# Opportunities for Marketing: Strategic Considerations

## Purpose

Increase the opportunities in which your Collaborative can promote your public report and its contents to target audiences, including the media.

## Considerations

**Planned Events and Activities.** The content of your public report and other elements of your Collaborative’s work are relevant to a wide range of community events, activities, and communications that are initiated by organizations other than your Collaborative. Knowing about these opportunities in advance will enable your Collaborative to:

* Relate the content of your public report to topics of interest in your community to increase the likelihood of your report being mentioned by trusted sources such as media, health writers, and Collaborative members.
* Promote your public report in the context of these external events to reinforce the wide-ranging relevance of your public report.
* Plan for and implement a steady stream of communication activities throughout the year to keep messages about your public report front and center for reporters, health writers, and others.
* Avoid scheduling announcements, events, or campaigns that could be overshadowed or conflict with planned health-related activities of other community organizations.

To identify some opportunities (and avoid major communication conflicts), consider the health observances in Resource 2b. This resource lists many national health observances and national launches, such as important annual reports from AHRQ, including the National Healthcare Quality and Disparities Reports. Also consider promotions and activities planned by organizations involved with your Collaborative, in addition to other statewide or community events.

* *Example*: In 2010, the National Football League (NFL) used Breast Cancer Awareness Month as a springboard to participate in events across the country. While perhaps an unlikely partner in this cause, the NFL can be a powerful and popular way to get a message to the local community. The NFL’s Web site includes a statement about the importance of breast cancer screening and lists activities team by team, community by community, to promote awareness (see http://tineyurl.com/ycdbabm). Similarly, a Collaborative that was one of the first Chartered Value Exchanges (CVEs) worked with their local NFL team to promote hypertension awareness and conduct blood pressure screenings before every home game.

**Unexpected Events.** Watch for opportunities to relate the content and relevance of your public report to national and local news events. This requires looking beyond the surface story to see the potential connections with the content, process, value, and other aspects of your Collaborative’s public report and related activities.

* *Example*: In 2009, after the crash landing of a US Airways airplane into the Hudson River when all 150 passengers survived, the media was interested in covering many angles to keep this popular national news story alive. Tapping into the fact that airline pilots routinely use checklists, the Puget Sound Health Alliance (Washington State CVE) used the story as a lead in to a news release about promoting the use of surgical safety checklists in hospitals.

Tapping into unexpected events as part of your communications gives reporters, and others who are not well versed in health policy, real-world analogies to help them easily understand the importance of your Collaborative’s work. While unexpected events regularly occur, you cannot plan on the timing of when such events will be relevant and appropriate. Therefore, you need to be able to move quickly to recognize and act on unexpected events as opportunities.

Not all events, whether or not they are planned, will be relevant to your Collaborative’s public report or work plan content, target audiences, and communication style. Start by reviewing the list of health observances and events (Resource 2b), select those that are relevant to your Collaborative’s public report and other products and activities, and add them to your Communication Plan (Resource 1b).