

“PFAS Facts” Workshop for Public Water Suppliers

Kleinfelder, Rocky Hill, CT

August 13, 2019



“PFAS Facts” Workshop Road Map

What is it? Why do we care?



Where is it? When will it get here? Can I avoid it?



What's the extent of the issue?



It's present. What do I do? Should I / how do I communicate it?

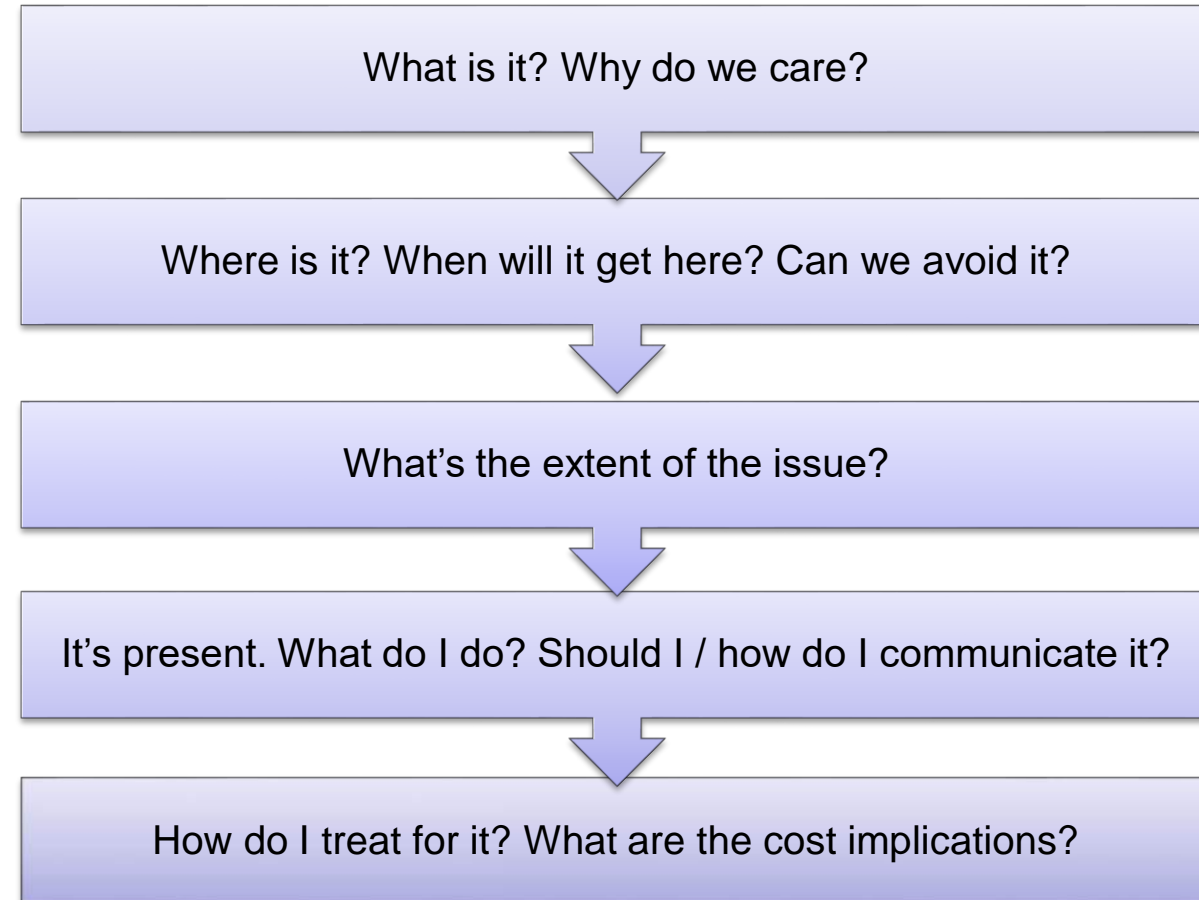


How do I treat for it? What are the cost implications?

