
NH Medical Staff Communications Strategy 2024-2025

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Communications & Medical Affairs



Purpose

Northern Health is committed to fostering collaborative and effective relationships with medical staff to support the delivery of high-quality care to Northerners, and to address the urgent, emergent, and strategic sharing of information. Through value-based relationship building, developing connections, and establishing relevant and effective communication with medical staff, this strategy aims to identify priorities for medical staff communication, and to provide an overview of principal communication channels.

Background

Recognizing that medical staff are inundated with information, it is important to relay information using streamlined and effective tactics to reduce “noise.” By listening to medical staff and their teams, engaging them in the process, and responding to their feedback, we can build more effective communication channels and increase connectivity.

Guiding principles

To achieve this purpose, communication to medical staff must:

1. Have a clear intention.
2. Be timely, consistent, and relevant.
3. Reflect a culture of engagement and partnership.
4. Use the most effective and appropriate channel(s).

Execution of strategy

The Northern Health Communications Lead, Medical Affairs is the point of contact for communication needs directed to and from medical staff. A member of the Corporate and Program Communications (CPC) and Medical Affairs teams and co-led by the Regional Manager CPC and the Regional Director, Physician Quality, Engagement and Education, the Communications Lead, Medical Affairs is embedded in both the Medical Affairs and Communications teams to support the development and implementation of communications priorities established by each department. Providing communications leadership and advising program leaders on projects, initiatives, campaigns, and the day-to-day informational needs of Medical Affairs, and in collaboration with communications experts and content experts. The Communications Lead, Medical Affairs assists in planning content and development for web, social media, printed materials, intranet and in-person communications, as well as emergency situations and in support of strategic initiatives. Equally important to this role is the ongoing commitment to internal and external relationship building to support medical staff communications and access to relevant and timely information.

Communication Objectives 2024-2025

Effectively use communication channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify how communication takes place with medical staff. • Ensure communication channels have clear purpose and process for use.
Share relevant messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify issues, updates and resources relevant to medical staff. • Develop information snapshots. • Match information to channels to effectively reach medical staff. • Share urgent and emergent messages effectively.
Establish platforms and opportunities for discussion and feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide contact information for communications lead in medical staff messaging. • Build relationships to encourage meaningful dialogue and prioritize engagement with medical staff. • Identify and use communication channels that are useful and effective for medical staff while factoring in new opportunities and evolving technology. • Identify and use opportunities for engagement with medical staff.
Evaluate methods and channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly evaluate use, reach, and effectiveness of channels considering new publications and changing technology. • Annually establish and evaluate digital and in-person engagement opportunities, considering new events, relationships, opportunities, and technologies.

Communication channels and tactics

Channels

Northern Health has established channels to facilitate the flow of information throughout the organization. Each channel has a specific purpose and requirements for use.

The development and improvement of these channels is ongoing and is informed by the unique challenges that exist in the NH region due to the large geographic service area and to the different administrative structures and staff in each health service delivery area (HSDA). A diversity of channels and methods of information dissemination is necessary to share information with medical staff and medical leadership.

The communication channels outlined below reflect the primary ways in which communication takes place with medical staff.

Communications Lead, Medical Affairs

Definition	Regional lead provides operational support and Medical Affairs communications strategies throughout NH.
Aim	To provide communications engagement, support, and information to medical staff, leadership, and medical staff teams.
Content	Engage and support publicly appropriate, medically relevant, useful, and interesting information to a broad medical staff audience, The Communications Lead Medical Affairs is responsible for coordinating medical staff communications and leading initiatives to advance the medical staff communication plan and engage medical staff. The position liaises closely with medical leadership and medical staff. The communications lead also manages several of the medical staff communication channels and identifies areas of development, and develops content through partnerships. The communications lead builds relationships with medical staff and attends events and conferences.
Frequency	Ongoing.

Medical Directors and Medical Leadership

Definition	The NH medical directors identify and approve the medical staff communications that are delivered through the communication champions, email, and medical and administrative leadership structures.
Aim	To review and provide feedback to the communications lead on initiatives to develop and improve the medical staff communication channels, and offer insight into the information that needs to reach medical staff within their HSDAs.
Content	Engage and support publicly appropriate, medically relevant, useful, and interesting information to a broad medical staff audience,
Frequency	Ongoing.

