

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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NTSB WEBINAR: *
*
COMMUNICATING AND CONNECTING SAFETY *
MESSAGES TO UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES *
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via videoconference

Thursday,
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APPEARANCES:

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W E B I N A R

(1:00 p.m.)

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3 MR. WORRELL: Good afternoon. And good morning on the West
4 Coast. Thank you all for joining today's webinar, "Communicating
5 and Connecting Safety Messages to Underserved Communities," a
6 necessary and long overdue conversation in road safety. The
7 webinar is hosted by the National Transportation Safety Board and
8 will last approximately 1 hour and a half.

9 In the last three years there has been a renewed sense of
10 urgency to better engage minority communities, but I say renewed
11 because interest from a high waxes and wanes. You can always tell
12 that interest is growing again with the popularity of terms such
13 as underserved, underprivileged, underrepresented, marginalized,
14 and vulnerable, in front of the noun "communities." All of these
15 words are right for many minority communities, but all of them
16 also depend on us discussing those people from the vantage point
17 of somewhere else. They are words to talk about people, not with
18 people.

19 What do they mean to me if I'm a member of the community?
20 For me, growing up part of my life in East Flatbush, Brooklyn, New
21 York, I didn't know there were such terms to describe where I once
22 lived and where part of my family currently live. The overall
23 racial and ethnic diversity of the country continues to increase
24 and we all know that soon we will be a minority majority nation.
25 Recent executive orders on advancing racial equity and support for

1 underserved communities have sought to bring about systemic change
2 and help close the gaps in racial disparities. Yes, to talk
3 policy, we need to talk about people, the underserved, the
4 marginalized, and the underprivileged. These are the communities
5 of greatest need by definition.

6 But what terms do we need to talk to people who are not
7 policy nerds? How do we close the gap in communicating and
8 connecting? And I say communicating and connecting with the
9 communities we serve to address the gaps in transportation safety
10 that they face.

11 Well, today you will hear from three panelists who are at the
12 forefront of connecting with these groups. They will provide us a
13 few tips and pointers that will help us better understand what it
14 takes to communicate as well as connect with these audiences.
15 Thanks again to all of our panelists for taking the time out of
16 their busy schedules to share and to add value today. I'm going
17 to do a lightning round of the panelist introductions, but their
18 bios are in the chat and on our event page, NTSB website, if you
19 want to learn more about them.

20 First, we will hear from Vickie Gogo, Senior Partner, ICF
21 Next. Vickie leads ICF Next's multicultural communications
22 practice, which provides clients experience, expertise, resources,
23 and staffing focused exclusively and authentically on reaching,
24 engaging, and communicating with communities of color.

25 We will then hear from Terrence Hayes, Press Secretary,

1 Department of Veterans Affairs. Terrence is a military veteran --
2 thank you for your service, Terrence -- who served in Iraq earning
3 awards and decoration that includes Defense Meritorious Service
4 Medal, the Bronze Star Medal, and three Meritorious Service
5 Medals.

6 And our final panelist will be Pamela Rucker Springs,
7 Director of Communications at U.S. Consumer Product Safety
8 Commission. Ms. Springs develops and executes communication
9 strategy to build CPSC's visibility and advance its mission to
10 protect American consumers. She brings more than 25 years of
11 experience in strategic communication.

12 Thank you all again. Together, they will provide insight
13 into best practices in communicating and connecting with diverse
14 communities.

15 And to make sure we're connecting with you, if you have
16 questions, please enter them in the chat. Once our panelists all
17 have presented, we will take as many of your submitted questions
18 as we can.

19 So without further ado, let's turn it over to our first
20 panelist, Vickie Gogo. Thank you, Vickie.

21 MS. GOGO: Good afternoon, everyone. Let me get started
22 here. All right. So I'm excited to be here today, it's an honor
23 to join the other panelists and talk about communicating and
24 connecting safety messages to underserved communities. As
25 Nicholas said, my name is Vickie Gogo, I work at ICF Next. We're

1 a global government consulting firm headquartered in the
2 Washington, D.C. area, specifically in Reston. We have
3 approximately 8,000 employees around the world and most of our
4 work is with federal government clients, but we also do quite a
5 bit of work with state and local governments, as well as private
6 sector clients.

7 As Nick also said, my specialty is multicultural
8 communications and as he also said, I guess that means we are
9 considered underserved. But that means that I also work with my
10 team of communication colleagues to be able to authentically
11 engage our communities. That includes a lot of federal government
12 clients that I've worked with, including HHS and CDC, NIH Office
13 of Minority Health, FDA, CPSC, HUD, CMS, Department of Labor,
14 Social Security, education department, and Department of Energy.

15 So we'll jump right in. For me, there's three things to keep
16 in mind as you embark on outreach and engagement with communities
17 that have been historically underserved.

18 First, determine your audience, and that includes audience
19 segmentation; we'll talk about that. Second is develop and
20 deliver your program and then, of course, track, refine, and
21 evaluate your outreach. And we'll cover this first section here
22 about determining your audience because everything, for me, is
23 about really who are we talking to, why are we talking
24 specifically with them, and what makes them tick so we can talk
25 with them better.

1 Nick touched on this just a little bit, but let's talk about
2 the term "underserved." I wanted to call out a few things about
3 this slide of words because we are communicators and we know that
4 words matter. People are not words, but also some words don't
5 accurately reflect people and shouldn't be used synonymously when
6 referring to people.

7 So a lot of the words on this slide are often used as
8 synonyms, people interchange them, but to me, that's really
9 inaccurate, so I leave with you the first note, and the first
10 thing I want to ensure that you come away with is that words
11 matter and how we describe people matters. How they describe
12 themselves is what matters most.

13 So people who have been historically underserved have been
14 provided with inadequate service. The people aren't underserved,
15 but what is presented to them is under-serving. They are
16 presented lives in like circumstances that are less than they
17 should be.

18 So in today's U.S., an emerging majority of the population
19 has been historically underserved, so that means underserved
20 communities are now becoming your general public. Your messages,
21 your materials and engagement strategies need to embrace that and
22 understand that. So what if you live and work in an area and
23 communicate with a geographic location that happens to be more
24 affluent or rich in resources and services? I encourage you to
25 look deeply at the demographics and seek to understand where some

1 of the next slides will speak to you and the work that you do and
2 find those hidden communities because they actually are there.

3 And so that leads us to audience segmentation. Audience
4 segmentation is the key to all of the outreach and engagement. A
5 marketing strategy based on identifying subgroups within a target
6 audience in order to deliver more tailored messaging for stronger
7 connections.

8 The subgroups can be based in demographics such as geographic
9 location, gender identity, age, ethnicity, income, or level of
10 formal education, but I like to even get more super granular than
11 that. I annoy a lot of my colleagues when I ask them who is our
12 audience and I can't just accept that some of those synonyms I
13 showed you in the word cloud are what we're left with.

14 To me, we have to really more fully understand who we're
15 speaking with. Just saying vulnerable communities, disadvantaged
16 communities, underserved communities, really just doesn't get it
17 for me. So the better we can understand them and engage with
18 them, we want to the audiences to know that we hear them, we
19 understand them and we're committed to connecting with them. So
20 we're not talking at them, we're engaging them. And so to do
21 that, you have to know who they are at their core and not just how
22 they present to the public, because those could be two very
23 different things. It's our job, as communicators, to really
24 dissect them and learn who they are and then how best to reach.

25 So in addition to the geographic location, gender identity,

1 et cetera, that I mentioned earlier, we go one step further. So I
2 encourage you to consider the following. We look at gender roles,
3 we look at attitudes toward conflicting communication, our
4 approach is to completing tasks, regionalisms, cuisine and dietary
5 habits, country of origin, all of these characteristics present
6 opportunities for you to better engage your audiences and
7 understand them so you'll learn who they are and how they
8 communicate. And also who is best to do that communicating, why,
9 where, how, and when.

