

Digital technology: An effective communication tool for pharmacy staff during COVID-19
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Background

- Information has been in a constant state of fluidity since the pandemic began and employees had to depend on a myriad of sources to keep themselves updated. At Yale New Haven Health, an Incident Command System for Pharmacy was quickly established and the communication action team was tasked with consolidating messaging, providing frequent updates and developing effective ways of reaching out to its nearly 900 pharmacy employees.

Objectives

- The pharmacy communications team adopted a multichannel approach to ensure employees are connected on and off the health system network to supplement the already established means of communication via email, manager communications and weekly updates. The primary objective is to evaluate the utility of digital technology in this setting.

Methods

- Yale New Haven Health partnered with a mobile engagement firm who had the ability to proactively deliver 1:1 member experience. It works on the basic concept of clicking into a hyperlink in a text message which then takes the user to a customized, PHI enabled web message.
- Requirements for this program were a phone master list and training on the software platform.
- An initial message was released with an address from the Chief Pharmacy Officer to all employees about the COVID-19 response in an embedded video format.
- Subsequent weekly messages included updated communication, FAQs and suggestions from employees regarding Employee Safety, Clinical and Drug Use Policy, Operations, Specialty & Retail and staffing.
- Metrics on delivered count (number of text messages sent to employees), clicked count (number of times message was clicked into) and actioned click (number of times employees clicked into link and responded) were collected.
- Post message analysis conducted by communication team was disseminated to section chiefs and then to all employees.

Results

Figure 1: Summary of text messages clicked count and actioned account for 11 text messages delivered from March 30, 2020 to June 1, 2020

