

# **Enhancing communication with medical examiners and coroners to support public health and safety**

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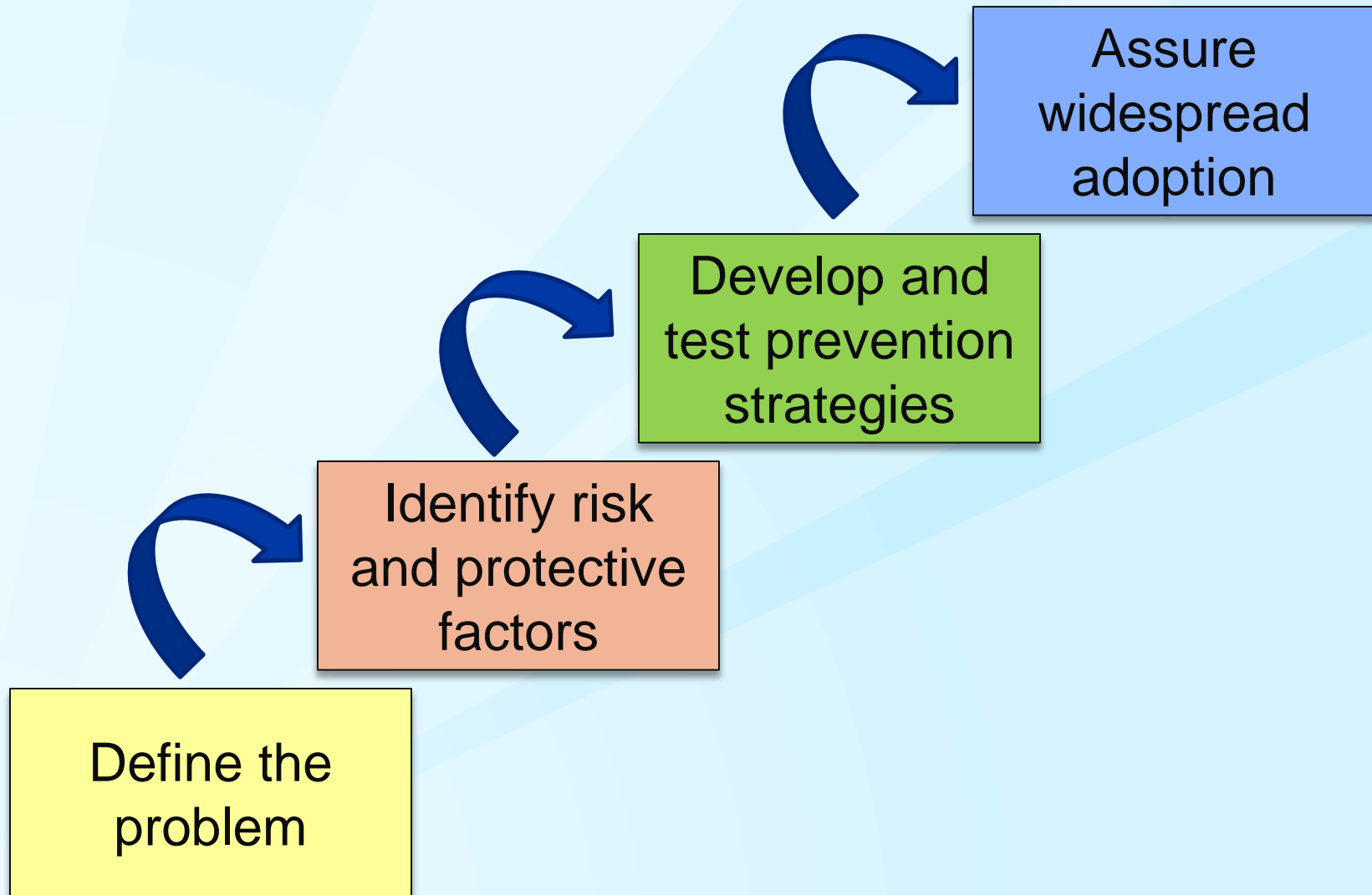
**National Commission on Forensic Sciences**