Medical Advisory Committees

Definition	Medical Advisory Committees exist at a local, HSDA, and regional level and make decisions and recommendations surrounding the NH medical staff, NH facilities, programs, and the quality and effectiveness of medical care.
Aim	The Northern Health Medical Advisory Committee (NHMAC) makes recommendations and provides advice to the Board of Directors on items concerning the medical staff and the provision of medical care within the facilities and programs operated by NH. Information distributed by the communications lead is brought to medical advisory committees for their information.
Content	NHMAC provides oversight and advice to the communications lead on topics regarding medical staff communication. The communications lead attends monthly NHMAC meetings and produces a NHMAC high level overview document shared with medical staff and partner groups.
Frequency	Ongoing.

NH Physician Website (title under review for change to NH Medical Staff Website)

Definition	A publicly accessible internet resource jointly managed by the Communications Lead, Medical Affairs and NH Web Team that hosts relevant and up-to-date information on programs, policies, procedures, priorities, communities, practice opportunities, orientation, education and training, and medicals resources.
Aim	To provide a hub for medical staff to find the information they need to provide care in keeping with NH standards and strategic initiatives, and to support ongoing recruitment and retention efforts as an informational source of truth for practicing and prospective medical staff.
Content	Information that is publicly appropriate, medically relevant, useful, and interesting to a broad medical staff audience, and needs permanent and easy access.
Frequency	Ongoing.

NH Physician Website Newsfeed (title under review for change to NH Medical Staff Website)

Definition	A publicly accessible internet resource where medical staff can find timely news and updates relevant to their practice.
Aim	To provide a consistent and efficient flow of key messages and updates for medical staff including current events, opportunities, education, and medical resources.
Content	Information that has a short shelf life, is relevant, and does not require a permanent location on the website.
Frequency	Ongoing. Updated weekly.

Medical Staff Digest

Definition	Compiled of articles and information solicited or sent by various departments and programs across NH and sent out weekly by the Communications Lead, Medical Affairs, this email newsletter update goes to medical staff (physicians, nurse practitioners, midwives, etc.) Medical Staff Associations, Medical Advisory Committees, partners, medical affairs personnel, among others.
Aim	To deliver relevant, timely, and important information directly to the email inbox of all medical staff in a timely manner.
Content	News and updates, overdose prevention and response, upcoming educational opportunities, locum and expressions of interest opportunities, NH organizational updates, wellness resources, etc.
Frequency	Weekly distribution, Thursdays. Reviewed by Comms and Med Affairs leadership.

Email

Definition	An internet-based communication tool providing immediate message delivery to the selected recipients.
Aim	To immediately deliver urgent information directly to medical staff for priority review.
Content	Information that is time sensitive and requires immediate distribution and has been approved for email distribution by NH and medical leadership.
Frequency	Varies.

Communication Champions

Definition	A network of individuals supported and trained to identify and deliver pertinent information within their communities and facilities to medical staff and other organizational partners by the Communications Lead, Medical Affairs.
Aim	To use established networks where a local contact facilitates the exchange of information to medical staff and targeted audiences.
Content	Information that is approved for distribution by the VP Medicine and medical directors, is relevant to the audiences, reflects a consistent message, provides resources for follow-up, and includes an identified set of key messages.
Frequency	Monthly check-ins with Champions. Distribution of materials as and when needed, as requested by Communications Lead, Medical Affairs.

NHMAC Bulletins

Definition	A summary of NHMAC monthly meetings providing a high-level overview for use by medical directors to share with medical staff and partner groups.
Aim	To present updates, key initiatives, and projects that may require review, discussion, or decision.
Content	Information that is approved for distribution by medical leadership in accordance with the NHMAC committee guidelines or terms of reference.

Frequency Monthly.

Medical Staff Townhalls

Definition A one-hour virtual information session provided to medical staff on topics of interest brought forward by medical staff and partners including Doctors of BC.

Aim To present updates, key initiatives, and projects for information and to encourage discussion.

Content Information that is relevant, timely, engaging, and of interest to medical staff and partners.

Frequency As organized, with a goal to schedule monthly sessions as topics dictate.

Medical Leaders Coffee Chats

Definition A one-hour virtual information session to provide updates from Dr. Chapman, VP Medicine, to encourage engagement with medical staff leaders: COs, CMHO, Medical Directors, MSA Presidents, and Division Physician Leaders.

Aim To present updates, key initiatives, and projects, and to encourage dialogue stemming from medical leader concerns and NH leadership priorities.

Content Information that is relevant to medical leaders. Topics include service interruptions, recruitment and retention, CEO priorities, etc.

Frequency As organized.

NH Conferences and Continuing Medical Education/Physician Quality Improvement Events

Definition Planned events used to provide information and learning opportunities to medical staff.

Aim To present information, education, and quality improvement opportunities to medical staff.

