



# Crisis Communication

Preston Webb | April 16, 2026



# Accreditation Statement



## Accreditation Statement

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This activity was planned by and for the healthcare team, and learners will receive 14.0 Interprofessional Continuing Education (IPCE) credit for learning and change.

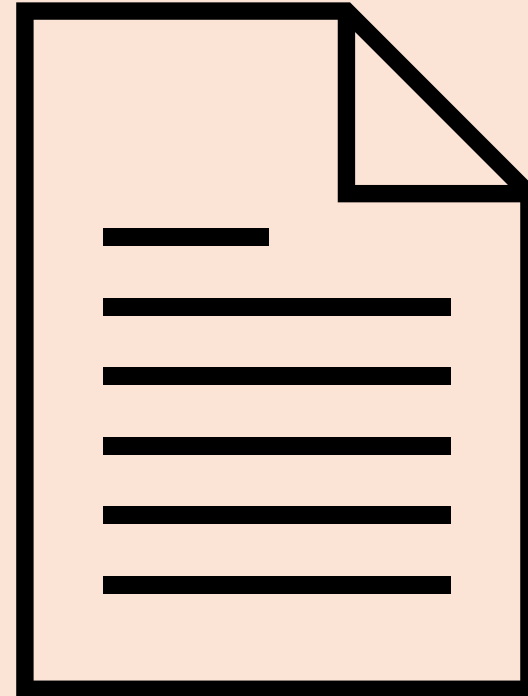
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### Available Credit

- 14.00 ANCC
- 14.00 Attendance
- 14.00 IPCE

# Disclosures

No relevant financial disclosures



# The Mentality

- Crisis Communication
- Message Amplification
- Reducing Stigma
  
- Building messages that are clear, actionable, and responsible across audiences

During any crisis, five qualities should guide communication:

- Accuracy – Information is true to the best of our knowledge.
- Brevity – Messaging is focused and direct.
- Clarity – Easily understood at a sixth-grade level.
  - This enables faster translations and easier sharing by partners.
- Speed – Information is shared as quickly as possible.
- Humanity – Messages acknowledge people, not just conditions.

- Providers begin reporting multiple tuberculosis (TB) cases in the Kansas City metro area through local health systems.
- Two weeks pass before a Health Alert Network (HAN) message is released.
- “KDHE is investigating a TB outbreak affecting at-risk populations in Kansas.”

# What's Wrong

“KDHE is investigating a TB outbreak affecting at-risk populations in Kansas.”

This situation presents several issues:

- Delay in communication (Speed)
- Limited clarity and guidance (Clarity)
- Use of vague or stigmatizing language (Humanity)
- Lack of actionable next steps (Brevity + Clarity)

- Delays in communication create information gaps
- Information gaps are filled by:
  - Informal communication
  - Assumptions
  - Misinformation
- Early communication does not need to be complete, it just needs to be useful

# Language and Stigma

- “At-risk populations” may:
  - Imply certain groups are inherently unsafe or diseased
  - Reinforce existing stigma or bias
  - Create distance between the message and the audience

Public health messaging has historically contributed to:

- Social exclusion
- Discrimination
- Delayed or denied care-seeking

Instead of labeling groups, describe risk clearly:

- “Individuals who may have been exposed”
- “People who may be more likely to become sick”

This approach:

- Focuses on circumstances, not identity
- Keeps messaging actionable
- Reduces stigma while maintaining accuracy

Health Alert Network (HAN) messages are not limited to providers

At KDHE, HANs are:

- Published publicly
- Shared by partners
- Picked up by media

Messages are often read by:

- Providers
- The public
- News outlets

# Multi-Audience Reality

Messages written for one audience are often used by many

Effective messaging must:

- Support clinical decision-making
- Be understandable to the public
- Avoid misinterpretation across audiences

If it is public, it is public for everyone

# Rebuilding the Message

Improved opening:

“KDHE is working with local health partners to respond to increased tuberculosis (TB) activity in the Kansas City metro area.

Providers should consider TB in patients with symptoms such as persistent cough, fever, or unexplained weight loss.”

# Adding Context and Reassurance

“This information may be concerning, but TB spreads through prolonged, close contact, and risk to the general public remains low.

Local health departments are supporting testing, reporting and case management.”

“If you suspect TB in a patient or have questions about testing or reporting, contact your local health department.

Early detection and treatment are effective in preventing spread.”

# Final Message

“KDHE is working with local health partners to respond to increased tuberculosis activity in the Kansas City metro area. Providers should consider TB in patients with relevant symptoms and potential exposure.

Risk to the general public remains low. Local health departments are available to support testing and reporting.”

# Key TakeAways

Effective crisis communication:

- Uses clear, accurate, and timely information
- Provides actionable guidance
- Is designed for amplification across audiences
- Avoids language that may create stigma

Small wording choices have real-world impact



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# Thank You/Questions

