



MEDIA ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

FOR HEALTH PROMOTION IN NIGERIA

Federal Ministry of Health, Abuja, Nigeria

December 2020

FOREWORD

Institutional media engagement is an essential component of public awareness, education, and promotion of positive health seeking behaviours. This media engagement strategy consolidates on the strengths of the Federal Ministry of Health in engaging the media on various public health promotion issues in key areas as routine immunization, polio eradication, family planning and other public health issues at community and household levels. It proposes a supportive media environment and high visibility for public health issues with buy-in from key actors, individuals, institutions, and stakeholders in the media industry at national, state, and local government levels.

The strategic goal is to develop a workable plan of action that supports intentional engagement of the media within the framework of key health issues and activities with shared information and positive media responsiveness to both local and international audiences. It also addresses the appropriate usage of social media platforms to reach a constantly evolving digital audience.

This Media Engagement Strategy outlines the various steps necessary to ensure consistent engagement of the media to promote health in Nigeria in line with the National Strategic Plan for Health Promotion (2020-2024).

It is my sincere hope that this strategy will be implemented to its full potential to promote health and wellness for the benefit of all Nigerians.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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In conclusion, I applaud the efforts of the Health Promotion Division under the leadership of Mrs. Ladidi K. Bako-Aiyegbusi (Director and Head, Health Promotion Division). Your commitment and innovative approaches to collaboration and enhancement of Health Promotion programming in Nigeria to the next level are laudable.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ANHEJ	Association of Nigeria Health Journalists
APCON	Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria
FMOH	Federal Ministry of Health
HMC	Health-in-Media Coalition
HP	Health Promotion
HPD	Health Promotion Division
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
LGA	Local Government Area
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NBC	Nigeria Broadcasting Commission
NCC	Nigerian Communications Commission
NHP	National Health Policy
NHPP	National Health Promotion Policy
NITDA	National Informational Technology Development Agency
NSPHP	National Strategic Plan for Health Promotion (2020-2024)
NTA	Nigerian Television Authority
NPC	Nigeria Press Council
NYSC	National Youth Service Corps
MPC	Maximum Pressure Campaigns
TST	Technical Support Team
UN	United Nation
UHC	Universal Health Coverage

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BACKGROUND:

Health Promotion & Nigeria's Media Landscape

Health Promotion (HP) is the process of enabling people to increase control over and improve their health. Every major policy document, ranging from the National Health Act – 2014 to the National Health Policy (NHP) – 2016 and the Second National Strategic Health Development Plan (2018 – 2022) is in concurrence that health promotion is Nigeria's means for 'reducing the overall burden of disease through behaviour and lifestyle changes'.

HP started in Nigeria with the setting up of the Health Education Unit of the Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH) in Lagos. Sequel to Abuja becoming Nigeria's new Federal Capital in 1991, the Unit, which had evolved into a Branch, relocated along with the FMOH from Lagos to Abuja in 2004. In 2006, the Branch transited into the Health Promotion Division in the Family Health Department. Nigeria keyed into health promotion with the drafting and launching of the National Health Promotion Policy (NHPP) in 2006. The Policy which was revised in 2019 aims to 'empower the Nigerian populace to take timely actions in disease prevention, improving their health and wellbeing as well as taking measures that ensure a healthy society'. Attaining this goal requires effective re-positioning and institutionalization of health promotion to make it fit-for-purpose and primed to develop, drive and support interventions and respond to emergencies.

Consequently, the Health Promotion Division embarked on developing a number of strategic documents, ancillary to the NHPP (2019). They include:

- National Strategic Plan for Health Promotion (NSPHP 2020 – 2024)
- Year One (2020) Implementation Framework of the National Strategic Plan for Health Promotion (2020 – 2024)
- Knowledge Management Guideline for Health Promotion 2020 – 2024

Multi-dimensional collaboration forms a major part of the policy statement of the National Health Promotion Policy (NHPP 2019). The Policy classifies key players into five major stakeholder groups: The Nigerian populace, Frontline, Strategic, Allied and Collaborative. The media and telecommunication institutions are listed among allied stakeholders. Consequently, one of the action points of Objective 2 of the NHPP is to:

Put in-place an effective media strategy to include social and new media thereby ensuring effective engagement with media institutions and platforms to raise awareness about population health gradient and potential actions to be taken thereby promoting positive reinforcement of healthy behaviour and lifestyle.