- Introductions / Learning Objectives
- Regulatory Update & Trends *Kirsten Ryan, PG*
- Chemistry, Sources, Occurrence;
- Watershed Protection & Defensive Strategies – *Jeffrey Hale, PG*
- Sampling and Laboratory Considerations
Lindsay Hutnick

Break

- Public Communication *Kirsten; Group*
- PFAS Treatment - *DingFang Liu, PE*
- Discussion / Wrap Up - *Kirsten; Group*



How do I communicate about it?

Public Outreach & Communication

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Kirsten Ryan, PG, Kleinfelder, Rocky Hill CT, August 13, 2019



1. Communication Challenges Discussion
2. Risk Communication Tools & Best Practices
3. Risk Communication Theory - Communicating and Stress
4. Communication 'Case Studies' / Group Discussion
5. Questions



What makes this so challenging?

- Intense traditional media focus & hyperbole
- Social media speed
- Advocacy group pressures
- Availability of public information (and misinformation)
- Other factors?

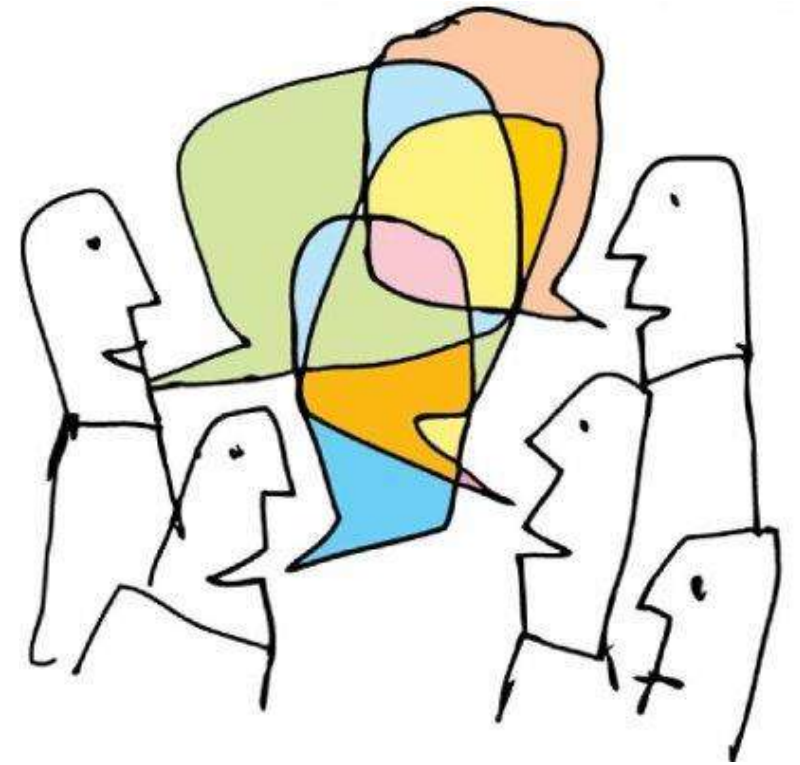


Group Discussion – Communication challenges:

- What information are your customers receiving about PFAS? From where?
- How do you approach communication with customers on PFAS?
- Is this very different than for other chemicals (eg lead, boil water orders?)
- What are some of your concerns? What are you customers' concerns?
- What are some of your experiences?

What is effective risk communication?

- Enhancing knowledge & understanding of subject
- Building trust and credibility
- Encouraging constructive dialogue
- Expressing appropriate levels of concern
- Providing guidance on protective behavior and actions



Seven General Rules of Risk Communication –

By Dr. Vincent Covello, Center for Risk Communication

1. Accept and involve stakeholders as legitimate partners
2. Listen to people
3. Be truthful, honest, frank, and open
4. Coordinate, collaborate, and partner with other credible sources
5. Meet the needs of the media
6. Speak clearly, and with compassion
7. Plan thoroughly and carefully

*Proactive communication will reduce stress...
for you AND your customers*

Communication and Stress -- Establishing Trust for Effective Communication

Stress: feeling upset, angry, fearful, outraged, concerned...

