

Promoting Healthy Living Through Improved Communication

As the Chief Administrative Officer of his county, Steve Ford works with various departments to assure that their processes are running smoothly. Coordinating the county's Administrative Services, Human Services, Community Services and Public Works is a significant challenge, requiring a great deal of cooperation on the part of many people. Ford's role is vital in assisting the county in getting things done the right way, when they need to be done.

The Challenge

The winter months can create a great deal of problems for a county, including:

- Unsafe Road Conditions
- Emergency Response Challenges
- Health and Human Service Concerns

Last November, Ford received a phone call from the director of their Health Services department. The director expressed concerns about the rapidly growing number of flu cases spreading throughout the state and the potential impact it could have on their county. With a large number of lower income families who would be more susceptible to contracting the strain because of their inability to pay for the flu vaccination, the county had decided to help.



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The director told Ford that the county procured enough doses of the flu vaccine to provide inoculations for 1,500 people, to be dispersed at three different locations within the county. In years past, the county would mail out a newsletter to inform each household of the available vaccine. They also reached out to their citizens through public service announcements on TV and public radio.

While these resources were helpful, the county was never able to achieve a large turnout. Often, available resources would be wasted due to the small number of people in attendance. In fact, the county would only average 100 – 150 people per site each year.



PROBLEM

- Increasing number of flu cases being reported
- Low attendance at flu shot clinics

IMPACT

- Flu was spreading throughout the county
- Increased burden on healthcare providers

SOLUTION

- Used Parlant to inform the community of the flu shot event and locations of the event

RESULTS

- Number of flu shot recipients increased by 250 percent
- Community involvement increased
- Improved public perception of the county

As Ford listened to the concerns of the Health Services Director, he suggested that they use the Parlant Mass Communication Service (MCS) to alert each household of the free vaccination opportunity. He indicated that it was a great way for them to keep Everyone Informed™.

The Solution

Just three days before the event, the county created a message through the Parlant MCS informing the residents about the free flu vaccinations. Because the county had used city data to identify the location of each citizen, the MCS was able to target the messages to residents in cities where the inoculations would be given. The robustness of the system also allowed them to simultaneously send both a voice and email message to all the residents within the three areas of the county in just 30 minutes.

The night before the event, Ford decided to send out a quick reminder via the Parlant service. Households in the specified areas immediately received a short reminder call, repeating the time and various locations of the inoculation services.

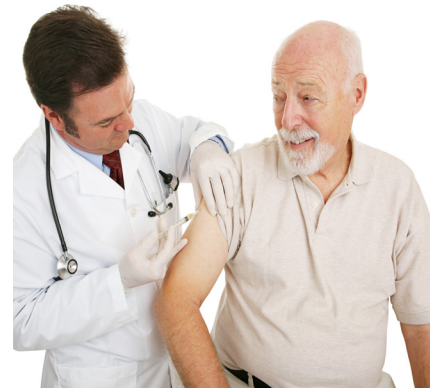
The Result

On the day of the immunizations, the effectiveness of the Parlant messages was immediately evident. With expectations to see turnout similar to years past, county administrators were blown away by the number of people who had come to receive a vaccination. Just three hours into the activity, medical staff had administered flu shots to over 400 people at each of the three locations. By the end of the day, all 1,500 flu shots had been administered.

During the event, the Health Services Director took time to visit with the people standing in line. She asked them how they heard about the event and every person told her the same thing. "I got your phone call." Not one person mentioned the newsletter or TV or radio commercials. The same feedback was also received at the two other vaccination locations.

As a result of the overwhelming success, the county was able to vaccinate a large number of deserving residents as well as generate very positive public perception. In fact, the county will now be using the Parlant Service for Blood Drives, Voting Awareness, and even for friendly reminders about past due utility bills.

This use case shows that one of the most effective ways to communicate with the community is on a personal level, generally by sending telephone and email messages. The success of this event is evidence that measurable results can be achieved when working with Parlant to easily accomplish the goal. As Ford said it so succinctly, "The flu shot event we offered to our community would not have been nearly as successful if we had not used Parlant MCS."



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