**Washington DC**

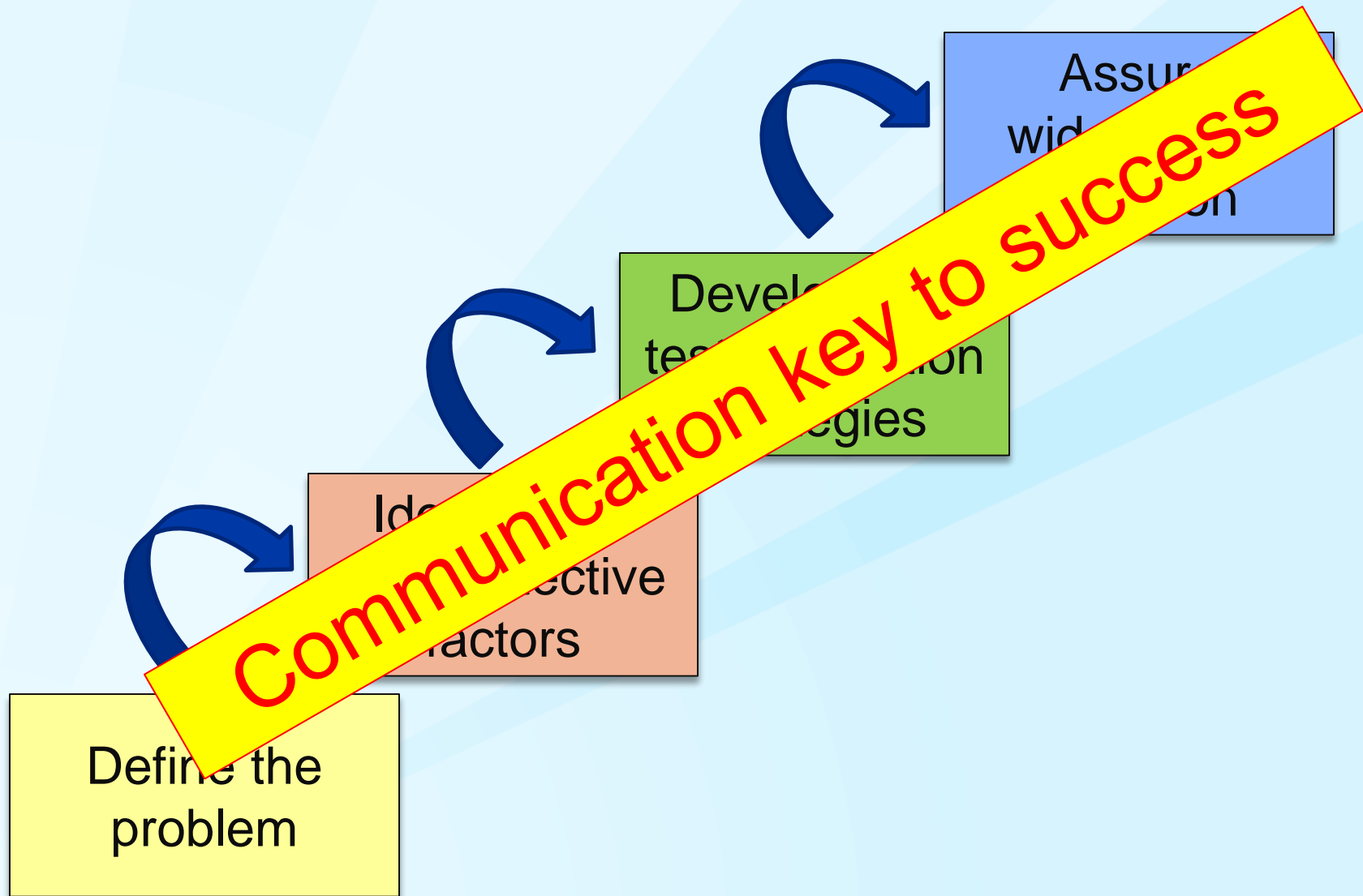
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# Public Health Model for Prevention

