

### Abstract

The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services communicates health messages to a variety of audiences, but it does not have a coordinated plan to communicate with health-care providers. An online survey asked providers about their preferences for communication tools and tested whether providers had received the department's message about new fish consumption guidelines. The majority of participating providers preferred brochures and one-page handouts. Provider type, gender and urban versus rural status were associated with preferences for certain communication tools. About 60% of providers said they would print patient education materials attached to e-mail messages. About 80% said they would visit a department Web site to view and possibly download materials. Forty percent of providers said they were aware of Alaska's fish consumption guidelines. The department should expand its communication efforts by sending more materials to providers, tailoring materials to providers' preferences, and increasing its use of the Internet.