating results, many similar techniques apply across audiences. The level of technical detail may vary, but always:
 - Maintain a focus on the public health message;
 - Distill key findings into a single overriding communication objective; and
 - Be clear about assumptions and limitations.

Tips to communicate about model outputs

Do	Don't	Examples
Emphasize the overall public health message.	Overly focus on modeling methods.	<i>"We are expecting a severe respiratory viral season ..."</i>
Acknowledge uncertainty.	Make definitive statements about modeling results.	<i>"This assessment is based on what we know now and may change as we learn more ..."</i>
Speak with plain language.	Use jargon.	<i>"To generate these results, we studied past data and current trends ..."</i>
Coordinate messaging with partners.	Work in silos.	<i>"We are working closely with healthcare providers across the state to prepare ..."</i>

Media are useful partners for communicating with the public

- The media can help disseminate information to a broader audience
 - Apply standard communication techniques, and remember your media training
- It is important to have a clear message, and to stick to that message
 - Don't get led down a rabbit hole
- Be clear about what is important for the public to know and/or act upon
 - What is the “so what?”
- Do not use jargon

For more information, contact CDC
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The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