10 And so now let me tell you, this is a time-consuming and
11 intentional step, but it will yield the results that you want.
12 There are no shortcuts. And we saw this during COVID, we didn't
13 have time as a nation, right, everything was moving quickly, the
14 virus was moving quickly, we had to move even faster. And so
15 there are lessons learned there, but too many hadn't invested in
16 the research and the information gathering before we needed it, so
17 when it became time to use it, the insights weren't there to tap
18 in to. So do it now, invest in it now and it will pay off in
19 dividends.

20 And one quick addition, as well, one other important note
21 that drives audience-focused engagement with communities that have
22 been historically underserved, particularly multicultural ones, is
23 consider the audience, the point in time, the issue and the media
24 or channel. People evolve, current events shape perspective and
25 perceptions, and things that audiences may not have communicated

1 or articulated before may rise to the top based on current events.
2 Going on right now in our nation, I'm sure you can think of a
3 couple of situations that we weren't really talking about three
4 years ago, five years ago. So now, how people are looking at
5 those situations, they really are top of mind and you have to
6 always consider exactly how everything is being shaped by current
7 events. It's important to do poll checks every so often and you
8 have to really commit to engaging your audiences long term. The
9 process is so valuable to the end results.

10 And now the second point is developing and delivering your
11 program. So when you approach communications with audiences that
12 have been historically underserved, we understand that the
13 audiences should feel a part of the process and the communication
14 is authentically tailored for them. Can't get lazy as
15 communicators when reaching out and engaging these communities.
16 They are used to being fed the lazy answers, so they should feel
17 that everything was created for them and say that nothing has been
18 created without them. I believe that audiences should be
19 included, they should see themselves and they should feel
20 respected. We have to be specific.

21 So I recently worked on a big coed education campaign and
22 every audience we engaged commented in the focus group phase,
23 "thank you for including us," just the fact that we went so far as
24 to take the time to hear directly from them and not make
25 assumptions. Our team has expertise based on decades of doing

1 this work, but there are always some cultural nuances, some issue
2 nuances, how did people feel about COVID versus how they may have
3 felt about, you know, a diabetes education campaign, those things
4 we had to understand and we had to talk to the audiences
5 themselves to be able to figure it out.

6 In communications with communities that have been
7 historically underserved, it's much more than race, socioeconomic
8 status, geography, or language. It's about message and messenger,
9 culture, credibility, and connecting. So this is where that
10 audience segmentation comes in, in understanding a lot about who
11 your audience really is, what makes them tick.

12 For example, we like to do a lot of faith-based outreach to
13 engage African Americans, but there's a lot of African Americans
14 who don't go to church, so what about them?

15 We talk about culture. When engaging our Hispanic and Latino
16 communities, we have to understand the nuances between those who
17 come to the U.S. from El Salvador versus coming from Mexico or
18 those coming from the Dominican Republic or Cuba or Argentina or
19 Bolivia. Not all Hispanics are the same and their culture is
20 different, so how they apply that culture to your communication
21 matters. Some who come from Central and South America identify as
22 indigenous, but when they get to the U.S., we just lump them into
23 the Hispanic/Latino category and push Spanish content at them.
24 None of it makes sense to them, that's not their primary language.
25 So it's disrespectful and it's actually lazy to not take the time

1 to understand who they are as a people, and ensure the message and
2 messenger we engage to deliver it makes sense and resonates with
3 them.

4 And the next piece is credibility, we have to face the
5 reality that many government agencies have varying levels of
6 credibility with our underserved communities. It's just there's a
7 long history there, there's a reason they are underserved, why
8 some have limited access to resources and, unfortunately, there's
9 a lot of blame to go around. Some blame this country, but some
10 come to folks that come from other countries, they carry that with
11 them based on how they were treated in their home countries. So
12 when we engage influencers who can carry the message, messengers
13 who resonate is most important. So for safety messages, that
14 might be older loved ones, that might be -- that carry the respect
15 of the community, for these communities.

16 And lastly, it's about connecting, authenticity matters. You
17 can't just show up on the scene when you need something and you
18 can't only want to engage a population segment when it serves you
19 well. Connecting means being there and putting in the work and
20 the effort to build the true, true relationships.

21 So we'll go through 10 keys to audience outreach and
22 engagement. The first, and you know how I feel about this,
23 audiences come first, and they do. We have to segment as much as
24 possible, we have to know who our audience is and they have to be
25 primary to everything that we do as communicators. Our message is

1 their message, which means they are first.

2 We have to understand that not all issues are created equal.
3 I mentioned this earlier. So we have to understand how the
4 audience feels about the issue; health is different than education
5 issues, which is different than transportation, which is different
6 than social issues. Our formative research will always help here
7 and you have to duly take the time to dive into that and to do
8 that.

9 Do not assume or lean on stereotypes about people, language,
10 or culture. So do your research, environmental scans, literature
11 reviews, focus groups, in-depth interviews, talk with everybody
12 you can, do enough research that you can point to, to justify
13 positions, messaging, and outreach. You cannot skip this step,
14 the research is key.

15 And then respect the diversity within the audience.
16 Obviously, the moniker "underserved community" doesn't tell you
17 much as a communicator, so break it down. And even if you land on
18 a focus with racial and ethnic minority groups, understand that
19 African Americans are not a monolith, neither are Latinos and
20 Hispanics, neither are Asian Americans. Understand the cultural
21 nuances and account for them authentically. You can look for
22 commonalities, but respect the differences. Representation
23 matters, use the right influencers, the right messages, and the
24 right cultural nuances to make sure that your message resonates.
25 Understand that culture is not language, so use the correct

1 language. Don't just translate, be sure you adapt and localize
2 your messages. And use the correct images and visuals. And
3 finally, don't take shortcuts. There's a lot of work involved and
4 you've really got to dig in and do it.

5 Number 5: Consider social and cultural differences that may
6 be a barrier to open and inclusive communication. I touched on
7 this a second ago. Our campaigns connect with clients and their
8 audiences authentically, addressing potential social and cultural
9 differences. We have to carefully consider all of those things
10 that I bulleted out.

11 What are the gender roles? Sometimes we have to use the men
12 as messengers, sometimes it's the women as messengers, sometimes
13 it's the grandmother, it could very well be the kids or youth.
14 Touch on those family values, ensure we understand their attitudes
15 towards conflict and communication. Understand their beliefs and
16 perceptions. There are different things from countries of origin
17 that we need to make sure that we understand so that we can also
18 communicate with them and not unintentionally incorporate barriers
19 to them hearing the message that we're trying to deliver.

20 And then understand the audience's unique history and how it
21 impacts the now. Historical trauma matters, it really does, and
22 when you're talking to communities that have been underserved,
23 there's a lot of baggage sometimes. I tell my colleagues if
24 something happened to my grandma, it might as well have happened
25 to me. It could've happened 20 years ago to her in Birmingham,

1 Alabama. It doesn't matter, I don't live there, I never lived in
2 Alabama, I never lived in Birmingham, but that was my grandma and
3 you did her wrong, you did me wrong, just like it was yesterday.
4 So we have to really understand that, culturally, as a people,
5 what that means and how we then have to overcome that, build that
6 trust, build those relationships and build that back.

7 Number 7: Telling authentic stories. So storytelling works,
8 we know it works, but allow the audience to tell its own story.
9 Their voices matter, most times yours does not.

10 You'll get nowhere if all you want to do is talk at people.
11 Involve them in the process, bring them into the process and have
12 them tell their stories. They're great influencers, they're great
13 messengers, but you've got to incorporate them and you've got to
14 be authentic and true to the mission.

15 And this again goes back to that, the messenger is often more
16 important than the message. The person that's delivering the
17 message is always more important than the message.

18 Be intentional, deliberate, and authentic. Yeah, I don't
19 know how much I would need to say about this, but your intentions
20 matter, people can read through it. Be very intentional in how
21 you want to communicate with people. Admit sometimes you mess up
22 and that can happen, but you've got to be deliberate in the
23 process, you've got to be authentic in it, you've got to be able
24 to justify where and how you were developing the messages and the
25 communications programs that you're putting together and who those

1 messengers are, the channels that you're using, be deliberate in
2 that process.

