

# Applying Lessons Learned from COVID-19 Communications to Future Public Health Challenges

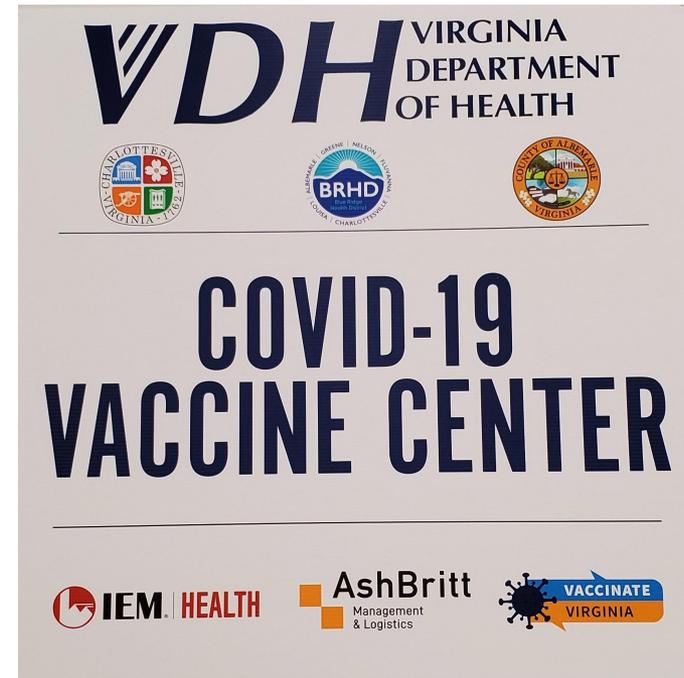
## Consider Your Audience

Reaching the Hesitant and Hard-to-Reach  
with Public Information



# Agenda

1. Introduction
2. Communications Strategy
  - Statewide, Targeted, Outreach Communications
  - Partner & Internal Communications
3. Reaching Hesitant and Hard-to-Reach Virginians
  - Partnership Case Study
  - Campaigns
  - Transcreation
  - Trusted Messengers
  - Address Misinformation
4. Best Practices and Useful Strategies