Under stress, people –

- Have difficulty processing information
- Become distrustful
- Give greater weight to negative information than to positive



All parts of the brain are highly active
Best communication is equally divided between
intellectual, emotional, and visual forms

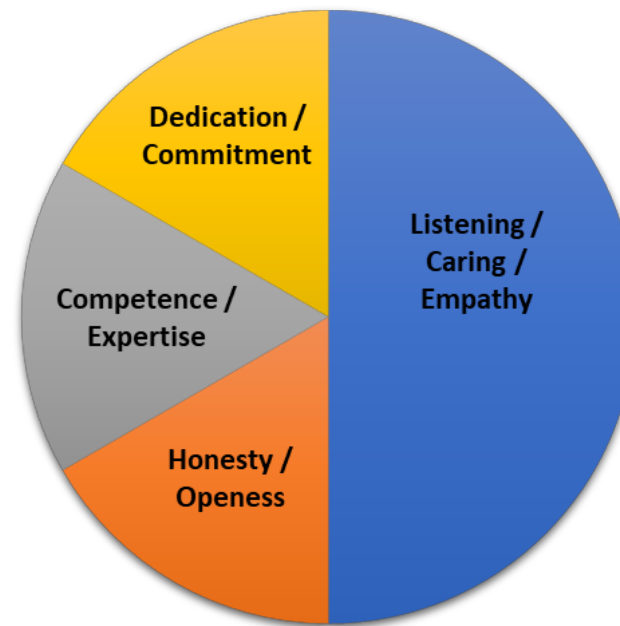
Establishing Trust for Effective Communication

- *“When people are stressed and upset, they want to know that you care before they care about what you know.”*

NON-STRESSED CONDITIONS



UNDER STRESS



‘Message Maps’ Process

- ✓ Identify Potential Stakeholders
- ✓ Identify Potential Stakeholder Questions
- ✓ Analyze Questions to Identify Common Sets of Concerns
- ✓ Develop Key Messages
- ✓ Develop Supporting Facts
- ✓ Test and Practice Messages
- ✓ Deliver through Appropriate Information Channels



Source: *Effective Risk and Crisis Communication during Water Supply Emergencies*, EPA 2007

Communication “Case Studies” – PFAS and Emerging Contaminants

- Kennebunk / Kennebunkport / Wells District, ME
- Hudson, MA
- Wareham, MA
- Mashpee, MA

- Group – Success stories? War stories?

Kennebunk / Kennebunkport / Wells Water District, ME

- 50 ppt detection in spring 2016
- Source: farm application of sludge from paper mill; municipal sludge
- District waited until spring 2017 to notify public
- Newsletter was delayed at printer; local media broke story first

Maine dairy farm plagued by chemical contaminants may be 'tip of the toxic iceberg'



Lessons Learned:

- *Superintendent: "Stay ahead of the communication curve"*

Resources from the Hudson Water Forum

Hudson, MA

- Testing since 2016
- Jan 2019: Well 90 ppt offline
- 4/17 Water Forum –
 - BOS Chair, State Rep/Sen, DEP Commissioner, Regional Director, MassDPH, Town Health Dept

Pros –

- Transparency; public engagement
- PFAS Website Resources; forum video
- Close involvement by Health Department