3 Actions speak louder than words. So this means use multiple
4 channels and be authentic in the messaging action. You cannot
5 promote a brand or an issue that wants to sell to the multi-
6 cultural, underserved communities if you're not invested in those
7 communities.

8 Develop the partnerships with relevant organizations. Show
9 up, be present, and be consistent. When we see you off line in
10 our communities, we're more likely to consider you worthy of our
11 dollars and worthy of listening to our message. Don't just run a
12 Juneteenth ad and not have a full year plan for engaging with
13 African Americans.

14 Don't push out a bunch of content in Spanish during Hispanic
15 Heritage Month and then ignore the community the rest of the year.
16 So be there authentically, all the time, and make it count.

17 This is a phrase that I use a lot: Nothing about us without
18 us, simply means engage your audiences and the messages that you
19 want to deliver. Have them, inform them, and then help deliver
20 them.

21 So the third point and last point here is to track, refine,
22 and evaluate your outreach. Commit to getting it right. Each
23 community requires different metrics based on their baseline
24 perceptions, actions, and unique tactics. Continuously collect
25 data, continuously talk to the communities. Don't just send out

1 surveys and be sort of hands off, continuously be in the community
2 and talk to them. And then you can refine your outreach based on
3 new audience insights.

4 The other thing to always understand is that timelines may
5 differ, every community has its own distinctive journey and so
6 respect that journey. There sometimes may be some kind of back
7 work that you need to do to get your audiences at a baseline that
8 you can then build from. Sometimes there's been harm in the
9 community that you need to address first and then move forward.
10 So talk with your audiences consistently, be part of the community
11 and then keep your sights on the long-term gains.

12 So to wrap up, I leave you with these three key takeaways:
13 determine the audience, including audience segmentation; develop
14 and deliver your program; track, refine, and evaluate your
15 outreach; and always, always, always fall back on your research.

16 So thank you so much and I will turn it back over to
17 Nicholas.

18 MR. WORRELL: Thank you, Vickie, for that body of
19 information, we look forward to the questions.

20 Next up is Terrence Hayes, Press Secretary, Department of
21 Veterans Affairs. Again, you can review the panelists' bios
22 online and in the chat box.

23 Terrence.

24 MR. HAYES: Thank you, Nicholas. Thank you, Vickie. Allow
25 me to share my screen here.

1 (Pause.)

2 MR. HAYES: First and foremost, thank you to everyone for the
3 opportunity to chat with you today. Thank you to my fellow
4 panelists for allowing me to be here with them, also. Vickie's
5 presentation was extremely educational and informational and she
6 made a wealth of points there that I really hope that many of you
7 take and implement in your everyday strategic communication
8 planning.

9 For myself, I'm Terrence Hayes, I'm the Press Secretary for
10 the Department of Veterans Affairs, that's our second largest
11 federal agency in the United States government. I arrived there
12 on January 20th of 2021, humbly, after the president appointed me
13 into that position. I am the first black man or woman to hold
14 this position at the Department of Veterans Affairs. I am the
15 official spokesperson for the Secretary, Secretary Dennis
16 McDonough, and for the entire department, that includes about
17 425,000 employees across the country and in our territories.

18 I'm responsible for all department-level external messaging
19 to press and to our external partners, like our veterans service
20 organizations, members of Congress, obviously, the White House,
21 and various other different stakeholders to include, most
22 importantly, our veterans, their caregivers, their families, and
23 our survivors. And as Nicholas touched on before, I am a 20-year
24 army combat veteran, so this is near and dear to me,
25 representation does matter, so with me being in this position I

1 understand the direct needs of veterans, I understand the direct
2 needs of veterans who look like me, and I understand the distinct
3 needs of veterans and their families when it comes to the various
4 different services and programs that are available to each of
5 those individuals.

6 So why we must communicate using underserved press. Rule
7 Number 1: You have to know your audience. Our audience at the
8 Department of Veterans Affairs consists of various different
9 individuals from across the country. We need to ensure that we're
10 able to communicate and connect with each of those individuals,
11 each of those demographics, in order to ensure that they receive
12 timely access to benefits and the world-class care that they've
13 earned and quite frankly, deserve.

14 So how do we do that? It's imperative that any time that I
15 work with my team, and we have a team of about 80 professionals
16 from across the country in various different regions of the
17 country, and we have 1800 facilities across the country, medical
18 centers across the country, they also have public affairs and
19 public relations specialists operating out of those facilities.

20 So it's important that those individuals are working in
21 concert with the leadership at those medical centers and our
22 regional offices, but also to ensure that when they engage various
23 different demographics that we want to ensure that they present
24 the information in a trusted and credible manner. What does that
25 look like? Myself, I'm not a Spanish speaker, it would not be

1 productive, let alone building that connection if I was to go on
2 Univision or talk to a reporter at *Al Día*. While I have great
3 intentions and I want to get the information out to the masses,
4 the best route to do that is to take a credible, trusted
5 individual who speaks their language, who understands the nuances
6 of the language of the audience that they are talking to, we
7 prepare that individual to engage that audience, and then we have
8 that person go out and actually conduct the interview.

9 So while I might be the official spokesperson for the
10 department and while the Secretary may be the overall spokesperson
11 for the entire department and representative for the department,
12 he and I may not necessarily be the right individuals to engage at
13 every single level.

14 So we have to use our teammates at the Department of Veterans
15 Affairs to do that. Not only that, they are many times the
16 subject matter experts. We would rather have those teammates who
17 deal with and engage with our veterans and their families and
18 their caregivers and survivors on a daily basis, to actually be
19 the face, they are the ones who have the touch with the veterans,
20 they are the ones who the veterans actually do trust and come in
21 contact with on a daily basis, so we're going to prepare them to
22 engage.

23 Case in point, we have a podcast reporter who just reached
24 out to us this morning in the Dominican Republic and what we're
25 going to do is we're going to have one of our individuals who

1 works here at VA in women's health care, this is about women's
2 health, who is actually from the Dominican Republic and we're
3 going to have her actually conduct the interview and engage that
4 audience and actually be able to communicate directly to those
5 individuals, it shows credibility, it shows trust, it shows
6 understanding that VA is taking this seriously to communicate with
7 that particular community.

8 The bottom line is this. As our Secretary says on a daily
9 basis, we must lead with intentionality. Representation does
10 matter. We conduct monthly press conferences and at every single
11 one of our press conferences we ensure that it's not just the
12 Secretary or myself up there, we ensure that we bring our
13 teammates up there.

14 And one thing that the Secretary is very intentional about,
15 and I don't want anybody to take this the wrong way because again,
16 it's all about intentionality and representation, but
17 specifically, we will never have three white men at that podium at
18 any given time, period. That's from him. So that leadership
19 comes from him and that's what we do in everything we do.

20 So we want to ensure that we have women representation at
21 that podium, we want to make sure that we have LGBTQ+
22 representation at that podium, we want to make sure that we have
23 Hispanic and Latino and black and Native American and Asian
24 American representation at that podium. So we're going to again
25 tap into our teammates throughout the entire workforce to ensure

1 that they have the opportunity to come up there at the podium
2 during our monthly press conference to engage our press, to get
3 those messages out to folks who look like them.

4 Rule Number 2: Building trust. One of the things that I did
5 when I first came on board as the Press Secretary of the
6 Department of Veterans Affairs is that I set up one-on-one
7 meetings with every member of our press that covers the Department
8 of Veterans Affairs. That consisted of about 20 or so members of
9 the press nationally who covered the VA. I sat down with each one
10 of them to ask them, you know, what could we do better to ensure
11 that we're communicating with your particular audience, and I was
12 able to take down many valuable notes.

13 But one of the things that I really noticed during those
14 talks is that there was a lack of representation in the media. We
15 were not engaging various different communities, we weren't doing
16 a great job with engaging our Hispanic and Latino media, we were
17 not doing a great job with engaging our black and brown and Native
18 American and Asian American members of the press.