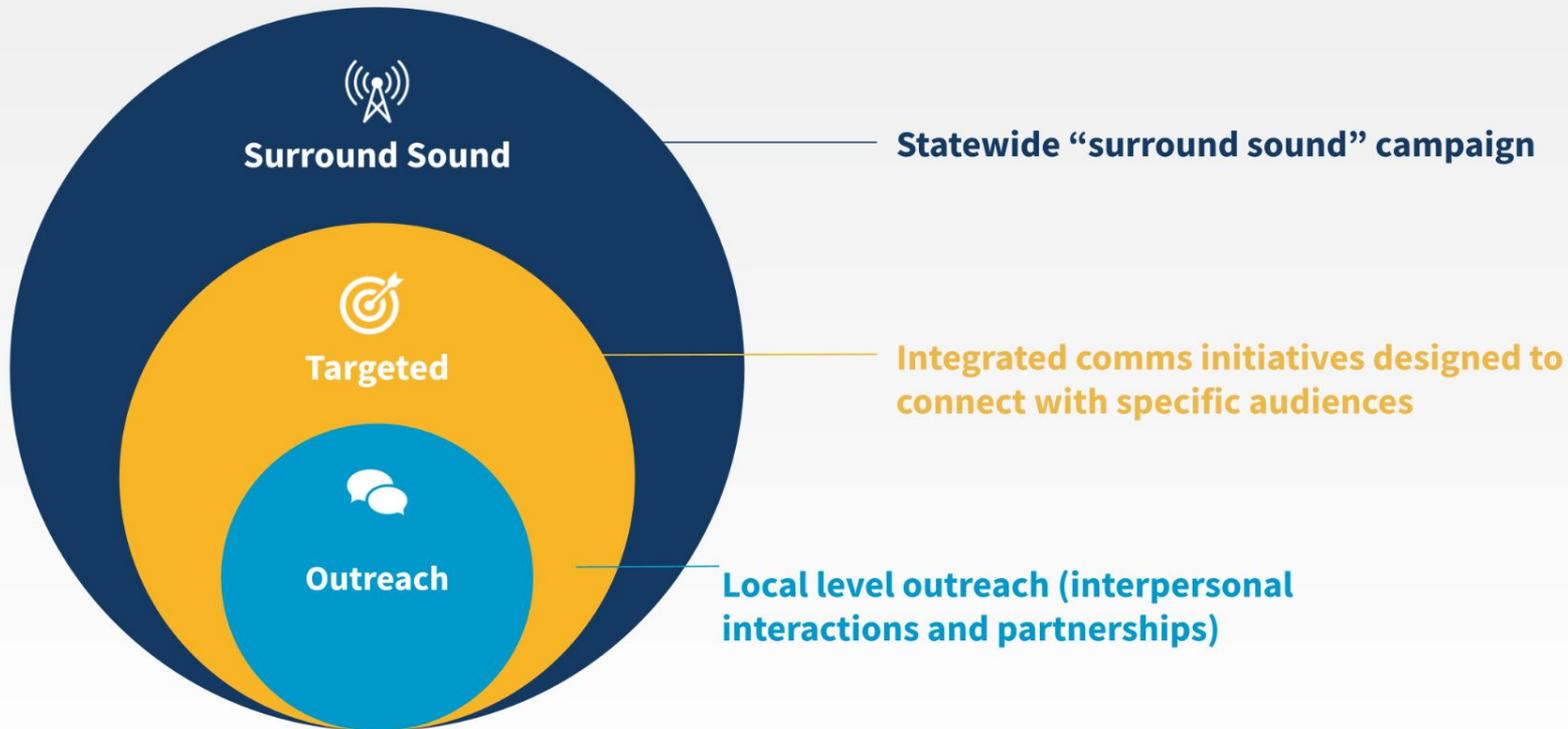


# Communications Strategy



## Strategy

Communications efforts should overlap and work in concert.



# Statewide Communications

## Example: Masking and Social Gathering Ads

### MASK.



Wear a mask in public.

### DISTANCE.



Stay 6 ft. away from others.

### WASH.



Wash your hands often.

### REPEAT.



Wear a mask in public.



Wash your hands often.



Stay 6 ft. away from others.



Limit your circle.



VIRGINIA'S  
HEALTH  
IS IN OUR  
HANDS.

Please keep doing your  
part to stop the spread.

**VDH** VIRGINIA  
DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH

### BE A COVID WARRIOR.



Wear a mask in public.



Wash your hands often.



Stay 6 ft. away from others.



Limit your circle.



VIRGINIA'S  
HEALTH  
IS IN OUR  
HANDS.

Please keep doing your  
part to stop the spread.

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**WEAR A MASK.  
PROTECT US ALL.**

[vdh.virginia.gov](http://vdh.virginia.gov)

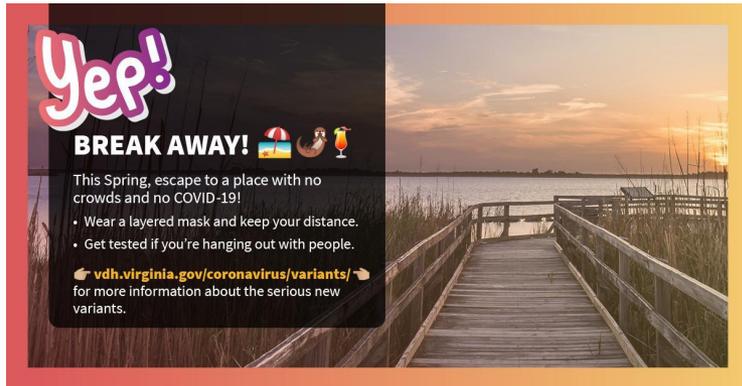
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# Targeted Communication

## Example: Gen Z Vaccine Ads



**Yep!**  
**BREAK AWAY!** 🏖️ 🍹

This Spring, escape to a place with no crowds and no COVID-19!