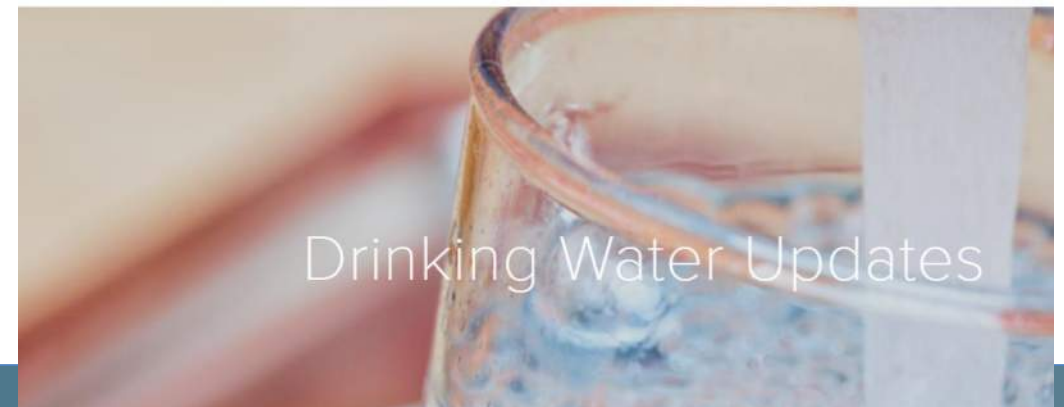
Citizen criticisms –

- Forum format too long, 45 min PPT- ‘we deserve respect’
- ‘this is an emotionally provocative subject – you have to understand our pain’
- Come prepared with bottled water plan



HUDSON HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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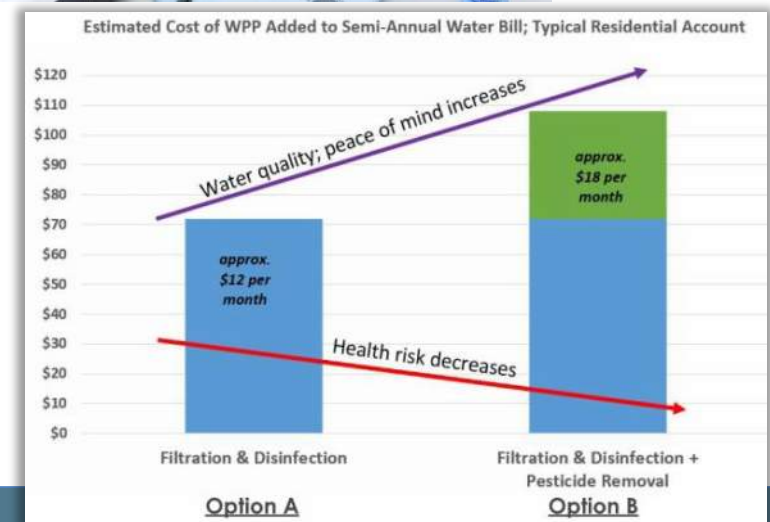


Wareham, MA

- 7 wells with cranberry bogs in watershed
- Wellhead Protection Program since 2001
- Unregulated pesticide monitoring; presented annually at public meeting
- 2015 – filtration for Fe, Mn designed; potential GAC upgrade for pesticide removal

In advance of funding vote:

- Public Outreach Plan; workshop with Commissioners
- Engagement via community events; survey, newsletter; new logo; establish social media presence, video segment, press interviews
- Warrant Outreach Brochure on GAC



Mashpee Water District, Mashpee MA

- 3/6/19 Boston Globe: in Mashpee - chemicals found in concentrations ‘that exceed what the EPA considers safe’
- 3/7/19 Mashpee Enterprise: Water District: *“Mashpee Water is still safe”*
- 4/17/19, Cape Cod Times: Well taken offline immediately after testing at 35 ppt
 - *“We decided to take the pumping station offline because we thought it was the best thing to do”*
 - *“We know that the water is safe to drink ...”*

Discussion points – How would you respond when asked “Is the water safe to drink?”

Communication 'Case Studies'

- Group Discussion –
- Other Examples? Experiences?



Questions?

Kirsten Ryan, PG

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THANK YOU!



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PFAS Water Treatment

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DingFang Liu - Kleinfelder, Rocky Hill, CT, August 13, 2019