19 So based on that, I decided that we needed to bring those
20 individuals to the table so we can truly say that VA is meeting
21 and educating and informing every single demographic of veteran
22 who has served this country. So I'm proud to say that now we have
23 various different members of the press who look like every single
24 individual who's represented this country honorably and we're able
25 to get those messages down to the grassroots level to ensure that

1 every single veteran understands the resources, the programs, the
2 benefits available to him or her. But that took work, it took
3 actually building a relationship. It's not a one-and-done
4 situation, it's not one conversation and hope that we can just,
5 you know, make things happen. It's a constant communication, it's
6 a constant relationship-building process that we're able to do and
7 I'm proud of my team for constantly always communicating with
8 these members of the press to ensure that we're meeting the needs
9 of their particular stakeholders, but primarily meeting the needs
10 of our veterans.

11 One of the key things I always talk about is that, you know,
12 it's very important for my boss, myself, to engage our national
13 media platforms. Many of you know what those are, you know, your
14 CNNs, your MSNBCs, your Fox News's of the world. But data shows
15 that over 70 percent of America either doesn't watch those
16 programs or doesn't trust those programs. So again, if those are
17 the only platforms we're engaging, clearly we are missing the mark
18 when it comes to educating and informing our particular
19 stakeholders.

20 So what do we have to do to correct that? Bottom line is
21 we've got to go down to the grassroots level. Again, as I touched
22 on earlier, we have our public affairs officers at our 1800
23 facilities across the country and our regional offices, and then
24 we have public affairs offices strategically placed in various
25 different regions of the country; we have to ensure that those

1 particular public affairs officers are engaging members of the
2 press in their local backyards, building that relationship because
3 we know again, based on that data, that our veterans tune in and
4 trust their local 5 and 6 o'clock news, their local radio stations
5 and their local newspapers.

6 So we have to get our messages out to those members of the
7 press, we have to engage those pockets in those communities, even
8 from the headquarters level we have to do that and we are doing
9 more of that and we're happy to say that because of those public
10 affairs officers on the ground building those relationships, now
11 we're able to get into those homes and ensure that veterans
12 receive the information that they need.

13 During Veterans Day, for example, which is obviously a big
14 time for us, we were able to do some very unique and great things.
15 I appeared on the Rickey Smiley Morning Show to talk about the new
16 law that President Biden had signed into law back in August that
17 impacts potentially 3.5 million veterans, it's the burn pit
18 legislation, and right now we're doing a full-court press to
19 ensure that every single veteran who may have come in contact with
20 burn pits, who maybe came in contact with Agent Orange, may have
21 come in contact with any toxic exposure because of their service,
22 understands how this law impacts them. So again, we have to go to
23 various different platforms to ensure that they understand and
24 know this information. The VA of old would've just slapped it on
25 a website and just hoped that folks would've found the

1 information. But these last two years -- again, intentionality --
2 we made it a point to go to the community and ensure that we are
3 not only just talking to the community, but receiving feedback
4 from the community and the community told us that we were not
5 doing a good job of ensuring that they understood what was
6 available to them. So we had those two-way conversations and now
7 we implement that in every single strategic communication campaign
8 that we do.

9 So again, that's why I went on the Rickey Smiley Morning
10 Show, that's why I had teammates join various different platforms,
11 Univision, *Al Día*, Steve Harvey Morning Show, other nontraditional
12 podcasts and other unique platforms that just traditionally were
13 never used. We do more on Instagram live and Facebook live than
14 ever before. Again, we have to go to where our veterans are,
15 young, older veterans, educated, veterans who need various
16 different means of communication, traditional means of
17 communication, paper versus just now your internet and web
18 communication.

19 Our veterans are very wide and they get their information in
20 various different ways, especially our rural veterans who,
21 unfortunately, don't have broadband sometimes and need that hard
22 paper copy information in their hands or we have to go to those
23 communities because they don't have a facility in their own
24 backyard, we have to ensure that we're meeting their specific
25 needs.

1 Rule Number 3 -- and Vickie kind of touched on this earlier
2 -- but personal connection is everything. Stories are critical
3 when you're engaging your audience. Allow those individual
4 stories to actually funnel out into the community because they
5 trust those stories, they trust that.

6 For example, a person like me, a veteran, a black veteran, if
7 I go before various different media or just yesterday I was in New
8 York City with Secretary McDonough at the National Action Network
9 convention speaking to veterans who look like me, encouraging
10 them, especially those who may have had a bad, you know, instance
11 with VA in the past or have been denied in the past, to give us
12 another opportunity to get it right for them. And I do that as a
13 trusted individual because this matters to me, as a veteran, as a
14 minority veteran.

15 So I went there to talk to as many veterans as I could to
16 ensure that they understood what benefits were there for them and
17 the importance behind getting into the system so they can get the
18 benefits in their hands as soon as possible because, again, this
19 is potentially generational wealth and other items that could be
20 left on the table for those individuals and we need to do a better
21 job of ensuring that they receive that information so they can
22 maximize those benefits that they've earned by serving our
23 country.

24 You have to personalize these experiences. Stories, telling
25 stories about how an individual who looked like them, speaks like

1 them, was able to receive these benefits and now, what their life
2 looks like now because of going through that process and getting
3 those benefits in their hands. Telling the story of how an
4 individual may have been denied three or four times and now has
5 come back because of this new law and because of our Secretary now
6 leading this agency transparently and more accountable than ever
7 before, giving us that second chance, and now that gentleman or
8 that woman now is able to receive those benefits. Maybe late, but
9 now they receive it and now they can see that this particular VA
10 is working for them and then allowing them to tell their positive
11 story so that other individuals can receive the benefits that they
12 have earned, as well.

13 So these are just a few examples of underserved media that we
14 have or currently engage right now. I touched on Rickey Smiley
15 Morning Show, I touched on Steve Harvey Morning Show. These
16 particular radio platforms had never been used before prior to us
17 coming on board. You can ask the question why, I asked the
18 question why, but I can't worry about what happened in the past, I
19 can only worry about what we can do now to ensure that our
20 veterans are getting the word and we're going to maximize every
21 opportunity to jump on these particular platforms.

22 We engaged Roland Martin, you know, I personally reached out
23 to him and said hey, you know, you have a major platform, many
24 individuals trust you as a credible source, we need to do some
25 work together, we need to be able to build that relationship to

1 afford our VA leadership to come on your program so you can
2 question us, all the tough questions, the challenging questions,
3 so we can address those questions and ensure that your
4 stakeholders are able to hear directly from their Department of
5 Veterans Affairs to understand exactly what we are doing for them.

6 Univision. We have several different teammates across our
7 workforce who have appeared on Univision or who have interviewed
8 with reporters at *Al Día*. Again, this is an opportunity for us to
9 talk directly to those individuals so they can culturally
10 understand what benefits are out there for them and how their VA
11 can help.

12 TheGrio. Again, another nontraditional, underutilized
13 organization that VA had just never really used. Quite frankly, a
14 lot of federal agencies don't use these particular organizations.
15 Again, another distinct opportunity to use their platform to
16 engage our particular stakeholders.

17 And the Black News Channel, when it was in existence, my
18 boss, myself, several other VA leaders appeared on that particular
19 show on a monthly basis to ensure that their particular audience
20 understood what was available to them.

21 Again, intentionality, again, stepping outside of the box,
22 again, doing what is needed to ensure that all of our veterans are
23 taken care of and receive the world-class care and timely access
24 to benefits, we have to go to where our veterans receive their
25 information.

1 I'll give you a particular case study that we're dealing with
2 right now. Recently, as recent as 2017, we looked into the fact
3 that there had been disparities in benefits ratings for black
4 veterans versus white veterans. We saw that the disparity was
5 about -- I want to say about 14 percent different.

