

## Building Communications Channels With Hard Reach Populations

### What's The Issue?

Public health messages, especially time sensitive messages about emergent public health issues, need improved dedicated communication channels to mitigate health disparities and improve uptake of recommended public health actions by populations that are harder to reach (HRPs). WCHD is building a system for communicating with 12 HRPs identified by the National Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Standards as outlined by the U.S Department of Health and Human Services.

### Why It's Important

Improving communications channels to HRPs, builds trust of public health in the community. Through these trusted relationships with HRPs, WCHD will improve its ability to understand and overcome cultural and linguistic barriers to craft messages that will be better accepted and received. As a result, uptake of recommended public health actions by HRPs will increase, thereby reducing health disparities within the HRP community.

### What We Did

- Used a **process flow** to identify the communication channels available and the need to achieve bi-directional communications through a liaison.
- Developed a **fishbone diagram** to identify challenges to bi-directional communication channels that enables WCHD to build stronger, more effective communications with HRPs.
- Identified a strategy to build communication channels by identifying community connectors to help bridge messaging.
- Developed criteria for community connectors and identified process for sharing information through monthly check-ins.
- Built a What's App channel to reach the Hispanic/Latino community and Spanish speakers.
- Identified Qualtrics listservs to enable WCHD to expand reach into two HRP populations.

### Lessons Learned

- WCHD can reduce literacy and language barriers by building messaging that is more pictorial to explain WCHD services.
- WCHD needs a strategy to recruit community connectors.
- While WCHD put messages on What's App in Spanish, recruiting followers has been more challenging
- WCHD needs to first build empathetic communications to connect with each HRP audience based on emotions, beliefs, and experiences before building responsive communications pathways with community connectors.
- WCHD needs to message on what public health is and why public health is important to better engage HRPs.

### Results

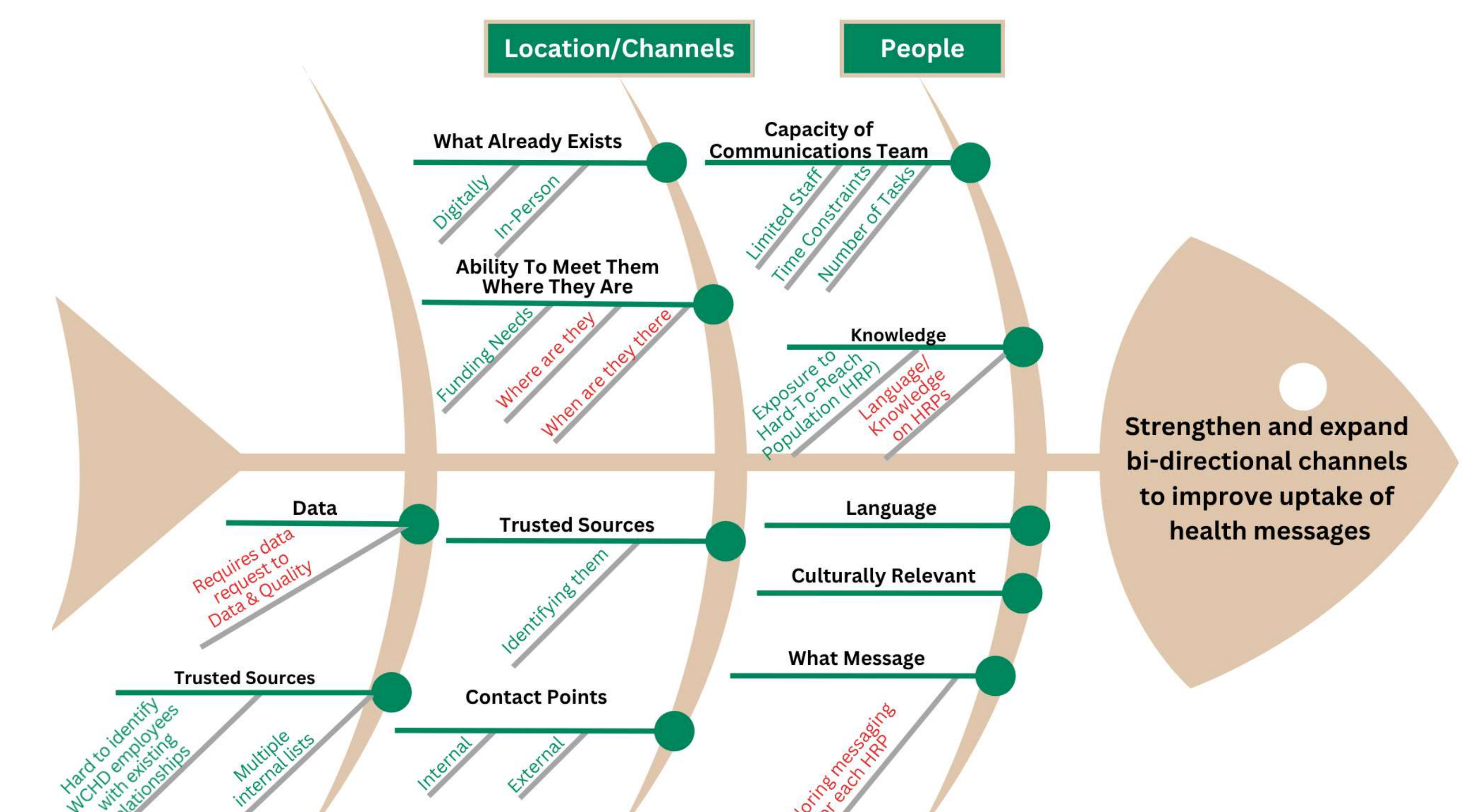
- Of the 12 populations identified and 8 languages, WCHD has established a strategy for building a communication channel to 6 of the 12 (50%) populations.
- WCHD continued to see a need for these communications channels to be established as multiple WCHD messages released this year have a need to reach into the whole community, including Winning Start Winnebago and TakeTen815.

### Next Steps

- WCHD will continue to work to recruit community connectors and followers to build the communications channels.
- WCHD will work to identify power-sharing strategies to help build stronger partnerships with community connectors

### Team Members

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Caption: Fishbone diagram identifying the challenges to bi-directional communications channels