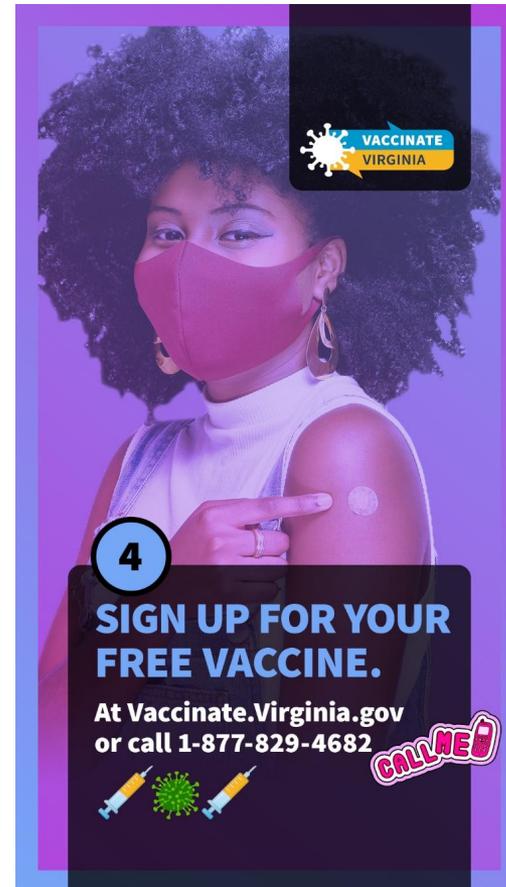
- Wear a layered mask and keep your distance.
- Get tested if you're hanging out with people.

👉 [vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/variants/](https://vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/variants/) 👈  
for more information about the serious new variants.



**VAX FAX**

**3 REASONS YOUNG ADULTS SHOULD GET VAXXED**



**VACCINATE VIRGINIA**

**4**

**SIGN UP FOR YOUR FREE VACCINE.**

At [Vaccinate.Virginia.gov](https://Vaccinate.Virginia.gov)  
or call 1-877-829-4682

**CALL ME!**

# Outreach Communication

## Example: Handouts and Door Hangers



**PARA SU PAZ Y  
TRANQUILIDAD.**

PÓNGASE LA VACUNA DE COVID 19.

Para mayor información visite  
**VACCINATE.VIRGINIA.GOV**  
o llame al: **877-828-4682**  
de 8 am a 6 pm los Lunes - Sábados



### Test Positive for COVID-19?



**VIRGINIA'S  
HEALTH  
IS IN OUR  
HANDS.**  
Do your part,  
stop the spread.

 Talk to your **healthcare provider** right away about COVID-19 **treatments**.

 Treatments are **most effective** if they are taken within **5 to 7 days** of symptoms starting.

 **Learn more** about available treatments for COVID-19 by scanning the **QR code** below with a smartphone



by visiting  
[vdh.virginia.gov/  
coronavirus/  
treatments](https://vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/treatments)

or by calling  
**1-800-VAX-IN-VA**  
**(877-829-4682)**



# Partner & Internal Communications

## Successful Strategies

- Facilitated agency-wide communications workgroup
- Activated a virtual Joint Information Center (JIC)
- Distributed weekly email communications
- Held COVID-19 partner calls
- Organized weekly vendor meetings
- Oversaw weekly tele-press briefings for the media
- Created communications toolkits
- Assess effectiveness of tools and reassess regularly

# Assess Communications & Pivot

Local health district public information officers were surveyed in 2020 to learn where they could use support.

Key takeaways:

- Resources got lost in email
- Dropbox is hard to sift through; there's lack of helpful context
- Timely plug and play was needed
- Best practices would make community outreach easier

The survey resulted in the development of the **COVID-19 Communications Hub**

<https://sites.google.com/view/covidcommshub/home>

# COVID-19 Communications Hub

## COVID-19 COMMUNICATIONS COVID Comms Hub

### 3 THINGS TO KNOW

- **Accessible:** Internal site (no password required, URL needed) which helps Virginia communicators stay on top of new COVID comms resources
- See what's new: Highlights content + strategy from VDH, vendors/partners, CDC, NIH, AdCouncil, COVID Collaborative, and many more
- Context: Built in field-activation guidance + calls-to-action



#### We surveyed LHDs / PIOs about tools:

Key takeaways: Tools get lost in email, it's hard to know what's recent, dropbox is hard to sift through, there's lack of helpful context, Best Practices would make community outreach easier... Make it turn-key... Make it easier for me to do my job