6 So I'll give you, for example, Terrence Hayes, a black
7 veteran, might've filed a claim for post-traumatic stress
8 disorder. My counterpart, my battle buddy, who may have served in
9 the same organization as I did, at the same time frame as I did in
10 Iraq, files the same post-traumatic stress disorder disability
11 claim and he may have received a 50 percent rating while
12 Terrence Hayes might've received a 30 percent rating. When you
13 look at the dollars and cents, that makes a huge difference. Both
14 of us served in the same area, we both were diagnosed with the
15 same ailment, yet one of us received a higher rating than the
16 other. Why is that the case?

17 So we researched that and we saw that that was a critical
18 issue. We're continuing to dig into that to ensure that when
19 Terrence Hayes and when my counterpart go in for their rating,
20 that it's equitable, that there should be no distinction between
21 race, gender, age, sexual orientation, any of those things. If I
22 come in with post-traumatic stress and the next individual comes
23 in with post-traumatic stress and we're both diagnosed with that
24 disability, we should be equally rated. So we're looking into
25 those issues right now.

1 But how are we communicating that? One way we're
2 communicating that, and I'm proud to say that we have -- we did
3 something that we had never done before, is that just recently we
4 brought in members of the Divine Nine, we brought in various
5 different veteran service organizations representing black and
6 brown veterans, to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

7 We didn't just bring them in to just give them a briefing and
8 throw some PowerPoint slides up on the screen. No, we brought
9 them in to have a two-way conversation, number one, to hear from
10 them, to understand the distinct needs that they have, and to
11 understand how we can do better at the Department of Veterans
12 Affairs in delivering the veteran experience to them. We were
13 able to take that feedback and now we're implementing all those
14 measures that they brought forth in those discussions and
15 everything we do now to communicate with every veteran that we
16 have across the board.

17 Now, black veterans have traditionally had lower trust scores
18 and there's some systemic reasons behind that. Secretary
19 McDonough just recently, as recent as a few months ago, was the
20 first Secretary to actually acknowledge systemic discrimination in
21 rating of benefits to black veterans. He's our 11th Secretary, he
22 was the first to actually acknowledge this publicly and it was
23 long overdue. This was an opportunity for us to re-earn that
24 trust with many of our black veterans. But not only that, as
25 Vickie kind of touched on before, well, we can just say things,

1 now we're actually implementing policy to ensure that what we say
2 lines up with what we're doing to ensure that our black and brown
3 veterans now receive the benefits that they've earned and, quite
4 frankly, deserve.

5 Just like I said, just yesterday Secretary McDonough met with
6 Reverend Al Sharpton and several members of the National Action
7 Network, he gave remarks and again, in this particular forum where
8 many folks in that audience had never heard of this particular
9 legislation involving burn pits, Agent Orange, toxic exposure,
10 they were introduced to it for the very first time, even though
11 this law passed just last year, last August.

12 So again, we're ensuring that we're going to where our
13 veterans are and not only did he just, you know, give remarks, we
14 brought out claims professionals to this particular convention to
15 ensure that those individuals in the audience who may have been
16 veterans who may have been impacted by these particular toxics
17 were able to meet with these individuals one on one and file their
18 claims immediately so we can take care of them.

19 Again, this affords us an opportunity, number one, to take
20 care of them and provide them with what they have earned, but two,
21 so now they can be those influencers for us to say hey, the VA
22 actually came to this convention, actually was on site taking
23 claims, and now I can tell you that this particular VA is actually
24 moving in the right direction to where we need it. We're going to
25 do more of that, you know, this isn't, again, just a one-and-done,

1 these aren't just onesie and twosie opportunities. Many of us
2 will go to the NAACP convention in late July and then we'll have a
3 team that goes down to the Urban League convention in Houston that
4 same month, again, talking to black and brown veterans wherever
5 they are.

6 We're going to do the same thing with our Hispanic and Latino
7 veterans, we're going to do the same thing with our Asian American
8 veterans, and we're doing the same thing right now with our Native
9 American veterans where we're meeting with the tribal leaders and
10 going into those areas to ensure that we build those relationships
11 with those tribal leaders to ensure that their veterans are taken
12 care of with the distinct needs that they have, as well.

13 One of the other things that I think is really amazing is
14 that, especially as a father of two HBCU grads, is that now we're
15 going into our HBCUs. We're not just going to the HBCUs to just
16 meet with the presidents and just chat with them, we're going to
17 the HBCUs to, number one, ensure that any of those student
18 veterans there have access to the benefits that they've earned and
19 understand the benefits and access to their care.

20 But number two, we're going to the HBCUs because we want to
21 ensure that we are able to find the brightest and best talent and
22 bring them on board to the Department of Veterans Affairs in our
23 critical and key positions, our clinicians, our doctors, our
24 nurses, all of our frontline VA healthcare professionals. We need
25 more individuals who look like them to serve at our facilities

1 because we know that the individuals who go seek medical care,
2 when that individual looks like them, their outcomes are
3 exceptionally better. So again, we need to do a full-court press
4 in doing so and now, with our partnership with our HBCUs across
5 the country, we're able to really recruit and see if we can bring
6 that bright talent to the Department of Veterans Affairs to make
7 better outcomes for our veterans where they are.

8 So I'll kind of leave you with this. The bottom line is that
9 we need to educate our leadership at all levels of the importance
10 of engaging nontraditional and underserved and underutilized
11 mediums. Bottom line. The time is now. You know, there's no
12 time to wait any further, we have to ensure that we're doing what
13 we need to do to ensure that our particular stakeholders have the
14 information that they need. Everything we do has to be about
15 those particular stakeholders, every decision, every policy that
16 we make, every way that we communicate.

17 We have to continue to cultivate those relationships, as I
18 said before. If you haven't built those relationships with those
19 members of the press, start today, reach out to them, educate them
20 on what you are doing for their particular demographic and how
21 they can be utilized to get those messages out to those
22 individuals.

23 Again, continue to meet with various groups to solicit their
24 feedback to improve their experience. We're going to continue to
25 meet with the Divine Nine, we're going to continue to meet with

1 faith leaders, we're going to continue to meet with our Native
2 American tribal leadership, we're going to continue to meet with
3 Hispanic and Latino leaders across the country because again, they
4 can help us influence and educate those men and women who have
5 served our country and ensure that they are taking advantage of
6 their benefits that they've earned.

7 Proactively communicate and even over-communicate to your
8 stakeholders. It's critical.

9 And I think that goes without saying, but the last one is
10 build trust by using those credible sources. I can't give that
11 example enough. Use your credible sources at your particular
12 organization as much as possible. Train those individuals to be
13 that trusted individual who you can put on that radio show or on
14 that TV show to talk directly to your particular stakeholders. It
15 will make a major difference in everything that you do and you
16 will see it in the trust scores at your organization.

17 Again, I thank you for your time, I truly appreciate it, I
18 actually look forward to the Q&A period, and I turn it back over
19 to Nicholas.

20 MR. WORRELL: Okay, thank you. Thank you, Terrence, for that
21 wealthful body of information and look forward for the questions.
22 If you have questions, again, drop them in the chat box.

23 Without further ado, I'm going to go ahead and turn it over
24 to Pamela for our last presentation. If you have questions,
25 again, drop them in the chat box and we'll try to take some of

1 them.

2 Go ahead, Pamela.

3 MS. SPRINGS: Thank you so much, first of all, Nick, for the
4 wonderful invitation. I am just honored and humbled to be in the
5 company of two great communicators. You know, those people who
6 know me know that I'm all about communication. So I'm Pamela
7 Springs, Director of the Office of Communications for the Consumer
8 Product Safety Commission and again, excited to be here.

9 Most people know the Consumer Product Safety Commission as
10 the agency that -- we're the agency that does the recalls, but
11 we're also the agency that provides important safety and product
12 hazard information to consumers around the country and we've been
13 doing that for more than 50 years and, in fact, CPSC celebrated
14 its 50th anniversary just about four or five months ago and I
15 think we all on this line understand how much the country has
16 changed in the past 50 years.

