Communicating Risk to the Public

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Generalities

• Have enough meetings but not too many
• Provide food/drink
• Education is key to collaboration/understanding
• Most interest in risk reduction strategies
• Interest in obtaining information about pending permits
Camden Waterfront South Air Toxics Pilot Project

- Formed community group from existing environmental activist groups
- Appreciated having their input make a difference
- Didn’t want to be studied any more, i.e., DEP knows what the problem is, just fix it, deny any additional permits and shut down existing sources
• Education is important
  – Understanding the process: legislative/regulatory/permitting
  – Simple analogies worked well-explained dispersion with a garden hose
  – They educated us on which sources are important to them, i.e., truck traffic, St Lawrence Cement, Camden County Municipal Utilities Authority
Urban Community Air Toxics Monitoring Project, Paterson City, NJ (UCAMPP)

• Rather then work with 1 group (invited individuals) this model is going to reach out to as many different groups as possible, different makeup. Camden was well organized already around air issues, Paterson is not organized on air issues at all

• Similar concerns to Camden,
  – Trucks, Odors, Trash/Waste
Words you are not supposed to use  (Sandman 10/05)

- Conservative
- Significant
- Insignificant
- Positive
- Negative
- Bias
- Anecdotal
- Safe
- Prepared
- Regret
- Compassion
- Empathy
- Acceptable- from DEP
Seven Cardinal Rules of Risk Communication (USEPA)

• Accept and involve the public as a legitimate partner plan carefully and evaluate your efforts
• Listen to the public's specific concerns
• Be honest, frank, and open
• Coordinate and collaborate with other credible sources
• Meet the needs of the media
• Speak clearly and with compassion.