Content Specific to conference focus or education topics.

Frequency Regular events held throughout the North.

Social media

Definition Publicly accessible and interactive internet-based messaging used to communicate to a broad public audience.

Aim To promote NH communities, programs, services, practice opportunities, recruitment, news and events to NH staff, prospective medical staff, and the general public.

Content Information that aligns with NH social media policy, has broad applicability and interest, uses visuals to support messaging, is provided to the Communications Lead, Medical Affairs with 1-2 weeks lead time.

Frequency	Regular posts on Instagram, LinkedIn, Facebook, by Communications staff in collaboration with Communications Lead, Medical Affairs as decided by Lead and med affairs programs leads.
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Program communications plans and campaigns

Definition	Plans supported by the Communications Lead Medical Affairs to roll out program specific campaigns and activities.
Aim	To reach internal and external audiences as defined.
Content	Information that is approved for distribution by Program leads.
Frequency	As necessary.

Memos

Definition	All-staff memos are vital for distribution of important organizational information. Circulated through email by the CEO executive assistant and shared by managers to their teams, all-staff memos are posted on the appropriate MyNH page for easy and reliable staff access.
Aim	To reach all NH staff with crucial CEO organizational information in a timely, consistent way.
Content	Information that is approved for distribution by NH CEO.
Frequency	As necessary.

Dedicated connection with frontline and remote staff

The vast geography of the NH region makes it difficult to ensure information reaches frontline and remote workers in a timely and consistent manner. When staff capacity to remain informed is compromised by inconsistent information distribution, their perception of the organization and trust in leadership is negatively impacted. An understanding of these risks and mitigation through use strong communications solutions ensures timely, relevant, and up-to-date clinical information is shared effectively. Methods to get information to clinical staff and those NH staff without dedicated desk space or shared computer access are vital. To that end, the following dedicated digital and non-digital channels have been developed.

Microsoft 365 – NH Digital workspace

Since 2020, remote working has become a regular way of life, not just at NH but across the world. Our NH region is vast and many of our sites provide unique geographic challenges for travel. Microsoft 365 (M365), adopted by NH in 2021, has brought NH staff and physicians greater access to one another, to information, and to a shared digital workspace, which means greater connectivity and improved communication around health. M365 provides access to programs and apps that support our workplace such as Teams, OneDrive, and MyNH (SharePoint Online). Teams meetings and Teams messaging have provided quick

connectivity between staff and leadership, ease of access to medical conference, and easier connection from site to site. Anyone can access Teams, whether NH staff or not.

Desktop backgrounds

The desktop background allows static, cross-organizational one-way message broadcasting to NH staff. The desktop background is an unchanging image that displays on all computers/workstations across NH sites and facilities. Backgrounds follow strict guidelines to ensure accessibility and are booked in weekly time slots for promotion, being prioritized based on organizational urgencies and impact to staff. Programs can request desktop backgrounds by contacting communications advisors or through MyNH.

Screensavers

Similar to desktop backgrounds, screensavers have reach organization wide. This rotating slideshow of static images presents an opportunity to reflect specific images to highlight, whether seasonally important or organizational priorities. Screensavers have great reach and great potential impact on staff well-being and connection. Screensaver images are submitted to NH communications and are changed over at least quarterly.

SnapComms

SnapComms is an emergency desktop alert system. For a region as large and population-disperse as ours, immediate reach to all staff is particularly important as we deal with growing wildfires and weather events each year. SnapComms causes a message to pop up directly on workstations in all facilities and sites providing critical details when an emergency situation is identified by NH leadership. SnapComms is managed by NH Communications and Emergency Management.

Printed materials

The Communications team includes skilled in-house graphic design and an established partnership with DocumentSource which results in readily printed posters, pamphlets, one-pagers, booklets, and more. Collaboration with the Communications Lead, Medical Affairs will allow programs and departments to develop and print materials relevant to their needs. They can also easily print organizational materials available through SharePoint.

Goals for the Communications Lead, Medical Affairs for 2024-2025:

- Obtain metrics and analytics for the NH Physicians website, track attendance to Town Halls, and obtain analytics of the Medical Staff Digest.
- Engage with communities, with a priority focus on the Northeast.
- Continue to build relationships with internal teams and partners with the common goal of streamlining medical staff communications.
- Establish a Community of Practice and communications training with local, on-site Communications Champions.
- Develop robust email distribution lists for all communities in the North.

The commitment to meet the communications needs of medical staff is ongoing and always evolving. The importance of solid communications channels is imperative to all aspects of medical staff satisfaction and effective teams.

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