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**U.S. National Water Safety Plan – Talking Points**

**What is the U.S. National Water Safety Action Plan?**

* The U.S. National Water Safety Action Plan (USNWSAP) is a national roadmap for collective action to reduce drowning. It provides a framework and tools to support the development and implementation of data- and evidence-informed context-specific water safety action plans in communities, counties, and states nationwide. It also lays out national actions that support implementation and increase the likelihood of success of those local plans.
* The Plan was developed to guide the efforts of aquatics professionals, public health and safety professionals, policymakers, researchers, advocates, families, manufacturers, and other partners and collaborators in the water safety community who together can take action to prevent drowning
* The USNWSAP is guided by four values:
* The value of evidence-informed action and the need for evaluation, and addressing the current absence of both
* The value of ensuring equity is considered during action plan development and implementation
* The value of collaboration and engagement of the water safety community in plan development, and
* The value of local context in ensuring relevant action
* The Plan covers a 10-year period (2023-2032), calling for coordinated uptake and implementation of drowning prevention activities around six key areas where evidence exists to support action:
* Barrier, entrapment, and electrical safety
* Data and public health surveillance
* Life jackets, personal flotation devices, and other flotation
* Rescue and CPR
* Lifeguards and supervision, and
* Water safety, water competency, and swimming lessons

**Why is there a need to develop a National Water Safety Action Plan?**

* The USNWSAP was created to help address the drowning crisis in the U.S., where there are an estimated 4,000 drownings annually, and an unknown number of nonfatal drownings each year, as at estimated cost of $553 billion. Drowning is most likely to impact the youngest and most vulnerable of our population who can’t advocate for themselves.
* In developing the Plan, the Steering Committee recognized that we were not starting from scratch and would be building on several strengths. However, we also acknowledged the realities that make addressing the issue challenging.
* Our strengths are:
* We have a history of water safety and drowning prevention in the U.S. to build upon
* We know how to reduce drowning
* Water-based activities have benefits beyond reducing drowning death and injury, and
* The water safety community is in a state of readiness
* Our challenges are:
* The size and complexity of the U.S and our people
* Drowning risk varies due to the contrasting hazards and preventive actions in place across the country
* Drowning patterns may start changing as a result of climate change
* Drowning is an issue without a clear lead
* Drowning data are limited and vary greatly between jurisdictions
* Investment in drowning prevention has not been commensurate with the magnitude and economic burden
* Creating a lasting culture of water safety in the U.S. will take cohesive, consistent, and coordinated action (this Plan lays out a roadmap to get there).

**USNWSAP: By the Numbers**

* The Plan features 99 action recommendations created and reviewed by:
* 96 working group members and expert reviewers
* 80+ subject matter experts consulted
* 393 individuals from 48 states completed the recommendation survey, the majority of whom work at the community level
* 175 organization at the national, state, county and local levels from 40 states completed the recommendation survey
* 17 national organizations working together as Water Safety USA
* 4 countries who shared their experiences in developing a national plan
* 9 steering committee members
* 12 working group co-chairs
* 1 project management assistant, and
* 27 blue ribbon panel members

**What are the Action Recommendations?**

* The 99 action recommendation are statements regarding prevention approaches backed by a reasonable level of research evidence or, in the absence of research evidence, expert consensus that they likely do help reduce drowning The action recommendations support action planning at the state, county, and community levels and made up a big part of the USNWSAP development process

**The Plan’s Call to Action**

* The launch of the Plan involves a call to action to all communities, counties, and states. We urge all water safety communities to come together to collaborate on the development and implementation of a context-specific, coordinated, data- and evidence-informed action plan to address inequities and reduce drowning. To support that development and implementation, creation of the USNWSAP involved establishing tools and resources described as the Reflection to Action planning.
* We developed guidance around a 12-step process. The flexible guidance is designed to work at the community, county, or state level in two phases:
* Undertaking a reflection exercise of the current situation, and
* Building on the results of reflection exercise to develop a data- and evidence-informed action plan
* The purpose of the **Reflection Phase** is to start action planning from an informed place, ensuring a full understanding of the current situation and an initial exploration of how that situation can be built upon and enhanced with action planning. The Reflection Phase has six steps: Getting Started, Partners and Collaborators, Waterscape and Hazards, Drowning Data, Current Efforts, and Putting it all Together.
* The purpose of the **Action Planning Phase** is to build on what was learned during the Reflection phase to identify data- and evidence-informed actions to improve or expand upon what is already being done, prioritize these actions, and develop, launch, and monitor a comprehensive and coordinated action plan. The Action Planning phase also has six steps: Critical Issues, Potential Actions, Prioritization, Plan Generation, Launch and Implementation, and Monitor Momentum.

**How will Progress Be Measured?**

* Because evidence-informed action and evaluation are a key focus, monitoring and evaluation are cornerstones of both the USNWSAP and the Reflection to Action process. By building in monitoring and stressing the importance of evaluation, the USNWSAP will, over time, lead to an increased ability to measure changes in exposure to hazards, uptake of preventive actions, and the rate of fatal and nonfatal drownings.

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