**Goal:** Streamline communications flow to LHDs/PIOs + communicators

**Content:** Social shareables, grassroots toolkits, templates, flyers, campaign assets

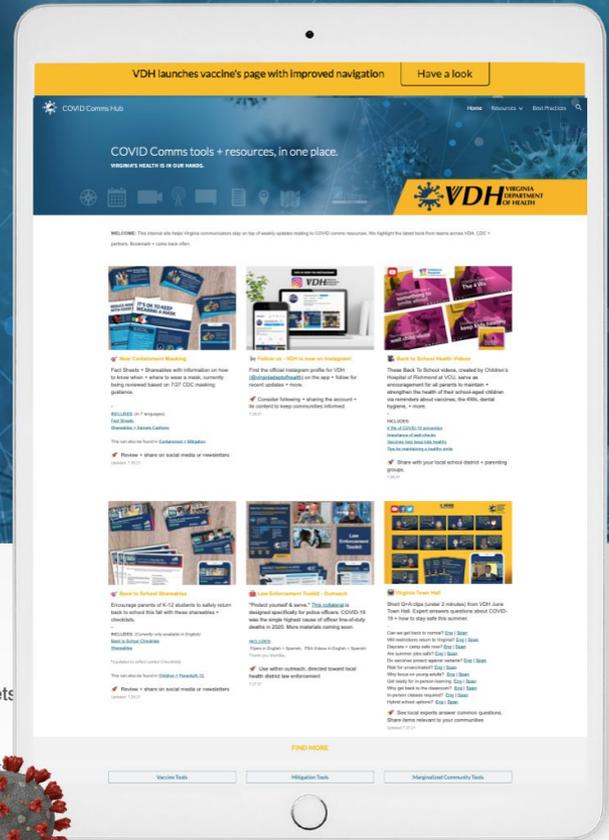
**News Feed:** Home page: What's New highlights new content, with CTA

**Strategy:** Provide user friendly outreach + activation support for communicators

**Stats:** Launched Jan 2021, served 4.7K people, with over 70K page engagement

**Your role:** Use content - or - submit content to be shared

Draft: Pending Approval



SIDDALL  
COMMUNICATIONS, LLC

# Reaching Hesitant and Hard-to-Reach Virginians



*Town Hall with Governor Youngkin and various community leaders and partners to encourage vaccination.*

# Partnership Case Study

**Virginia becomes the first state in the nation to mandate coronavirus workplace safety rules**



Perdue poultry processing plant in Accomac on the Eastern Shore

[NPR: Virginia Poultry Workers See Victory In New COVID-19 Protection Rules \(7/20/2020\)](#)

# Response

- **Engaged** in regular communication with poultry processing leadership
- **Identified** tools that would resonate with plant workers
- **Developed** communications tools in multiple languages
- **Recommended** strategic placement of communications materials (dining areas, restrooms, announcement boards)



**Coming to work sick doesn't make you a hero.**

 Stay home, rest, and avoid others as much as possible.

 If you have to be around others, wear a mask that covers your nose, mouth, and fits tightly against the sides of your face. Everyone around you should also wear a mask.

 Call your doctor if you're sick and discuss your symptoms.

 VIRGINIA'S HEALTH IS IN OUR HANDS. Do your part, stop the spread.

 VDH VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

**Cada capa nos protege**

**PREVENCIÓN** **CONTENCIÓN**



Vacuna Mascarilla Distancia Ventilar Higiene Prueba Notificar Aislamiento

TU TUS SERES QUERIDOS

  Vaccinate.Virginia.gov · 877-VAX-IN-VA (877-829-4682)

# Healthy Back to School Campaign



## Collaborative partnerships

- Virginia Department of Education
- American Academy of Pediatricians
- VDH: OFHS and OEpi

## Integrated Messaging

- Routine immunization
- Routine dental and health checks
- Connection to school health team
- COVID-19 information
- COVID-19 vaccine and booster info

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OF  
EDUCATION

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DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH

