

Water Communication Workgroup
Friday, December 11th, 2020 | 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.

MINUTES

Attending: Tegwyn Brickhouse (VCU- School of Dentistry), Andy Crocker (Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project, Inc.), Brenda Davy (Virginia Tech, Department of Human Nutrition), Bob Edelman (VDH- Office of Drinking Water), Sarah Hinderliter (VDH- Office of Drinking Water), William Mann (Olde Towne Medical and Dental Center), Barry Matthews (VDH- Office of Drinking Water), Natalie Pennywell (VCU Health Hub at 25th), Hannah Robbins (Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth)

Staff: Sarah Holland, Ericca Facetti, Chloe Van Zandt
Meeting recording [link](#)

Proceedings:

Desired Outcomes

- Understanding of resources and research that affect our mission
- A shared understanding of new partners and organizations participating in CCR development
- Built consensus on workgroup's next steps

Discussion

Welcome and Introductions

Review Resources (review embedded in presentation slides attached)

Discussion:

- Microsoft word has readability tool to check reading level of documents
- Some utilities were able to learn what questions the community had regarding their water, and were able to add a Q&A section to their CCR
- Some water utilities include CCR's with an annual water bills, some mail them separately, or posting them in public places
- If utilities hear back from community members, few systems have a written policy on how to capture responses and feedback
- EPIC CCR competition: Dr. Davy submitted a draft in partnership with collaborators at Virginia Tech. Competition winners will be announced Jan. 15th

Guest Presentations

Andy Crocker- SERCAP, Virginia State Manager

- Systems have never asked their customers what they want know. CCR are required to produce CCR's by July 1, this is often just checking a required box.
- Most of the customers who receive their CCR do not read them, few people ask questions or give feedback
- If customers do ask questions, they sometimes do not trust the response from the water utilities. For example, if a customer is concerned about the taste of chlorinated water and the utility provides information and data, sometimes they still do not trust the water quality.
- SERCAP uses EPA CCR template, then it requires editing to make it more readable (see attachments: VDH template and CCR example)



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- Edits and changes to CCR's can cost time or money. Example: if using electronic delivery, must provide links and physical copy upon request
- Some water utilities post CCR's in a local newspaper
- Infographics: opportunity to better communicate information. 1 ppm is equal to 4 drops of ink in 55 gallons of water. 1 ppb is equal to 1 sheet of toilet paper on a roll that stretches from New York to London.
- VDH template is short and the least costly to mail out
- Most systems struggle to engage customers regardless of size

Sarah Hinderliter- VDH-ODW, Training and Outreach Coordinator

- Outreach through Work for Water (Virginia Water Environment Assoc. and VA AWWA)
- Participate in career exploration programs, attending 10-15 events per year across the state
- Elementary level: personal exchange with students, teaching students about how water gets to a house. Uses mascot H2O Hero Team: explains drinking water and waste water process.
- Middle school and high school events are expo style- Mission Tomorrow. Explain the industry and where water comes from and where it goes.
- Water Jam event: brings students into water conference, professionals talk about water careers.
- Growing partnerships and outreach events to share how critical the water industry is

Discussion

- Even in there is not increase in water industry job interest, the information sharing is helpful and impactful
- National RCAP received grant Aqua for All, to put in bottle filling stations in schools
- Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth and Delta Dental Foundation are also looking at bottle filling stations in schools. Also VA PTA has small amount of funding for filling stations. Opportunity for an additional meeting re: filling stations.

Next Steps, Workgroup timeline and future meetings

- 2021 meeting schedule: every 6 weeks, Fridays 10-11AM
- Next Meeting: Jan 22

Action Items

- Review VT CCR template submission
- Review Andy's resources: VDH CCR template and SERCAP CCR
- More to come: I will send additional resources for review before our next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.