17 And what my presentation is going to do is kind of take kind
18 of a then-versus-now approach to how we approach consumer safety
19 messaging. We have evolved our approach to safety messaging from
20 development to delivery, and our evolution is grounded in data and
21 insights about our audience, speaking to Ms. Gogo, and how to best
22 reach and motivate them to engage in the behavior that we want
23 them to engage in, whether it's, you know, taking advantage of a
24 recall or, you know, ensuring that they have the proper safety
25 equipment for falls, et cetera. So next slide.

1 So this Munchkin here is my granddaughter Sadie and, you
2 know, when I took this job about a year ago she was just about two
3 years old and, you know, in the first couple of months I really
4 started to understand kind of the challenges that young mothers
5 face with regard to, you know, how the baby should sleep, what
6 products they should use for their baby, and within the first few
7 months I really became an evangelist for all the young mothers in
8 my family and other people in my family.

9 CPSC data show that African Americans suffer
10 disproportionately from product hazards, from deaths associated
11 with infant products and SUID, to drownings, residential fires,
12 African Americans are overwhelmingly disproportionately represented
13 in those and other product hazards. And so, you know, this job
14 causes me to look at everything, every product in my home, through
15 a new and different lens.

16 So this map is the last U.S. census map which shows that
17 there are more than 330 million people living in the U.S. and
18 specifically, this map shows population density.

19 Now, most agencies, including most organizations, including
20 CPSC, have historically used population as a primary determinant
21 for education campaigns. To reach the most people, it just makes
22 sense to focus on areas that have the highest density. But the
23 social upheaval in recent years has really coincided with the
24 recognition that a blanket approach to messaging and
25 communications is just not effective, and I think that both of my

1 colleagues have spoken to that from different angles. And we at
2 CPSC needed to rethink our approach to safety messaging and we
3 needed to have that approach grounded in data and insights to
4 refine so that we can speak effectively to those that we want to
5 reach and again, those who are most impacted by product hazards.

6 So we are using data and insights to inform everything we do,
7 from who we need to reach, how we need to shape our messaging and
8 especially those that are most impacted, and what tactics will
9 help us make best use of limited resources to reach our audiences
10 and drive the behavior that we want to see. You know, I wish I
11 worked with my colleague Terrence, you know, we're a really,
12 really small agency, probably in the -- one of the 10 smallest
13 agencies in the federal government, I wish I had half of his
14 budget.

15 So for us, mindset matters and just for those of you, I&E
16 stands for information and education. So for CPSC I&E, mindset
17 matters. This means we also need to understand the "who" and the
18 "what" behind the injury and gain insights on why certain groups
19 are impacted more than others. And gaining this understanding is
20 important so we can create messages that are not only effective
21 and relevant, but resonate with those who need to hear them.

22 So it's not breaking news to say that the U.S. is becoming
23 increasingly diverse. Geographic diversity is widespread and
24 increasing in every region in the country and the largest example,
25 of course, is the 25 percent population gain among groups other

1 than non-Hispanic whites. We also know that children represent
2 the leading edge of the country's growing disparity. I'm sorry,
3 growing diversity. So let's take a look at that population map
4 again, but this time not just where people live, but who lives
5 where.

6 So in the areas where the original map was largely empty, we
7 actually see large populations of African Americans, Hispanics,
8 Asian and Pacific Islanders and Native Americans, and we're using
9 these insights to drive a more inclusive and targeted approach to
10 inform our safety campaigns, what languages do we use and what
11 platforms do we leverage to drive those messages.

12 So -- sorry. This slide. So this is a really, really busy
13 slide, but I think it underscores the complexity of what CPSC is
14 trying to do and it also speaks to what both of my colleagues have
15 spoken to, the complexity of determining who our audience is, who
16 and where we should target our messages, who are the voices that
17 these communities trust to deliver these messages, and how can we
18 authentically deliver our various messages. For CPSC, it's how
19 can we authentically deliver safety messages to change hearts and
20 minds.

21 So we're going to have a bit of a "show and tell" and look at
22 how far the CPSC has evolved and how we're putting our data into
23 action. So here's our first brief video. This is a PSA about
24 poison prevention in the home and it was produced in the mid-
25 1970s, 1975, '77. The tips are still valid, but you'll see how

1 dated it looks and then we'll take a look on the other side.

2 (Video played.)

3 (Video concluded.)

4 MS. SPRINGS: So let's fast forward to today and what we've
5 learned from our current data. We know that young children, aging
6 adults, and people with intellectual and developmental
7 disabilities, IDD's, share many of the same risks and hazards from
8 household products. We know that children over-index in
9 poisonings and injuries from swallowing batteries and magnets, and
10 8 million children live in households led by a grandparent or
11 other relative. People with IDD's, we also know, are often cared
12 for by other family members.

13 So we used these insights to create a PSA that would
14 incorporate these learnings and address the hazards that may be
15 common in these groups, including hazards from medications and
16 batteries, trip hazards, et cetera. So let's take a look at --
17 let's meet Max.

18 (Video played.)

19 (Video concluded.)

20 MS. SPRINGS: So, you know, the result was this new PSA to
21 educate folks on various risks in the home. We produced this in
22 English and Spanish and the actress that plays the grandmother was
23 bilingual and so she played a dual role. We produced it, we sent
24 it out to Spanish language stations, both amplified and organic,
25 as well as on social media. We targeted a significant part of our

1 budget to reach Hispanic audiences and low-income households. For
2 us it was tremendously impactful and effective, nearly 5 million
3 people saw the ad, more than 2 million engaged with it on YouTube.
4 So for us it was, you know, a wonderful formula and a wonderful
5 way of using data to reach the underserved and communities that
6 folks may not have in the past.

7 So this next video will have relevance for a couple of my
8 colleagues on the phone, on the line here. This is a fuel safety
9 add that CPSC ran again in the '70s, featuring the cast of the TV
10 show M*A*S*H. It features one of the lead characters informing
11 troops about the importance of gasoline safety. And a fun fact,
12 M*A*S*H celebrated its 50th anniversary last year and Loretta
13 Swit, who's the actress you see here, was kind enough to tag us in
14 some of her social media at the same time. So let's take a look
15 at this and then we'll show you an alternative on the other side.

16 (Video played.)

17 (Video concluded.)

18 MS. SPRINGS: So that ad, we don't do fuel safety, we do
19 skill safety messaging, obviously. We haven't done an ad, but now
20 our focus is really on carbon monoxide poisoning. We show that
21 there has been an upward trend in CO deaths between 2008 and 2018.
22 I'm speculating here, but it could be the increase in hazardous
23 weather around the world and around the country. We know that a
24 vast majority of CO poisonings occur in the home and we know that
25 22 percent of generator-related CO deaths, so that's, you know,

1 deaths from portable generators, occur in the African American
2 communities. And so this is, for us, a major red flag, it's
3 nearly double our representation in the population. So we wanted
4 to take a really fresh approach to CO safety messaging and we
5 wanted to create messages that were -- that would reach adults and
6 children, that were easy to understand and relevant and create a
7 narrative that would be engaging and memorable.

8 Our data showed also that people were, you know, forgetting
9 the safety messages about these machines, maybe too complicated,
10 and so we came up with a really simple way to think about the
11 hazard of carbon monoxide. The poison from one generator is equal
12 to hundreds of cars. And so just like you wouldn't sleep in a
13 room with hundreds of cars around you, you shouldn't sleep with a
14 generator close to your house. So let's take a look at 500 cars.

15 (Video played.)

16 (Video concluded.)

17 MS. SPRINGS: So this was an omni-channel campaign that
18 leveraged any platform that you can imagine, social, earned media,
19 we focused our efforts in geographies where -- that were at
20 highest risk for hurricanes, winter storms where generators would
21 be in demand. We placed ads in digital news platforms and
22 lifestyle platforms. We also amplified it with a really robust
23 social media campaign, so basically trying to meet our audiences
24 where they consume content, wherever that may be. This was a very
25 -- again, another very successful campaign for us, we had a 72

1 percent engagement rate amongst the Hispanic audience on YouTube
2 and in other platforms, so very happy about that.