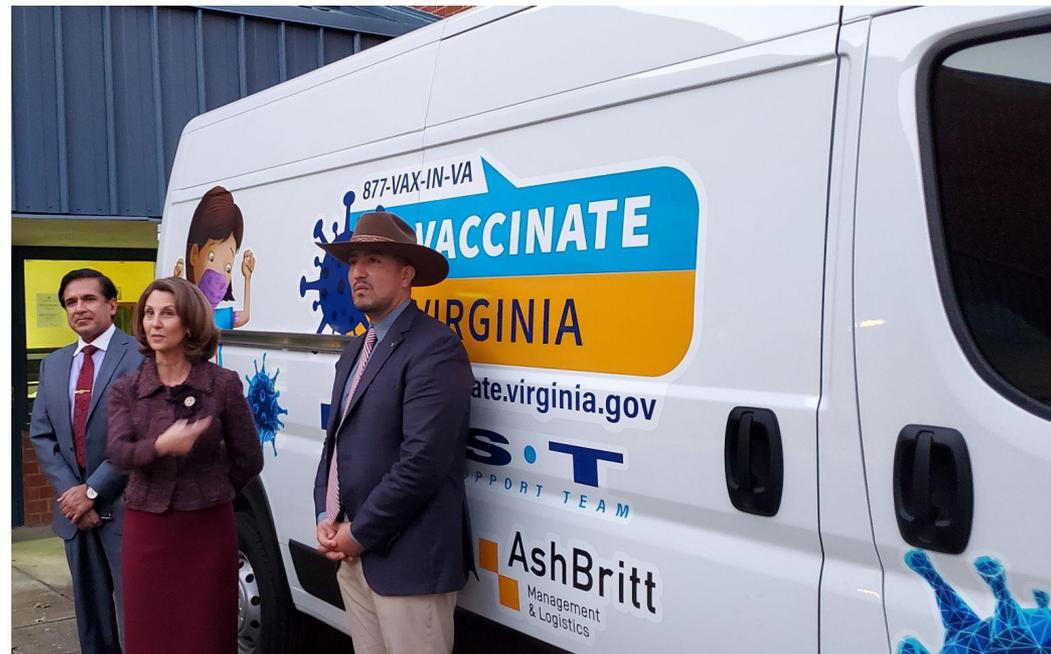
# Benefits and Best Practices

- **Build trust** with communities by working with strategic partnerships
- **Create consistency** in look and tone by using brand guidelines
- **Simplify messaging** with toolkits
  - Provide graphics and instructions so that others can use them for outreach



# Tools, Tactics, Campaigns

- Public relations
  - Media/press inquiries
  - Op-Eds in local newspapers
  - News releases and statements
  - Press conferences - live/virtual
- Targeted advertising campaigns
  - Traditional: TV, radio, print
  - Digital: display, social media
  - Email: newsletters



*First Lady of Virginia*

# Public Relations Tactics

## Example: Media/Press, Op-Eds in Newspapers



Dr. Danny Avula  
VDH Spokesperson and Vaccine Coordinator

# Booster Campaign

## Localized ads:

- Digital ads geo-targeted to people near the 9 CVCs
- Print ads in 13 publications (including Spanish language)

## Statewide ads:

- 15 and 30-second TV ad, available in English and Spanish and holiday messaging
- “A Booster is a Tune Up” and “Score One for Your Immune System”
  - 30- and 15-second TV, radio, and out-of-home public Service Announcements (PSAs)
  - Distributed with “Keep Them Protected” kids’ vaccine PSA



**Community  
Vaccination  
Centers are  
open!**

- First & Second Doses
- Boosters
- Vaccines for kids ages 5-11

[LEARN MORE](#)



# COVID-19 Booster Commercial



**“A Booster is a Tune-Up for Your Immune System” (30 sec)**

# Targeted Advertisements

## Example: Holiday Messaging

**VDH**

Protect the people who make the holidays so special.  
**Celebrate safely.**

**VDH**

Pass the turkey, not the virus.

Celebrate safely this Thanksgiving.

**VACCINATE VIRGINIA**

Before you plan your menu, plan to get your vaccine.

[LEARN MORE](#)

**VIRGINIA'S HEALTH IS IN OUR HANDS.**  
Do your part, stop the spread.

Keep your distance.  
Stay 6 feet apart.

**VDH**

LET'S ALL MASK UP **WASH UP** **STAY APART** **DO OUR PART**

COVID is here. Let's all do our part to stop the spread.

