Infectious disease dominated the news, including an Ebola outbreak in West Africa, introduction of highly pathogenic H5N2 strain of avian influenza in Minnesota, and the United States’ largest outbreak of measles in over a decade.

Schools and colleges across the AHC were part of the response to these infectious diseases, including providers with University of Minnesota Health. AHC expertise was called on to consult, explain, and advise media, government, health care providers, and educators.

We facilitated an unprecedented number of media requests seeking interviews with AHC experts. This outreach showcased AHC’s extensive expertise and served the public by correcting misinformation and allaying fears with science-based information.

Using social media, the Health Talk blog, and relationships with reporters and editors, we secured media interviews resulting in more than a thousand media hits related to Ebola, avian influenza, and measles reaching millions of people.

The University of Minnesota Medical Center was named one of nine regional treatment centers in the United States for patients with Ebola or other severe, highly infectious diseases.
By the numbers

Awards received: 8 from the University of Minnesota Communicators Forum, including an unprecedented third year winning the people’s choice MIKE award

Major presentations: 4 to professional organizations

Media coverage:

Nearly 1,000 media hits on Ebola

640+ media hits on the highly pathogenic avian influenza that reached Minnesota in March

450+ media hits on measles

Web presence:

Sites upgraded to Drupal: 34 with more units served

Websites in UMContent: 114—down from 164

AHC Web Community members: 291

Web town halls hosted: 10 with 303 attendees

Drupal trainings hosted: 7 with 78 registrants

AHC Resource Hub pageviews: 292,772

Health Sciences site pageviews: 295,540

Creative Agency

The Creative Agency provided 1,000+ staff hours to help AHC departments and University partners with graphic design, writing, web, and video services. The agency coordinated another 1,000+ vendor hours to assist with these marketing projects. Clients enlisted the Creative Agency to work on more than 220 projects over the fiscal year, including brochures, newsletters, magazines, displays, event promotion, recruitment materials, and social media content.

Public Relations

The past year saw significant media coverage for all AHC schools and colleges. Through media outreach, use of social media including the Health Talk blog, and collaboration with AHC communicators, the University of Minnesota health sciences hit around 18,000 media mentions. That resulted in more than 24 million people who read, listened to, or watched news stories featuring AHC research, education, and clinical care.

We added a public relations coordinator focused on telling stories from University of Minnesota Health. With increased media attention to research and evidence-based patient care stories, we are expanding awareness of UMN Health as a top health care provider delivering breakthrough patient care every day.

We continued to build relations with the AHC schools, colleges, and programs, strengthening collaboration, improving processes to manage public relations, and helping tell stories to reinforce government relations messages to the legislature.

Public and Community Affairs

We planned, coordinated, and implemented programs and events to advance the AHC’s mission with internal and external stakeholders. Internal events included several annual recognition ceremonies for faculty and students to celebrate excellence in education, clinical practice, and research. The Health Zone at the Minnesota State Fair engaged external stakeholders in health matters through exhibitors and hands-on activities from across the AHC. During Mini Medical School, AHC faculty illuminated how the University impacts and advances health across the state and around the world.

Expanded our web resources, including Drupal how-to information; overview videos on key concepts; and tips for analytics, search, images, and web content best practices.

Defined our web strategy with an approach that supports the vision of a true ecosystem, improving the site organization and bridging content through connection points.

Launched 34 sites in Drupal that work on mobile and other devices, including the Medical School’s flagship site and a Raptor Center site that better aligns with their communication goals. We established a web upgrade process for Drupal that we have communicated in a clear, timely manner.

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HealthTalk blog pageviews: 154,563

Total visitors: 132,049 from 199 countries

Visitors from MN: 38,945

Unique visitors: 130,671

Stories developed: 165

Story content: Medical School: 62; Public Health: 49; Veterinary Medicine: 19; Nursing: 8; Pharmacy: 11; Dentistry: 6

Social media:

Facebook likes: 2,500

Twitter followers: 4,500+