

Kathryn M. Karnell, M.A.
Strategic Communications Leader | Digital Content Creator
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Strategic communications manager and content creator with a record of excellence. I lead integrated content strategy, editorial planning, user-centered social media and website improvements – informed by analytics, user research, and best practices. I responsibly approach emerging technology and have expertise in AI adoption. My service mindset fosters impactful internal and external partnerships.

EXPERIENCE

Strategic Communications and Content Strategy Consultant

July 2025 – present

- **Designed/delivered/evaluated** “*AI Basics: critical literacy for responsible use,*” **training** for county public health professionals to build capacity and best practices for use of AI tools.
- Using national guidance, thought leadership, and available templates, created a process for supporting CHC and local health department’s **AI policy development**.
- Conducted qualitative thematic analysis of **185 staff feedback submissions** for a FQHC to identify priorities; synthesized findings to support leadership funding decisions.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [HRSA](#)

June 2020 – July 2025

Communications Strategist, Office of Strategy, Innovation, and External Affairs

Advised executive leadership, set communications strategy, managed vendors for a \$1B+ public health maternal and child health investment portfolio.

Strategic Communications

- Served on the Strategic Planning Committee, partnering with leadership on the **communications strategy document and its multi-year implementation and measurement**.
- Functionally led a team of five communications professionals to define and cascade key messages across digital channels, ensuring consistency with institutional priorities, brand standards, and public trust expectations in reputationally sensitive environments.
- Elevated and managed **brand alignment across externally-facing products and events**.
- **Pioneered** social media/**integrated campaigns** around key priorities and populations such as the National Survey of Children’s Health, maternal morbidity, children with special health care needs, and well-child services; supported omnichannel efforts to improve customer experience (e.g. National Maternal Mental Health Hotline and with the HRSA data warehouse).

External Affairs and Media Relations

- Drafted press releases, talking points, presidential proclamations, answers to media and congressional inquiries, Title V guidance letters and materials, and federal register notices in high-stakes and highly-sensitive/political environments.
- Engaged 400 external partner organizations for national well-child campaign.
- Used my expertise in television production and story development to advise leadership in how to engage with the media.

Executive Communications and Stakeholder Engagement

- Draft talking points, remarks, and executive communications for use at convenings and events.
- Engaged grantees and consumers of services/people with lived experience to participate in agency convenings and campaigns; developed trusted relationships.
- Spearheaded the bureau’s **plain language efforts and trained 300+ staff** to build workforce capacity.

Digital Media Management

- Led social media strategy across channels, coordinating editorial calendar, content intake, clearances, scheduling, posting, and performance follow-up.
- Set goals and success measures for recurring products and campaigns; used analytics to **interpret engagement and iterate strategy** and improve results over time.

- Developed guidelines for campaign development to ensure products were in service to stated strategic goals and delivered on user needs.
- Managed **website overhaul** and evolution; reduced website content by 70% and **increased engagement by 10%** through improving information architecture, navigation, and content clarity based on research findings and testing results; Leadership Excellence Award.

Content Creation

- Developed documents and digital materials across a spectrum of web and social content, including **newsletters, campaign pages, toolkits, federal register notices, infographics, graphics, fact sheets, FAQs, slide decks, and event materials.**
- **Produced** (Directed, wrote, edited) promotional and instructional **videos** and written stories.
- Led content strategy and rebranding for a flagship external newsletter, resulting in a **70% increase in subscriptions** (to ~54,000 subscribers).
- Partnered with cross-functional teams and SMEs to develop resources, including toolkits for stakeholders and customers (e.g. Hotline, Mapping Tools, Home Visiting and Healthy Start locators).

Selected Outcomes/Impact

- Increased **Instagram engagement by 500%** for a Child Health Day campaign compared to other agency content during the month.
- **Increased click-to-call actions by 503%** for the National Maternal Mental Health Hotline following SEO review and improved web content design.
- **Drove 1.2M views** to a Black Maternal Health Week campaign webpage, generating hundreds of toolkit downloads; Agency Innovation Award.

Ulster University – United Kingdom

October 2017–April 2020

Public Engagement and Communications Lead

- Led communications strategy, outreach, and content creation (social media, instructional videos, website content) for a **multinational digital health initiative** (mobile health app) involving academic institutions, government agencies, and healthcare partners.
- Developed and delivered **public engagement training**; achieved a **80–91% satisfaction rate** from participants.

AWARDS

Hubert H. Humphrey Award for Service to America (2024)

HRSA Honor Award for Digital Campaign Innovation (2023)

Other awards related to healthcare content, documentary filmmaking, and social media campaigns.

TECHNICAL

Digital & Analytics: Google Analytics (G4), SEO, Semantic search, GEO, UX research, accessibility

Content & Design: CMS, Jira, Adobe Creative Cloud, Drupal, Camtasia, Figma

Collaboration & Project Management: Agile & Scrum, Jira, Microsoft Teams, Slack

Productivity & Platforms: Microsoft Office Suite, Google Workspace

EDUCATION and CERTIFICATES

M.A. Communications, Syracuse University – Newhouse School

B.A. Sociology, University of California, Santa Barbara

UC Davis Extension – Certificate in Big Data, AI, and Ethics

IBM – Introduction to Agile & Scrum

UPenn – Viral Marketing & How to Craft Contagious Content

Colleague Consulting, LLC – Leading Organizational Change