This is further underscored in Objective 4, one of which action points include:

Institutionalize the production of the full suite of operational documents connected to the National Health Promotion Policy.

Currently, Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Health (FMoH) engages with the media through the FMoH Media Unit, of the office of the Honourable Minister for Health. The Unit is headed by a Director, posted to the FMoH by the Federal Ministry of Information. The Unit invites Media Correspondents whenever the FMoH is carrying out the following activities:

1. Ministerial press briefing
2. Ministerial Launch of Policy documents
3. Commemoration of UN Days
4. Opening ceremonies of health and related activities
5. Hosting of Conferences - National and International

Recently, a Health Promotion Social and Traditional Media Team was set up to showcase technical content and health interventions which are driven by Departments, Divisions, Programmes and Units of the FMoH. Each of these entities is represented on the 25-member team, chaired by the Head of the Health Promotion Division. It is alternately chaired by the Head of the Media Unit and the Social Media Officer serves as Secretary. Specifications of the mode of engagement between the FMoH and the media sector during media-covered activities happen on a case by case basis, as there is no blueprint to define the process.

Additionally, the emergence of social media misinformation and fake news on public health issues further justify the need to clearly define the modus operandi of the health and media sector engagement.

It is in view of the foregoing that this first ever media engagement strategy for health promotion in Nigeria has been developed to meet the requirement of the NHPP (2019). It is a blueprint articulating how the Health Promotion Division (HPD) of the FMoH would work hand in hand with appropriate media to effectively and efficiently channel health communication; including risk communication, information disorder management, emergency preparedness, community engagement and more.

1. <https://www.4imn.com/ng/>
<https://hintng.com/10-leading-newspapers-in-nigeria/>
<https://nigerianinfopedia.com.ng/nigerian-dailies-best-daily-newspapers-in-nigeria/>
<https://answersafrica.com/top-10-nigerian-newspapers-most-read-online.html>
2. <https://medialandscapes.org/country/nigeria>
3. <https://nigerianinfopedia.com.ng/best-online-newspapers-in-nigeria/>
4. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/>

SNIPPETS OF NIGERIA'S MEDIA LANDSCAPE

Print (Newspapers)¹

Multiple online sources identified the 10 most-read hard copy newspapers in Nigeria in 2019. The 5 (all privately owned) newspapers that recurred (though rated differently) among the top 5 leading newspapers are: The Punch, Vanguard, The Nation, The Guardian and This Day. Media Landscapes is of the opinion that: 'The Nigerian media landscape² is a changing climate. Once dominated by print, radio and television, it is experiencing a disruption by digital platforms.' Consequently, the 5 most-read online newspapers³ (purportedly based on Alexa traffic rank) as at April 2020 are listed as: The Vanguard online, The Punch, The Nation online, Information online and Sahara Reporters.

In a 2019 publication⁴, Adeniran et al reviewed Newspaper Coverage of Maternal and Child Healthcare Issues in Nigeria. They adopted the content analysis method to analyse four purposively sampled newspapers over a twelve-month period. The study finds that the majority of published MCH issues lacked the required depth to adequately drive development of MCH in Nigeria. The paper thus calls for better coverage of MCH and other health-related issues with the relevant context necessary to drive development of healthcare in the country.

More recently, Apuke and Omar⁵ (2020) examined media coverage of COVID-19 in Nigeria with attention to the frequency and depth of coverage, story format, news sources, media tone and themes. Four widely read news-papers were content analysed between February 2020 and April 2020. Results indicated that the Nigerian media performed well in terms of covering the pandemic, which in turn created awareness. However, the coverage was not in-depth as most of the reported stories were short and were predominantly straight news.Further findings disclosed that most of the stories were alarming and induced panic. Public sensitization and education were sparingly covered.