**VDH**

**HAPPY SMALL DAYS.**  
Keep celebrations small to fight COVID.

**VDH**

**THE FEWER, THE SAFER.**  
Keep celebrations small to fight COVID.

**VDH**

**HAPPY SMALL DAYS.**  
Keep celebrations small to fight COVID.

**VDH**

# Transcreation (Translation + Creation)

## Example: Hispanic Heritage Month



**#CuídateVA**

Mes de la Herencia Hispana

*Mientras celebramos el pasado, debemos proteger nuestro futuro.*

[aprende más](#)

**VDH** VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
Protecting You and Your Environment



**#CuídateVA**



Práctica el distanciamiento social

**VDH** VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
Protecting You and Your Environment

[www.vdh.virginia.gov](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov)

**#CuídateVA**

*El uso de la mascarilla no reemplaza el distanciamiento social*



**VDH** VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
Protecting You and Your Environment

[www.vdh.virginia.gov](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov)

**#CuídateVA**

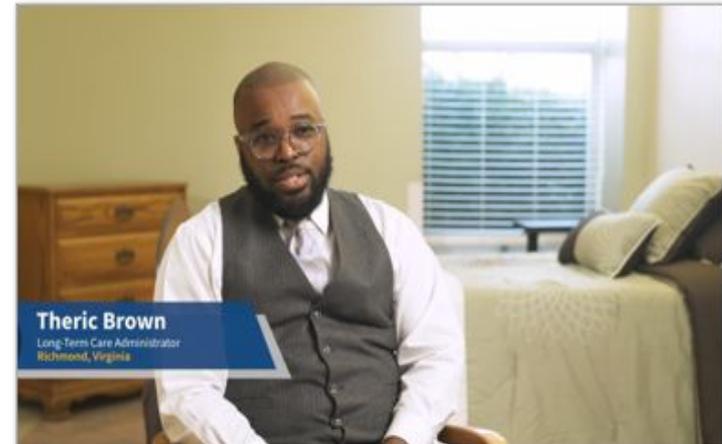
Mes de la Herencia Hispana

*Mientras celebramos el pasado, debemos proteger nuestro futuro.*

**VDH** VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
Protecting You and Your Environment

# Trusted Messengers

## Reaching Hesitant and Hard-to-Reach Virginians



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**“Meet Susan from Chilhowie, Virginia” (60 sec)**

# Trusted Messengers

## Example: Straight from the Pediatrician Campaign

30-Second Online Video, Radio, and Audio Streaming Ads in English and Spanish



*It is OK to have questions about the vaccine.*



*As a parent you always want to protect your children.*



*The COVID-19 vaccine has been rigorously studied and has shown to be both safe and effective.*



*In Virginia, when pediatricians were asked if they vaccinated their own children who were eligible for the vaccine, over 93% indicated they had already.*



*The virus can infect anyone, no matter how young they are, and the vaccine is the best way to protect your children.*

Protect your child with a COVID-19 vaccine.

Find an appointment:  
[vaccinate.virginia.gov](https://vaccinate.virginia.gov)  
877-VAX-IN-VA  
877-829-4682



# Addressing Disinformation, Misinformation, and Hesitancy



“VDH Vaccine - Trust” (60 sec)

# Addressing Disinformation, Misinformation, and Hesitancy

**STAY COVID SAFE**

- 

Wear a mask over your nose and mouth.
- 

Stay 6 ft. away from others.
- 

Wash your hands often.
- 

Use COVIDWISE to be notified of exposure.
- 

Sign up for your free COVID-19 Vaccine.

  [vdh.virginia.gov](https://vdh.virginia.gov)

**Virginia Department of Health** ✓  
117K followers • 48 following



Audience growth from January 2020 to August 2022

# Best Practices

- **Identify** the single most critical message and the audience who needs to hear it
- **Determine** when the intended audience will be most receptive to the message, how often they need to hear it, and from whom they need to hear it
- **Develop** campaigns around the single most important outcome, whether it's prompting a one-time action or change in beliefs and behaviors



# Best Practices

- **Consider** a mix of media channels that will effectively and efficiently reach priority audiences, whether all Virginians or a specific population, based how they consume media
- **Plan** media channels and creative assets based on the target audience, complexity of message, lead time to activate, and the dynamic nature of current/future COVID-19 guidance
- **Develop** communications for specific audiences while executing in an inclusive way

# THANK YOU & Questions