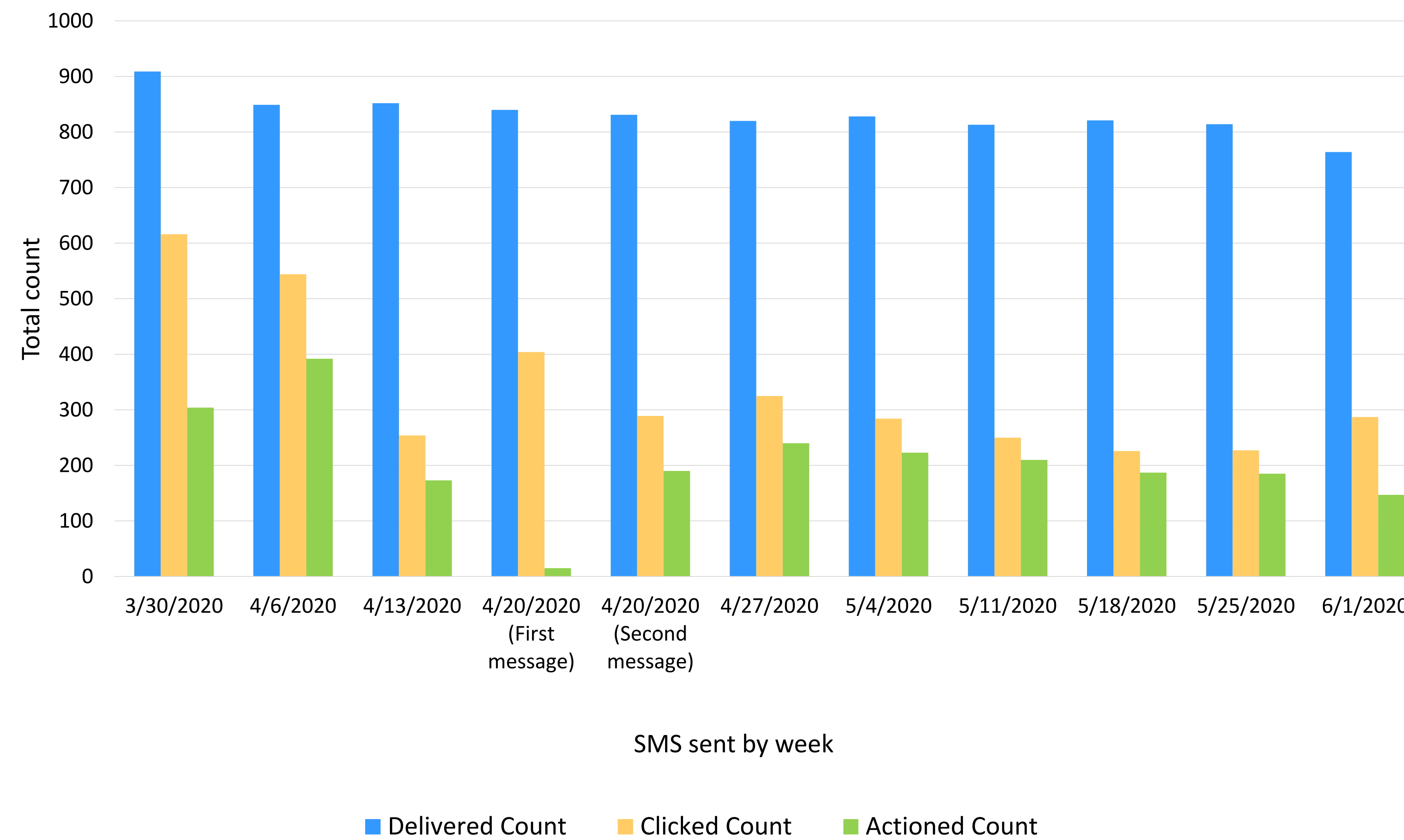


Table 1: Overview of total delivered count, clicked count and actioned account for 11 text messages

Sum of Delivered Count	9,138
Sum of Clicked Count	3,706
Sum of Actioned Count	2,266
Average Click Percentage	40.65%

Table 2: Summary of count of actions per category for total 11 text messages delivered

Category Selection in Text Message	Count of Actions
Clinical/Drug Use Policy	499
Staffing	430
Employee Safety	421
Operations	400
Specialty/Retail	243
Suggestions/Feedback	216
Communication	90
Employee Wellness Resources	54
YNHHS COVID-19 Call Center	34