5. Oberiri Destiny Apuke and Bahiyah Omar (2020); How do Nigerian newspapers report COVID-19 pandemic? The implication for awareness and prevention School of Communication, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800 USM, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia and Department of Mass Communication, Taraba State University, PMB 1167 Jalingo, Nigeria

6. <https://knowledge.geopoll.com/nigeria-audience-measurement-q1-2018>

7. National Population Commission (NPC) [Nigeria] and ICF. 2019. Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey 2018. Abuja, Nigeria, and Rockville, Maryland, USA: NPC and ICF.

Broadcast⁶

The Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey 2018⁷ states that the level of exposure to mass media is generally low in Nigeria. Among both women and men, radio and television are the most frequently accessed forms of media. Women are slightly more likely to watch television than to listen to the radio (33% versus 30%), while men are slightly more likely to listen to the radio (39% versus 34%). Since 2013, women's and men's exposure to mass media has shown a gradual decline. For example, the proportion of women who listen to the radio at least once a week has decreased from 39% to 30%. Among men, the proportion has declined from 55% to 39%. The proportion of respondents having no access to any of the three sources (newspaper, television, and radio) has increased from 50% to 56% among women and from 38% to 51% among men. The survey revealed that 4.6% of women age 15-49 read a newspaper, 32.9% watch television, and 29.8% listen to the radio at least once a week. 51.2% of women in urban areas watch television on a weekly basis, compared to 17.3% of rural women.

The survey also reported that the radio is the most common source of family planning messages in Nigeria, with 31% of women and 39% of men having heard a family planning message on the radio in the past few months. Among women, 19% reported having seen a family planning message on television and 4% saw one in a newspaper or magazine, while among men these proportions were 23% and 13%, respectively. On the other hand, 65% of women and 56% of men have not been exposed to family planning messages through any of the four media sources (radio, television, newspaper/magazine, and mobile phone) in the past few months.

GeoPoll Nigeria⁸, in their Q1 2018 Media Audience Measurement Report indicated the top 5 radio and television stations as follows:

Nigeria Top 5 Radio Stations in Audience Share Monthly Trend

Nigeria Radio Audience Share_ Q3, 2017-Q1, 2018			
Station	Q3, 2017	Q4, 2017	Q1, 2018
Ray Power FM	8%	8%	8%
Wazobia FM	8%	8%	7%
Cool FM	6%	8%	7%
Splash FM	3%	3%	3%
Adaba FM	3%	3%	3%

Nigeria Top 5 TV Stations in Audience Share for the past 3 quarters.

Nigeria TV Audience Share_ Q3 2017-Q1 2018			
Station	Share_Q3, 2017	Share_Q4, 2017	Share_Q1, 2018
Channels TV	10%	11%	11%
AIT	8%	8%	9%
CNN	6%	8%	9%
TVC	5%	6%	7%
Wap TV	4%	5%	7%
Other	68%	63%	58%

There is a general increase in audience share for the top 5 TV stations from July 2017. Channels TV has the highest audience shares across the quarters.

NTA is asked at the regional level for each state, and the ratings for each individual NTA station combine to account for a large % of the 'Other' stations outside of the top 5.

Digital Access

Datareportal reviewed digital access in Nigeria at the beginning of 2020 and reported as follows:

Internet users in Nigeria

- There were 85.49 million internet users in Nigeria in January 2020.
- The number of internet users in Nigeria increased by 2.2 million (+2.6%) between 2019 and 2020.
- Internet penetration in Nigeria stood at 42% in January 2020.

Social media users in Nigeria

- There were 27.00 million social media users in Nigeria in January 2020.
- The number of social media users in Nigeria increased by 3.4 million (+14%) between April 2019 and January 2020.
- Social media penetration in Nigeria stood at 13% in January 2020.

Mobile connections in Nigeria

- There were 169.2 million mobile connections in Nigeria in January 2020.
- The number of mobile connections in Nigeria increased by 12 million (+7.7%) between January 2019 and January 2020.
- The number of mobile connections in Nigeria in January 2020 was equivalent to 83% of the total population.