3 So my last video, being mindful of time, is about baby
4 safety. Our data and other research from the CDC told us that
5 historically excluded populations, especially black and Latino
6 families, are at highest risks of infant death and injury. We
7 appreciated that our baby safety messaging, particular safe sleep
8 messages, really conflict with care-giving practices that have
9 been in place for many generations and as a grandmother, I
10 absolutely understood that. When Sadie was born, I put blankets
11 in her crib, I put teddy bears in her crib, I now know that that's
12 the wrong thing to do.

13 So the challenge for us became how do we show that bare is
14 best, right, so a bare sleeping environment is best. It doesn't
15 mean that you don't love the child. So we created a campaign that
16 basically had two key messages: less stuff doesn't mean less love
17 and bare is best for a baby's sleep environment. So let's take a
18 look at traditional meets trendy granny. And I'll alert you that
19 this is in Spanish because we produced this in both Spanish and
20 English using an African American granny for the English language
21 version.

22 (Video played.)

23 (Video concluded.)

24 MS. SPRINGS: So even if you don't speak Spanish, I think you
25 get the gist of it. Trendy granny rolls up on a scooter, asks

1 traditional granny why are you knitting that big quilt or blanket,
2 she says it's for the baby, these other things are for the baby.
3 Trendy granny says that's not a good thing. Traditional granny
4 wants to know why not and she talks about bare is best for baby.

5 So that was a tremendous opportunity for us, that was another
6 multi-platform campaign that we ran last year during baby safety
7 month, which is June, when we knew our messaging would have the
8 most relevance and context. We tapped into platforms that reach
9 Spanish speakers, we explored new placements on Instagram Reels,
10 and finally, we targeted states with high SUID rates according to
11 the CDC, so Mississippi, Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, West
12 Virginia. This was a tremendous campaign, again, that surpassed
13 all of our goals, and so just another instance where data, knowing
14 your audience, knowing how to reach your audience can really
15 deliver results and save people in the meantime.

16 I'll skip ahead here. So for us, inclusivity and diversity
17 means more than just ethnicity and race, and we know that
18 individuals with disabilities experience product hazards and need
19 to get safety information, as well. So we also know that people
20 need to see themselves in messaging in order for it to resonate.
21 We have heard there isn't enough material on educating people with
22 disabilities about the dangers in their home. So last year we
23 began to update our stock image library to reflect the diversity
24 that is present in the community, including people of different
25 ethnicities, ages, and abilities performing activities related to

1 several of our priority campaigns. We researched props to
2 accurately reflect real life at home for Americans with
3 disabilities and we cast, as you can see, a wide range of models.
4 And this effort has the added benefit of helping us cultivate
5 connections to disability groups and laid the foundation and
6 groundwork for CPSC to collaborate further in the future and tap
7 into the overall desire to increase safety education within this
8 community.

9 So my two takeaways. Other than repeating what my colleagues
10 just said, for us, data-driven insights fuel great storytelling
11 because, at the end of the day, that's what we're all about,
12 storytelling. And authentic stories make messages memorable and
13 lead to the behavior change that we want to see.

14 So with that, I will thank you for your time and thank Nick
15 and my other colleagues for allowing me to speak, and I'll stop
16 sharing and look forward to questions.

17 MR. WORRELL: Thank you, Pamela. And thanks to all the
18 panelists for taking the time again for this rich body of
19 information.

20 I know we're short on time here and I'm going to jump right
21 into a couple of the questions. One that I'll start it off with
22 is, "What sensitivities exist or should I be cognizant of when I'm
23 communicating with a new audience that I'm not used to talking to?
24 Many people are nervous about offending people or coming off as
25 potentially dangerous, how can I avoid this?" That's open to all

1 of the panelists, jump in.

2 MS. GOGO: I have a lot to say on that. The first thing and
3 really the best place to start is to talk to them, they're people,
4 talk to them as people, talk to them with genuine interest and
5 concern. Don't come with an agenda, talk to them as people. Find
6 out how they want to be identified, how they, you know, prefer
7 communication, talk to them, talk to people who seem similar to
8 them and gather that intelligence.

9 MR. WORRELL: Pamela, I see you shaking your head, anything?

10 MS. SPRINGS: I couldn't have put it better, I couldn't have
11 put it better. People will appreciate the fact that you care
12 enough to ask, rather than, you know, taking a step back, being
13 standoffish, et cetera. You know, that in and of itself can help
14 to lay the foundation for a great connection.

15 MS. GOGO: One of the greatest challenges -- I'm sorry, Nick.
16 One of the greatest challenges is with our tribal communities,
17 people are afraid to engage tribes, they don't want to get it
18 wrong, they don't want it to be -- they are sovereign nations,
19 they don't want a big international incident, this is probably the
20 greatest challenge, I think, and why a lot of the tribal
21 communication is left out. If you can find someone to help to
22 educate you on how to engage these communities, to at least get a
23 start, to at least get a meeting, but genuine interest, you do
24 have to check your organization's, you know, potential baggage
25 that they may have encountered and there may be some kind of good

1 will that you got to fix first or at least acknowledge, but I
2 think that's probably the biggest, the biggest issue is with
3 tribal communities.

4 MR. WORRELL: Thank you.

5 Terrence, did you want to offer on that?

6 MR. HAYES: No, I think the ladies have answered the question
7 exceptionally well.

8 MR. WORRELL: I see. I'll jump to the next question and this
9 one is for you, Vickie. Please comment on how many different
10 overlapping categories or disadvantages can coexist in one person,
11 age, language, ethnicity, race, gender, citizen status, chronic
12 illness, disability, caregiver status, et cetera. That's a lot,
13 Vickie.

14 MS. GOGO: Yeah. All of them. What we found in working in
15 our COVID education work, there was a couple of opportunities
16 where we had to address the intersectionality and one that comes
17 to mind most is with African Americans, one of the audiences we
18 wanted to really address within that campaign was focused on
19 African American young adults with intellectual disabilities, so
20 there's three things right there already.

21 And in the focus groups, when we talked to them, we asked
22 very specifically how they want to identify, which one, you know,
23 kind of rises to the top for them, and that gets to my point about
24 how addressing people for a particular issue at this moment in
25 time. There are times where there's some things going on in the

1 world today where it doesn't matter, all the degrees I have and
2 the great professional job that I have, I'm a black woman when I
3 walk out this door and that is the only thing that people are
4 going to see. There's other times where it's just I'm just a
5 woman that walks out the door, right? We know what's going on
6 right now in the news.

7 And so there's all kinds of reasons that you need to sit
8 still and really look at the audience and see where your -- you
9 know, your brand or your message intersects with that individual.
10 Sometimes I'm just a mom, I'm a mom and we got mom issues, all
11 moms got mom issues and -- you know, so you look at that and then
12 try and determine which one at some point will rise to the top.

13 I'm dealing with something with my parents, I'm that
14 caregiver person. Sometimes I'm a sister, I have two brothers,
15 you know. So you want to just look at which things will really
16 matter. And there's sometimes I'm the younger sister, right, I'm
17 the youngest of three. So we're kind of all the same on some
18 level, it doesn't really matter in some different aspects, but
19 those are the things that you look at and then see where you can
20 make those commonalities across the individuals.

21 MR. WORRELL: Anyone else want, any of the other panelists
22 want to weigh in on Pamela's (sic) question?

23 (No response.)

24 MR. WORRELL: All right. Panel, I have two questions here
25 that are directed to you. I'll ask the first one. When I was a

1 child, there were three television networks and all eyes were on
2 them. Today we have countless media channels to choose from. Can
3 you please elaborate on how media fragmentation affects CPSC's
4 approach to messaging?

5 MS. SPRINGS: It's all about the data, it's all about knowing
6 who your audience is, where are they -- of the dozens of platforms
7 and the hundreds of channels out there, where does my audience go
8 for information? You know, when I first came to the CPSC and I
9 was -- and I, like Terrence, am the first black person to hold
10 this role out of 50 years, which says a lot, I'm just going to say
11 that.

