

Outreach, Education and Enrollment – Storybanking Toolkit

Sharing people's stories is a compelling way to demonstrate the success of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and make complex health care policies easier to understand and relate to. Consumers' stories are valuable tools to incorporate into communications with legislators, reporters, funders and donors, as well as op-eds and letters to the editor. Following is a toolkit that will help you story bank in the most effective and efficient way possible.

What's included:

- Storybanking tips
- FAQ to engage partners in story collection efforts
- Interview discussion guide
- Story collection form
- Participant tracking form

Storybanking Tips

1. **Whose stories should you collect?** The most powerful success stories will come from people who can speak to the health and health care issues they have faced and how the ACA has helped them. Storybanking can take time, so determine what types of stories best align with your outreach priorities and seek out individuals and groups that can share those stories. This allows you to focus your story collection efforts on the types of stories that will have the greatest impact on your communication efforts.

Your story collection should mirror your outreach and education efforts. For example, if you are focused on reaching people who are newly eligible for Medicaid, look for stories of people who have recently been able to enroll in Medicaid because of the expanded income eligibility. Also consider the demographics of the uninsured in your area so you have stories that reflect the makeup of your community. Knowing who you want to reach makes it easier for you to concentrate on the stories that matter.

2. **Develop strong relationships with enrollers and organizations that supported enrollment efforts.** Enrollers can be a valuable source of success stories because they have been on the front lines of ACA implementation – working with people every day to answer their questions and help them get coverage. In this toolkit, we have included a template email you can tailor for enrollers that clearly explains why they should help with your storybanking effort. We also recommend providing them with a story collection sheet as well as a form that releases personal health information.
3. **Build your network.** To collect a variety of stories, partner with organizations that reach your target constituencies. Human services agencies, food banks, community health centers and hospitals, doctors, nurses and social workers all work closely with people who will likely benefit from the ACA. If you need stories from people who are not connected to your current network, consider expanding your network by reaching out to groups that already have relationships with the communities you'd like to reach.

4. **Story Collection Form.** Provide partners with an intake form they can distribute at events, in their offices or directly to health care consumers. The form will allow you to prescreen stories and determine which ones to explore.
5. **Collect stories.** For the stories that demonstrate the success of the ACA, schedule a time when you can meet with the person either in person or over the phone. If the interview is over the phone, record the conversation so you can go back and listen if you missed something or want to get a direct quote. If the interview is in person, consider video because you may want to include video stories on your website or other social media channels. Of course, ask the person's permission before you record the conversation. We have included sample questions to kick start your interviews.
 - ***If you want a quote, ask for it.*** When you have a particular sound bite in mind, ask questions that will lead your interviewee to it. For example, "if you could say one thing to a policymaker about this issue, what would it be?"
 - ***Get photographs.*** A picture of the person you are talking to makes your stories more powerful.
6. **Privacy protections.** Work with your organization's legal counsel to check the privacy laws in your state so you can provide allied organizations with accurate legal counsel about releasing private health information.
7. **Keep track.** Keep all of your participants in a database that's easy to search, sort and track down stories when you need them. We've provided a template spreadsheet that will help you stay organized with your storybanking effort in the appendix of this document.
8. **Delegate.** Spread out storybanking responsibilities throughout your organization – and partner organizations – so that everyone takes part in the effort. Be clear about the types of stories you are hoping to collect –young invincibles, Hispanic women, small business owners, etc. Consider how you are dividing responsibilities so that everyone isn't going after the same types of stories. A monthly goal can help keep people focused, and sharing stories at staff meetings and on coalition calls can help inspire people to maintain their enthusiasm.
9. **Share the stories.** Once you have a solid story bank (or the start of one) be sure to include these stories at community events and meetings with policymakers. Tell these stories in your op-eds and letters to the editor; stories will make these materials come alive. Short quotes can appear on the front page of your website, but if you don't have one, create a dedicated story section for longer narratives. Consider sharing stories through social media, and when you post stories encourage your followers to share their own experiences as well. Always remember to include pictures if you have them!

Storybanking FAQs for Partner Organizations

Why collect stories?

Personal stories are one of the most powerful ways we can show the impact of the Affordable Care Act. They help make complex policies easier to understand. Stories can be used to connect with policymakers, consumers and other communities that need to understand the ACA.

Why are you asking my organization to help identify stories?

To be effective, we need to share stories that reflect all of the communities that are taking part in the Affordable Care Act. We want to capture the experiences of [COMMUNITY], the ways they are benefiting from new health insurance options and the changes they've seen in their health care experience. Your relationship with members of [COMMUNITY] can help us identify individuals with stories to share and help us connect with those individuals. We will work closely with you to collect these stories and share them with your organization.