Social Networks

Medialandscapes has reported that year after year, the Internet continues to grow in importance – in terms of number of users, connection speed and its use in influencing non-technological fields of endeavour. With Nigeria’s fairly high internet penetration of 61.2 percent (as of March 2020) –online media companies are harnessing Internet users’ online activity to build their platforms.

For example, in the pre-Internet era, only the media alone could set agenda for the public. But recent years have witnessed the agenda-setting powers of the public. The propriety of the trend is debatable, from the egotistical, journalistic point of view, but these are the times when social media departments of digital newspapers are peeping into the Internet to see what people want to read – the questions they’re asking Google, the topics they’re typing into major search engines – and informing the editorial department to quickly latch on to it.

As of March 2020, the number of internet users had increased to 91.6 million, according to internet World stats, justifying Nigeria's status as the country with the sixth highest number of Internet users across the globe.

Courtesy of Alexa, a commercial web traffic data and analytics company, we know that as popular as Facebook is, it is only the fourth most used social network in Nigeria and the fifth most used website overall. As of February 2016, 16 million Nigerians used Facebook – the highest in Africa. On the average, 7.2 million of them were on the site every day. Ahead of Facebook are Google.com, YouTube and Bet9ja.com. Twitter, boasting 1.8 million users monthly, is the 16th most visited Nigerian website. The social networks ahead of Twitter in Nigeria are Yahoo, Nairaland, Eskimi and Instagram, legit.ng, punchng.com. Nairaland, an online community created by Seun Osewa in March 2005, currently has over 1.9 million registered accounts and over 55 million Internet users. Meanwhile, Instagram had 3.6 million Nigerian users as of March 2017, 40 percent of them female and more than 80 percent of them aged 18 to 44.

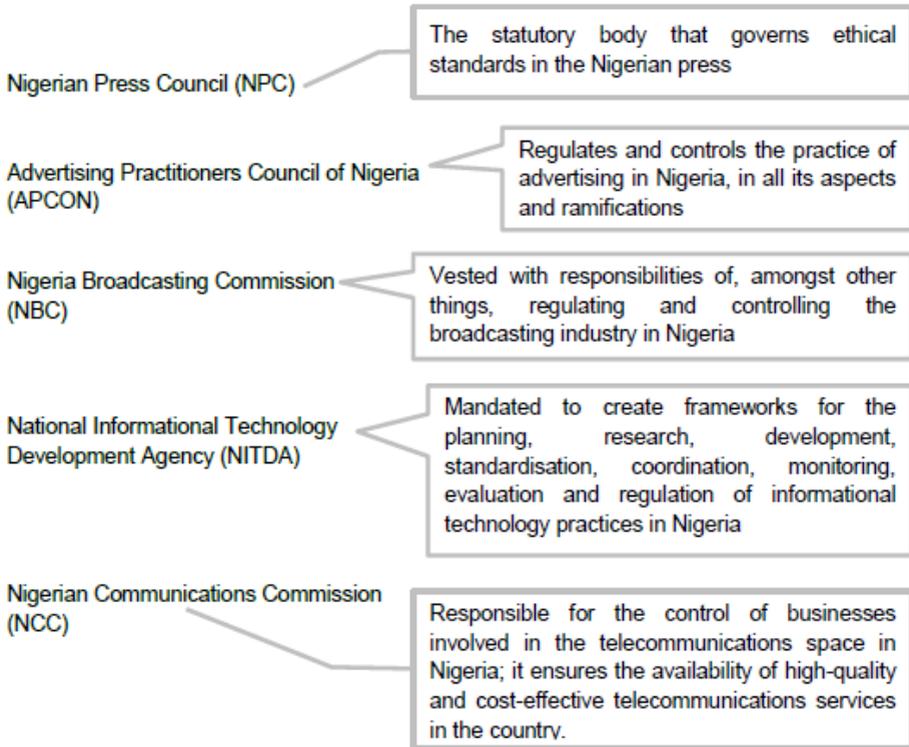
To compete with emerging digital news providers, print newspapers began to relocate their resources online. But this wasn't just a print phenomenon. As legacy papers opened online versions, the electronic media followed suit. Radio and TV stations would soon discover that they couldn't exist without an online version. And that holds true till today: digital has become the centrepiece of Nigerian journalism, with all of print, radio and TV feeding off the massive powers and rallying numbers of the Internet.