12 But I was -- you know, folks shared with me that they had a
13 really robust, you know, diversity, equity and inclusion
14 communications platform and afterwards I was like okay, great,
15 where are you looking? And, you know, I saw lots of major media,
16 I saw lots of, you know, content, lots of coverage in major media
17 outlets in big cities, big urban cities, and for some of the folks
18 on the team and, you know, that served as a proxy for reaching
19 black communities.

20 And I just had to be -- I just had to be very blunt and I
21 said where are the black media hits? Well, we're in cities and
22 I'm like no, where are the black media hits, where's *TheGrio*,
23 where's *The Root*, where is, you know, *BT*, where is the *Amsterdam*
24 *News*, where is the *Washington Afro-American*, where are these hits
25 in the communities that we say are more directly impacted,

1 disproportionately impacted? How are we getting that message to
2 them? Because I can guarantee you that not every black person in
3 Washington, D.C. reads the *Washington Post* and not every New
4 Yorker reads the *New York Times*. And so, you know, knowing your
5 audience, knowing how they consume information, do they get their
6 information on mobile, do they get it from TikTok?

7 Even though we're government and we can't use TikTok, but are
8 there other platforms that we can use? So you need to know your
9 audience, know where they consume their news, and you need to be
10 there and you need to be there again in an authentic way, in a way
11 that resonates with them. So that's how you get around the
12 scattershot approach, which is just not effective anymore.

13 MR. WORRELL: And I would like to drill down a little bit
14 more on that and knowing your audience. How do you all see the
15 black community, how do we consume information today?

16 MS. SPRINGS: You know, I've heard different things and
17 Vickie -- you know, Vickie probably has forgotten more than I know
18 about this. You know, it used to be that young African Americans
19 largely relied on their mobile devices to get news, to get news
20 and information. That may still be the case. But, you know, for
21 older African Americans, you know, there may be churches, there
22 may be again those historically black newspapers, those black
23 platforms, digital and otherwise, you just have to be everywhere,
24 you have to be in all of those places if you're trying to get your
25 message across.

1 MR. HAYES: Yeah, Nicholas, for us at the Department of
2 Veterans Affairs, we kind of survey the data with our, obviously,
3 customers and what we've found is that depending on the age of our
4 black veterans, it depends on what platforms they use. So our
5 older black veterans may consume either television or print
6 newspaper or they actually prefer like a town hall setting, as
7 well. So we do a bunch of town halls across the country to ensure
8 that we're bringing these men and women in to give them the
9 information that they desire.

10 But your younger veterans who may like their fast-paced news
11 or, you know, small snippets and things of that nature, we ensure
12 that we're packaging it up to meet their needs, as well. They may
13 not be consumers of, you know, the 2- to 3-minute videos, they may
14 like the 15- to 30-second videos, so our digital team creates
15 those to ensure that we funnel them out to our various different
16 platforms and then we have our influencers that kind of help us,
17 as well, to amplify those messages, also.

18 So it just kind of depends on various different factors,
19 gender, age, things of that nature, but we have to ensure that
20 we're able to do all of those aspects of communicating because we
21 don't want to miss not one veteran when it comes to providing them
22 the information that they need.

23 MR. WORRELL: Yeah.

24 MS. GOGO: I think the other piece with that, as well, is
25 that historically, black people are over-indexed in radio. I

1 think the pandemic, I'm very interested in seeing a lot of new
2 numbers as it relates to folks who are now working from home;
3 however, we also know that a lot of black folks still had to go to
4 work, so there was still that commuter piece, there was still that
5 drive time, I think, you know, Terrence hit on that with some of
6 the national radio syndicated shows that he's focused on with his
7 veterans outreach.

8 And, you know, the other piece sometimes, it's a real strong
9 word of mouth. My dad is a veteran, I could call him right now
10 and he will be on the phone to the VA looking at whatever it is I
11 ask him to look up because I saw it somewhere else.

12 So you've got to really hit people from different areas and
13 really know what makes them tick and where they live but then
14 also, you know, who they can also influence because sometimes it
15 could be me and my alumni network and I share something, and it
16 could be me and, you know, the PTA at my daughter's school,
17 there's so many -- so many different ways and we have to get
18 creative and yes, use some of our mass media, we know there's a
19 lot of, you know, issues sometimes and trust with some of the mass
20 media, so going to those trusted influencers is really, really a
21 way to go.

22 MR. WORRELL: Yeah. I'll take the actual final question I
23 see coming in here and we'll wrap it up after that. I am a
24 commentator, I am from a Muslim country with a lot of
25 discrimination against women. Some people from such places bring

1 that way of thinking to the United States. How do you communicate
2 with them respectfully but make sure not to approve or promote
3 their discriminative behavior against women, et cetera, in
4 communicating? Anyone want to tackle that?

5 MS. GOGO: Yeah, I'm happy to start the conversation and
6 start the answer there. I mean, that gets back to that point
7 where I said all of those different characteristics of a community
8 that we look at and that is a reality for some. There are some
9 conversations that you can have woman to woman within Muslim
10 communities and then there's others that you cannot, you know, get
11 in there.

12 So it is again looking at those influencers, perhaps there
13 are places, depending on what the message is, depending on what
14 the issue is, I think it's paramount there, you've got to be
15 respectful of the culture. One hundred percent, that comes first,
16 you have got to be respectful of the culture.

17 But there are also ways to be able to communicate with the
18 women and to be able to get your messages out, whether it's with
19 and through children, perhaps they're in school, they're in a
20 regular public school, perhaps, and there's things that go home, I
21 get a folder every day that comes home with my daughter, there's
22 all kinds of different ways while still being very, very
23 respectful of the culture, because at some point you will either
24 completely turn them off and shut down the entire line of
25 communication with the family or the community and that's

1 definitely something you don't want. It absolutely depends on
2 what the issue is and how you then go about engaging them. I work
3 a lot in health communication and so that is one of the things
4 there. And even with our Hispanic and Latino communities where
5 they make family decisions for health decisions and you have to
6 understand how to present some of that information to them so that
7 you understand that the entire family is going to be involved in
8 whatever it is.

9 MR. WORRELL: Awesome. Well, I'm going to wrap it up here.
10 Again, thank you to all the panelists, to all of you who joined
11 today's webinar.

12 We will host a second webinar in June that will address
13 communication needs in the Hispanic community. For more
14 information, follow us on the various social media platforms,
15 Twitter@NTSB.

16 Each of our panelists today supported the point that if we
17 are interested in taking our messages to the community, it must
18 begin with intentionality and authenticity. John Maxwell wrote a
19 book called "Everyone Communicates, Few Connect." It cannot just
20 be lip service or social media posts, occasionally a post on the
21 website. As Maxwell puts it, "Connecting is all about others.
22 Connection begins when the other person feels valued." All our
23 panelists today indicated no matter how good your content, until
24 you connect with people, there will be a barrier between you and
25 them almost as if we are speaking a different language. One of my

1 favorites quotes is Nelson Mandela said, "If you talk to a man in
2 a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to
3 him in his language, that goes to his heart." This will literally
4 be the subject of the next webinar, but it is also true today. We
5 in safety need to remember to communicate in plain language if we
6 wish to connect. We can't expect everybody to learn jargon,
7 technical language, in order to make a difference in their own
8 lives or their own community.

9 One last thought. Benjamin Franklin tells us, "If we tell
10 them, they will forget. If we show them, they will remember. If
11 we involve them, they will change." So let's use what we have
12 learned today and get out there and involve some folks.

13 Again, thank you to all the panelists once again and we'll
14 see you in June. Have a great evening.

15 (Whereupon, at 2:30 p.m., the webinar concluded.)
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the
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IN THE MATTER OF: NTSB WEBINAR: COMMUNICATING AND
 CONNECTING SAFETY MESSAGES TO
 UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

PLACE: via videoconference

DATE: April 13, 2023

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
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David A. Martini
Transcriber