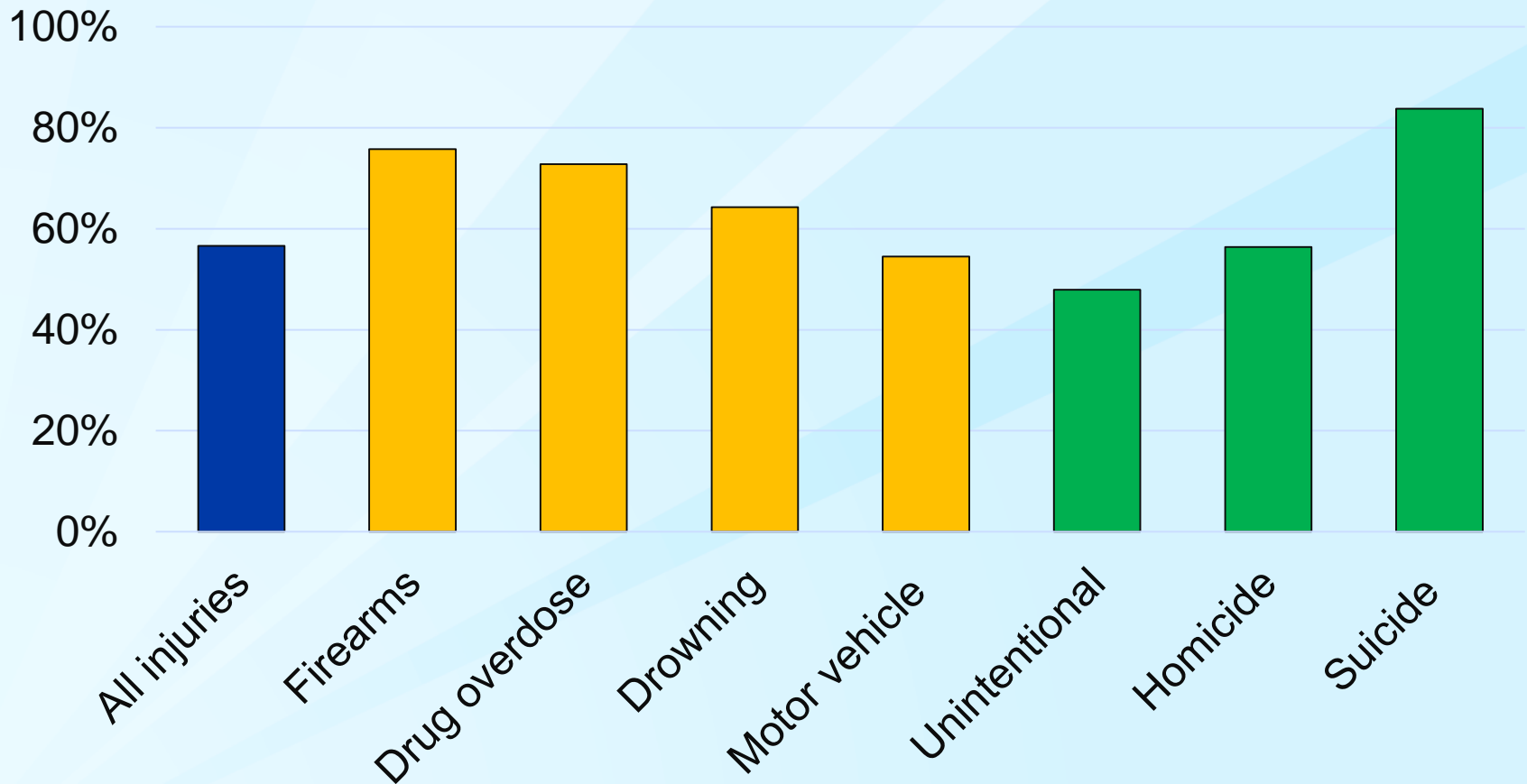


# Public Health Model for Prevention



# The majority of injury deaths do not occur in a healthcare setting

Percent of injury deaths that occurred in a non-healthcare setting



Source: National Vital Statistics System, CDC WONDER, 2013 data

## **NCHS CDC program**

- **Working to improve national mortality surveillance by ...**
  - Promoting quality and consistency in death investigations
  - Facilitating collection, automation, and distribution of medicolegal death investigation data
  - Enhancing efficiency of current programs by coordinating efforts
  - Facilitating information sharing among medical death investigators and public health

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**Communication key to success**

# What information does CDC need from MECs?

- Information for prevention purposes including cause and circumstances of death, and risk and protective factors
- Potential emerging public health and safety threats
- New science and technology in death investigation that may impact public health
- Seminars, reports, publications of interest

# What information does CDC need to communicate to MECs?

- Alerts on emerging public health threats
- Resources on death investigation (e.g., SUID)
- Services offered (e.g., detection of infectious diseases)
- Guidance on filling out death certificates
- Seminars, reports, publications of interest
- Continuing medical education opportunities
- Funding opportunities



# Current pathways used by CDC to communicate with MECs

- MDI Professional associations
- Conferences/meetings
- Conference calls
- Personal communication
- Through state partners
  - More difficult due to multiple departments within governments
  - State vs. county

# Routes of communication



## Health Alert Network

- Primary method of sharing cleared information about urgent public health incidents
- Collaboration with between CDC and federal, state, local partners to develop protocols and relationships to will ensure robust interoperable platform for the rapid distribution of public health information

# Routes of communication

## Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity (COCA)

- Provides timely, accurate information to clinicians related to emergency preparedness and response and emerging public health threats
- Fosters partnerships with national clinician organizations to strengthen information-sharing networks before, during, and after a public health emergency

# Routes of communication

## State vital records registrars

- Communicate with medical examiners and coroners in their jurisdiction on issues related to death certification
- CDC's NCHS has email contacts for state and local vital records registrars who process death certificates as part of their duties

# Why existing routes of communication aren't sufficient

- Each of our communication pathways are for very specific purposes with controlled dissemination
- None has primary focus of ME/C
- No communication mechanism for distributing non-critical materials such as training and funding announcements

# Summary

- Proposed network would supplement our current communication pathways and fill a void
- CDC needs to communicate with medical examiners and coroners for public health and safety

“Let conversation  
cease, let laughter  
flee, for this is the place  
where death delights to help the  
living.”

Inscribed on the wall of the NYC Medical Examiner's Office,  
Translated from Latin, Giovanni Morgagni

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*“Information is a source of learning.  
But unless it is organized, presented, and  
available to the right people, it is a burden,  
not a benefit.”*

**Drop ?**

William Pollard