A few non-state organisations are making their marks, using digital media for health promotion, one way or the other. Notable among them are Nigeria Health Watch (e-mails); The Health Communicators (online new portal (blogs) and Association of Nigeria Health Journalists (ANHEJ).

The Nigerian Communications Commission as at September 30, 2020 reported on the number of active subscribers for telephony services (Subscriber/Operator Data) on each of the licensed service providers utilizing different technologies including GSM, CDMA, Fixed Wireless and Fixed Wired (i.e. Landline):

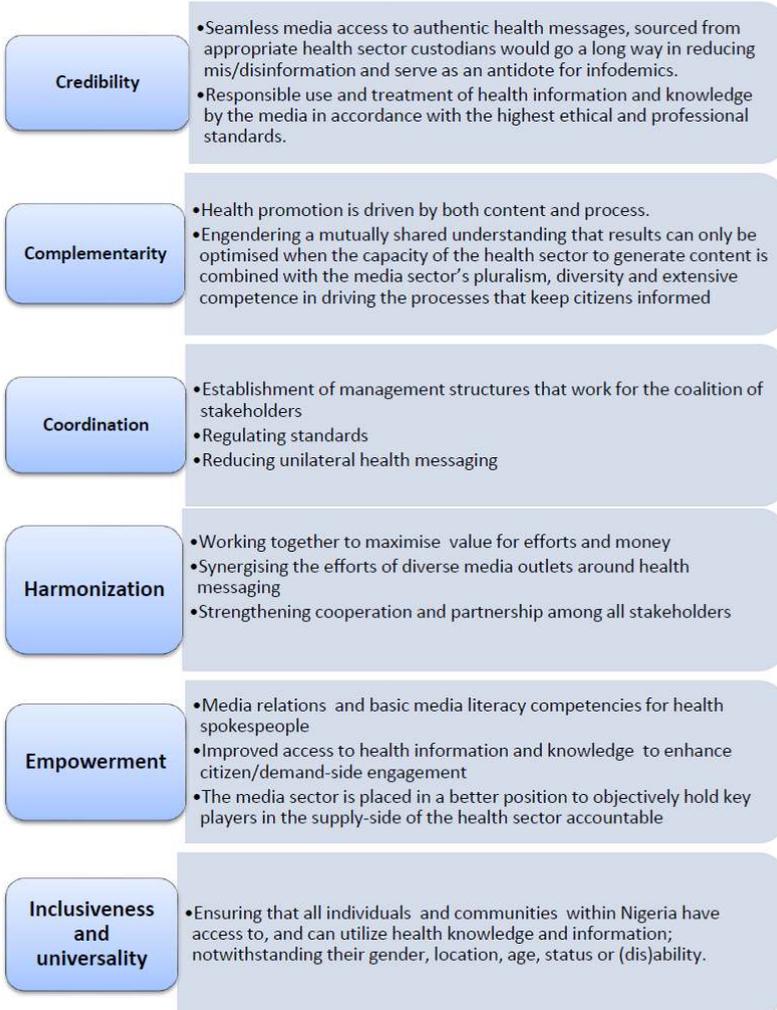
	AIRTEL	EMTS	GLO	MTN	VISA FONE
No. of Subscribers	54,766,947	12,377,612	52,934,089	83,083,913	N/A
Percentage (%)	26.96%	6.09%	26.06%	40.90%	N/A

Key Media and Communications Regulatory Agencies



GUIDING PHILOSOPHY

This maiden media engagement strategy for health promotion in Nigeria is designed to achieve specific objectives. Additionally, it is anticipated that it will evolve into an overarching policy guide; defining how the FMoH harnesses the media's enormous potential to contribute to attaining the country's vision of 'Universal Health Coverage (UHC) for all Nigerians'. The major guiding philosophy underpinning this framework is outlined below:



AIM

The aim of this strategy is to set out mechanisms, arrangements and effective pathways to guide collaboration between the Health Promotion Division of Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Health and the media sector. It is meant to prescribe ways to harness available tools for publicity, information sharing and public engagement in order to fulfil the mission of the National Strategic Plan for Health Promotion (2020-2024), which is to empower Nigerians to make informed choices for healthier living.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- Establish parameters to guide and manage the working relationship between the Health Promotion Division of Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Health and the country's media sector
- Articulate approaches for leveraging potentials and facilitating linkages and collaboration among key stakeholders, audiences, media platforms and outlets for health information sharing and public engagement
- Serve as a template for adaptation at state and LGA levels, reflecting their own circumstances and objective realities.

KEY STRATEGY COMPONENTS

The health and media sector engagement process shall be predicated upon six key strategic components namely: 1) Coalition building, 2) Issue based partnerships, 3) Capacity strengthening, 4) Health Promotion Correspondents 5) Promotion of best practices and 6) Creation of a Health Promotion Subdomain as outlined below.

"Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success" **Henry Ford**

Strategic Component 1: Coalition building

Based on the 'stronger together' principle, a collaborative ecosystem made up of the Health Promotion Division of the FMoH and diverse media outlets shall be established. Guided by the current media landscape in Nigeria, Health Promotion Division of the FMoH shall reach out to a cross section of media outlets, inviting them to team up with the FMoH(HPD) in what would be known as the Health-in-Media Coalition (HMC). The membership of the HMC should include representatives of regulatory authorities such as Nigerian Press Council (NPC), Advertisers Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON), National Broadcasting Commission, Broadcasting Organisation of Nigeria, Nigerian Communications Commission, etc.

As soon as the HMC is established, terms of engagement shall be articulated in a mutually negotiated HMC Partnership Charter. The Charter shall be developed with the full participation of all parties. It shall double as the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the FMoH and each media organisation. It shall clearly outline mutually agreed detailed roles and responsibilities of each arm of the coalition; a management and coordination structure, including itemisation of steps for grievance resolution and review of the Partnership Charter.

Through the Health Promotion Division, the basic roles and responsibilities of the FMoH would include but not be limited to the following:

- 1) Provide an enabling environment for initiating and activating the coalition building process. A major entry point would include a strategic summit of chief executives drawn from traditional media and the health sector to set the stage for collaboration.
- 2) Expand the FMoH website to include health promotional content.
- 3) Generate high quality professional health messages, materials and other forms of content in a timely and consistent manner for online media access
- 4) Make available a centralised one-stop-knowledge bank/hub that shall serve as an online platform for collaboration between the health sector and partner media organizations
- 5) Explore, develop and operationalize a reward and recognition system for the media arm of the HMC. Mechanisms for incentivizing media organizations and personalities could include:
 - i. Right of first refusal (ROFR) and other opportunities
 - ii. Facilitate opportunities for organizational and human capacity development
 - iii. An annual award and recognition of the best

- collaborating media organisation
- iv. An annual award and recognition of the best health correspondent.

While considering the annual award option, it should be noted that a Nigerian Academy of Science Media Award already exist. The Academy awards are presented annually to honour broadcast journalists and Newspaper columnists who published science-related articles, such as articles on health, technology and environment.

The basic roles and responsibilities of the media arm of the coalition shall include (but not be limited to) the following:

- 1) Demonstrate buy-in, ownership and effective participation in the HMC
- 2) Facilitate the dissemination of health messaging, knowledge and information in the most appropriate format, hitting the right tone at the right time; offering peak periods, whenever doing so is mutually convenient.
- 3) Continuously seek for innovative ways to improve reach and of meeting the health information needs of our country, communities and diverse population
- 4) Explore cost effective margins including corporate social responsibility options
- 5) Provide technical support and guidance to the health arm of the coalition

Collectively, members of the HMC shall imbibe the following standards for working together:

