2027 Health Messaging Student Competition: *Promoting Positive Behavior Change to Advance Public Health for All*

Aim: To showcase the work of Mailman students and highlight how health communications can be used as a powerful tool to change behavior and promote health in domestic or global settings.

Hosted by: Lerner Center for Public Health Promotion

Eligibility: Any Mailman student

Project: Students (1-4 students per submission) will be asked to create a health communication product (e.g. video, GIS mapping, data visualizations, social media posts, podcast, poster, etc) and campaign designed to promote behavior change that advances public health for all. To share campaign details, students will create nine slides that answer specific questions (see below).

Health communication products *may* include: video, data visualizations, social media posts, education/workshop materials, digital stories, podcasts, posters, books, games, magazines, GIS mapping, brochures, websites and more...

Competition Theme: *Promoting Positive Behavior Change to Advance Public Health for All*

Potential Audience:

- Public health practitioners
- Individuals and populations interested in public health prevention

Potential Topics:

Chronic Disease & Healthy Living

- Chronic disease prevention and management
- Physical activity promotion
- Nutrition and healthy eating
- Sleep and stress management
- Preventive care and screening
- Vaccine hesitancy
- Treatment adherence

Mental Health & Emotional Well-Being

- Coping strategies and emotional regulation
- Reducing stigma around mental health
- Building and maintaining supportive social connections
- Trauma-informed communication
- Access to support services

Criteria for Selection of Finalists: A diverse committee of public health communication scholars and experts will review student materials and slides. Finalists will be chosen using the following seven judging categories: effective messaging, creativity/innovation, design/aesthetics, public health

impact and relevance, dissemination, project guidelines and potential to promote healthy behaviors. Each of the seven categories will be scored on a scale from 1-5.

Three submissions (1st, 2nd and 3rd place) will be selected and asked to deliver a ten-minute presentation (guided by their slides) at an Award Ceremony in April 2027.

1st place team: $1,000; 2nd place team: $750; and 3rd place team: $500. Team members will be compensated equally.

Finalists will also be entered into a multi-school, "Cross-*Lerner Health Messaging Student Competition*," in which their submissions will be judged alongside finalist submissions from the Lerner Center at Syracuse University and the Lerner Center at the Columbia University School of Nursing. Students will be invited to an online award ceremony in May, and additional monetary prizes will be awarded to top winners.

Required Slides:

Slide 1: Title slide [include student name(s), department(s)]

Slide 2: Goal of the health communications message and call to action (e.g. promote behavior change among a certain population)

Slide 3: Information about target population: location, demographics and other relevant characteristics

Slide 4: Epidemiologic, social, behavioral and/or theoretical justification (details about the public health issue)

Slide 5: Rationale for use of the health communication channel (e.g. data visualization, podcast, digital story, video, social media, poster)

Slide 6: Storytelling: What story/narrative are you telling with your public health message? How does your message promote behavior change?

Slide 7: Proposed dissemination (e.g. audience, placement, campaign promotion); ***Healthy Monday Challenge:** Receive a bonus point by strategically including *Monday* to your dissemination plan! *Read more below.*

Slide 8: Societal Impact: Why you feel your health communication message will be efficacious? How does it advance public health for all? How does your message enhance advocacy?

Slide 9: Citations

Note: You may include additional slides (e.g. to spread out text/include other important info), but please make sure that your presentation includes, and centers around, the 9 prescribed slides. **This is the information that the judges are expecting to see.**

***Healthy Monday Challenge!** Healthy Monday is a national public health initiative that encourages individuals, organizations, and communities worldwide to commit to better health every Monday. When you adopt a healthy habit at the beginning of the week, you're more likely to sustain it throughout the week. **Gain an extra point by incorporating the "Monday effect" into your health communication campaign's dissemination plan.** How can you leverage Monday to make healthy habits stick?

Registration: Please email the name(s)/department(s) of your group members to ohc2103@cumc.columbia.edu by January 20th.

Submissions (product and slides) due: Wednesday, March 31st at 5pm; Please email slides and HC product to Azure Nowara (aen2129@columbia.edu).

Finalist Presentations & Award Ceremony: TBD (April/May 2027)