

# LET'S TALK PUBLIC HEALTH WEBINAR HANDOUT

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## Prepare to Pivot: The Potential Outlook for Public Health Communication in 2026 & Beyond

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The transition into 2026 marks a fundamental restructuring of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and how our public health system functions, characterized by a 25% cut to the HHS discretionary budget, the loss of 20,000 staff, and the proposed consolidation of 28 HHS divisions into 15. Stay informed of these and other changes with our tracker: [Major Proposed and Enacted US Federal Government Changes Impacting Public Health and Health Communication Infrastructure and Funding \(2025–2026\)](#).

At the same time, media company ownership is consolidating, contributing to biased coverage and news suppression, and public broadcasting (NPR and PBS) is being defunded, creating local news deserts in remote and rural areas. Combined with the dependence on algorithm-controlled platforms and the emergence of AI-generated content that outpaces verification systems, health communication professionals face a perfect storm for health misinformation and disinformation that further reinforces existing health beliefs, accurate or otherwise, and intensifies a polarized landscape where evidence-based truth struggles to break through echo chambers and reach the communities that need it most.

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### Introducing the LTPH Pivot Framework

To navigate the storm, public health organizations must move away from static or reactive messaging toward a proactive and dynamic approach. The Let's Talk Public Health (LTPH) Pivot Framework operates on the principle that in a landscape of high polarization and low trust, agility and community co-creation are your most valuable assets. The framework is broken down into six interconnected phases that create a continuous feedback loop, ensuring your communication remains resilient and responsive to real-time threats and needs amid a rapidly shifting media and political landscape.

## The Let's Talk Public Health Pivot Framework (ALTEMA)

Phase		Implementation Strategies
<b>A</b>	Anticipate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Forecast, don't just react:</b> Use regular environmental scanning and scenario planning to forecast how policy changes or media consolidation might impact your specific region.</li> <li>• <b>Identify information voids:</b> Map local news deserts in your area to predict where misinformation may first take root.</li> </ul>
<b>L</b>	Listen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Monitor narratives and sentiment:</b> Track social sentiment, search trends, and community conversations to identify misinformation and disinformation, and understand not just what people are saying about health-related topics.</li> <li>• <b>Establish systems for rapid response:</b> Create policies and procedures for escalating items that require planning or intervention, based on anticipation and listening.</li> </ul>
<b>T</b>	Translate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Create meaning:</b> Connect your data back to your local context, including underlying fears and values. Turn complex data into accessible, culturally relevant, jargon-free insights for use in your messages and materials.</li> </ul>
<b>E</b>	Engage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Co-create assets:</b> Collaborate with trusted local stakeholders, such as physicians, faith leaders, and local icons, to create messages and materials, valuing their lived experience, insights, and expertise. Create and maintain a pre-bunking content bank to counter misinformation and disinformation in real-time.</li> <li>• <b>Join local communication networks:</b> Build a reciprocal, two-way relationship based on mutual understanding and trust. Respect the established dynamics and goals of the network, and build trust on shared ground.</li> </ul>
<b>M</b>	Monitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Evaluate content performance:</b> Consistently check engagement and interaction metrics to ensure your messages and materials are breaking through echo chambers and reaching information voids.</li> <li>• <b>Evaluate network strength:</b> Conduct social network analyses to map the connections between you, your local network, and the community. Survey the strength and quality of those connections by measuring trust, cohesion, reciprocity, and resilience.</li> </ul>
<b>A</b>	Adapt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Iterate:</b> Share your data with your network and adjust materials, messaging, messengers, and channels based on content performance.</li> </ul>