- Embed high ethical standards in partnership working
- Respect strategic and operational schedules
- Agree what behaviors they can expect from each other
- Deliberately invest in building a strong and constructive relationship
- Hold each other to account and encourage constructive challenge and dialogue between partners
- Promote mutual trust

Strategic Component 2: Issue based partnerships

The HMC notwithstanding, the FMOH(HPD) may opt to engage with one or a specific cocktail of media outlets to address a particular issue or more. Examples of such issues as outlined in the National Strategic Plan for Health Promotion (NSPHP (2020-2024) include:

- National presentation and Ministerial launch of health promotion strategic documents (NHPP 2019 and NSPHP 2020-2024)
- Periodic Maximum Pressure Campaigns (MPC) activities to address prevalent disease conditions and for prioritized national programmes such as immunisation, family planning, malaria, leprosy, tuberculosis, onchocerciasis, viral haemorrhagic diseases, substance abuse and screening programmes for Non-communicable diseases such as hypertension, diabetes and cancers.
- Media support to Champions / Ambassadors of Health Promotion in Nigeria
- Media support to National Health Promotion Days
- Incorporation of Health Promotion Championship into government's N-power and NYSC programmes in liaison with the relevant agencies
- Technical assistance to Social/New media Technical Working Group

Strategic Component 3: Capacity strengthening

This strategic component shall consist of a bouquet of efforts. In addition to conventional training arrangements, other approaches would be used to improve the knowledge, skills and practices of both media actors and health sector policy makers, managers and operatives to leverage on each other's professional strengths and niche.

On the one hand, the capacity of media executives and practitioners would be enhanced to report effectively on a wide range of health promotion issues. On the other hand, opportunities would be deliberately created for health promotion personnel to develop basic media literacy, including how to reduce marketing connotations in health messaging and other ways to leverage the media sector. The Health-in-Media Coalition will explore mutually convenient ways of getting these to happen.

Strategic Component 4: Health Promotion Correspondents

Traditional media outlets usually have Health Correspondents who also operate from the outlet's Health Desk. The HMC would explore the option of encouraging media outlets to either appoint correspondents dedicated to health promotion or even re-designate existing health desks as health promotion desks. Where a media outlet designates health promotion correspondents, they would automatically represent their media outlet on the HMC.

Strategic Component 5: Promotion of best practices for effective health messaging

It is stipulated in Nigeria's Health Promotion Policy that all health promotional interventions including materials to be administered on the Nigerian public MUST satisfy the under listed minimum standards:

- Conform to the approved procedure for development of health promotion materials
- Be sensitive to religion, culture and gender
- Be conducted based on evidence including accurate data and information
- Be audience and geographically specific
- Be relevant to the issue it aims to address
- Have a Call to Action

Consequently, the health and media sector engagement charter would require and facilitate a commitment to these ideals. Currently, some media outlets may not be conversant with the required minimum standards. The Health Promotion Subdomain described below shall flag them conspicuously, in addition to other means of publicizing the requirements.

Strategic Component 6: Creation of a Health Promotion Subdomain

The FMoH has a parent domain (website): <https://www.health.gov.ng>. Through the National Strategic Plan for Health Promotion 2020 – 2024 (Strategic Intervention 2.3) the FMoH committed to the establishment of a Social/New Media platform for Health Promotion - Twitter: @HPDGOV and Facebook: Health promotion Nigeria. In furtherance of this, the HPD in collaboration with both the FMoH Media and ICT Units is establishing a subdomain, dedicated to health promotion; when operational,

The Health Promotion subdomain would branch off into different subdirectories with specific content types such as the health promotion e-library. These would include public access levels and a pathway to which HMC members retain exclusive access. Shared responsibility for up to date content management on the subdomain would rest on both the Knowledge Management Officer and the Social/New Media Officer of the HPD. The Subdomain Managers shall work

hand-in-hand with the Health Promotion Social and Traditional Media Team; the Social/New Media Support Team and the 8-Member Technical Support Team (TST) for the Champions / Ambassadors of Health Promotion in Nigeria.

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