If I identify a good story, how can I share it with you?

We'll give you a story collection form that you can share with the individual. This form asks for contact information and a bit of information about their experience – if you share this information with us, we'll reach out to collect their story. If you prefer, we can share some questions to start the story collection conversation.

What are the legal/privacy considerations around collecting stories?

We'll ask everyone who shares their story to sign a privacy release that allows [ORGANIZATION] to share their story in media outreach, with policymakers and through digital channels.

Sample Interview Questions

These sample questions are designed to help you start the conversation with interviewees. The key is to use open-ended questions that allow storytellers the room to share their story. You can provide an example story to set the tone for the conversation and give the interviewee an idea of the level of detail you are looking for.

Introduction

Thank you for your time today. This should take approximately [XX] minutes. [Organization Name] is collecting stories that bring to life how health insurance is helping people and families – and why it is so important. With your permission, your story could be used in [Organization Name]'s website, speeches, reports and other venues. We will not share the story in any other way without your permission and you can share as little or as much information as you like.

I'm going to record the discussion so that I can concentrate on our conversation. Is that okay?

New Medicaid Participants

- Do you currently have health care coverage? Had you tried to get coverage in the past and been denied?
- Did you have coverage before the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) went into effect?

- If yes: Tell me about your coverage – did you find it affordable? Did it cover the care you needed?
- If no: What difficulties did you face without health coverage? How did you take care of your health care needs?
- How did you learn about your health care options?
- Tell me about your experience signing up for coverage.
- Now that you have health insurance, are you making different choices about your health care? (e.g. Have you gone to the doctor since getting covered? Are you accessing your care differently?)

Small Business Owners

- Do you provide health insurance for your employees?
- Before the ACA, did you provide your employees with health insurance?
- How have your employees responded to having health care coverage?
- What would you say to other small business owners in [STATE] who don't provide coverage?

People who bought insurance through the Marketplace

All consumers:

- Did you have health care coverage before the Affordable Care Act?
- If yes: Did the coverage provide the health care you needed? Did you find it affordable? How does your new insurance compare?
- If no: What changes in your insurance have been most meaningful to you?
- How did you learn about your health care options? What did you think about the options available to you?
- Were you eligible for financial assistance? How much does your plan cost each month? How did that affect your decision to enroll?

For families:

- How does having insurance coverage impact your family?
- Does having health care coverage change your family's budget decisions?

For young people:

- What motivated you to enroll in health care coverage?
- Does having insurance through the Marketplace change the way you look at your job?

For people who were tied to employer's health care:

- Why were you tied to your employer's plan for health care coverage?
- Now that you can purchase coverage through the Marketplace, how will you approach your job search/future employment?

Pre-Existing Conditions

- Do you or someone in your family have a pre-existing condition? What problems did you/they have getting the care you/they need?
- How has the new health care law impacted you/them?
- If you could say one thing to a policymaker about this issue, what would it be?

Renewals

- What did you think about the health care plan you purchased during the last open enrollment period?
- How did you learn that you needed to renew your health insurance?
- Was the renewal process simple?
- Did you get assistance from a navigator?
 - If yes: Please explain how he or she helped you.
- Did anything change with your coverage when you went to renew your plan?
- Were you eligible for financial assistance? Did that change from the last time? How did that affect your decision to enroll?

Enrollers/Service Providers (e.g. non-profits that work with low income individuals)

- Tell me about your work. What are the biggest health care challenges that people in your community face?
- How has the ACA affected your community?
- What are the most common questions you hear about health care coverage?
- Tell me a story about a person you have been able to help.

Your story can make a difference.

Personal stories are the most powerful tool we have in our fight to protect and expand access to quality health care. Thank you for sharing yours.

After filling out this form you will receive a call from an employee at [Organization Name]. Your story will remain confidential until you give us permission to share it.

Yes, I am willing to talk to someone about my story.

Name: _____

Street: _____

City, Zip: _____

Phone: _____ **Email:** _____

Date: _____

Are any of the following true about your story?

☐ I enrolled in a new plan through the [STATE Marketplace].

☐ I am an entrepreneur or a small business owner who recently enrolled my company in health insurance.

☐ I have - or someone in my family has - a pre-existing condition and now have affordable health care coverage.

☐ I am newly enrolled in Medicaid.

☐ I renewed my coverage.

Notes: _____

APPENDIX

Story bank Participant Tracking Log

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