Figure 2: Display of text message staff received

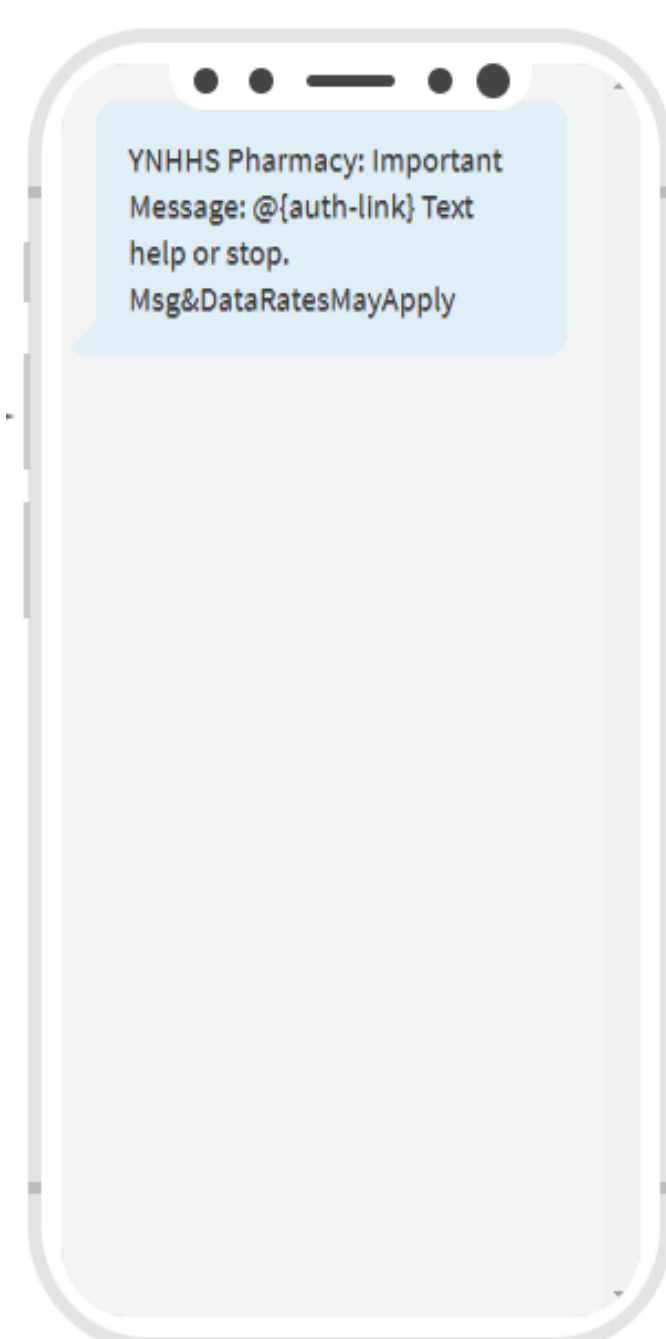


Figure 3: First text message sent included a three question survey with a video of the chief pharmacy officer embedded in it.

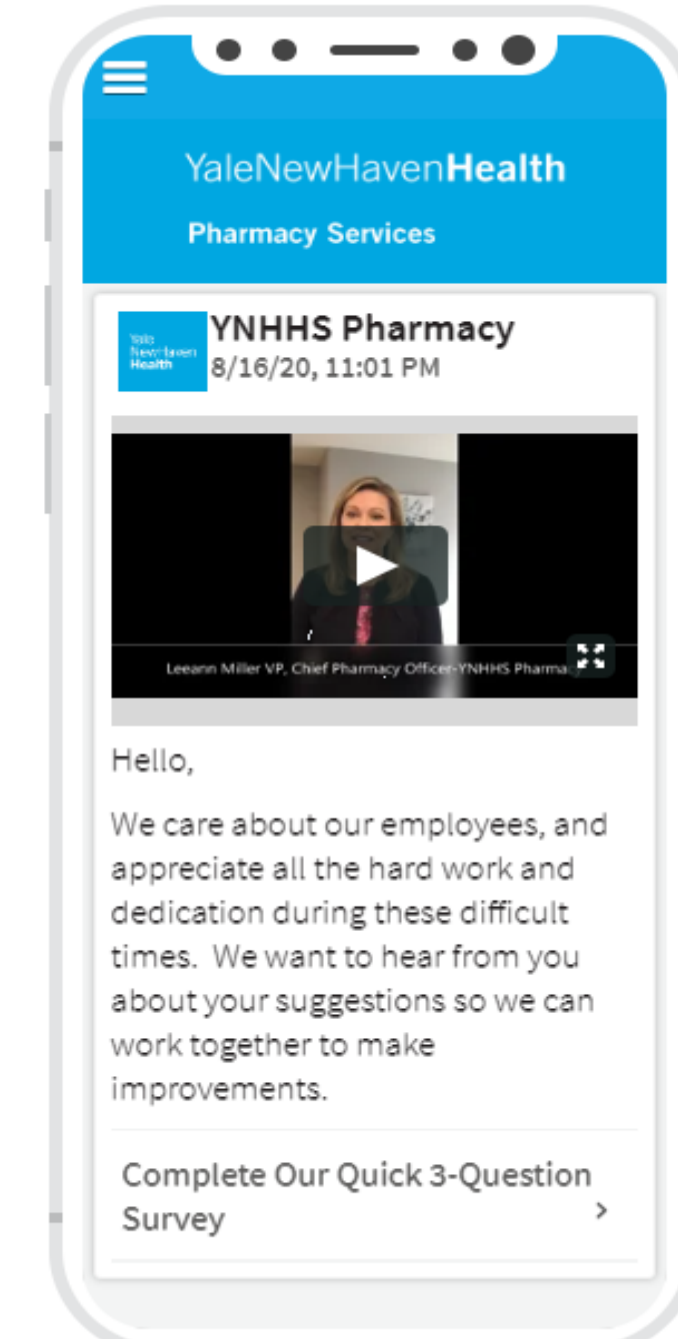


Figure 4: Second message sent to pharmacy employees. This was the general format for the weekly text messages.

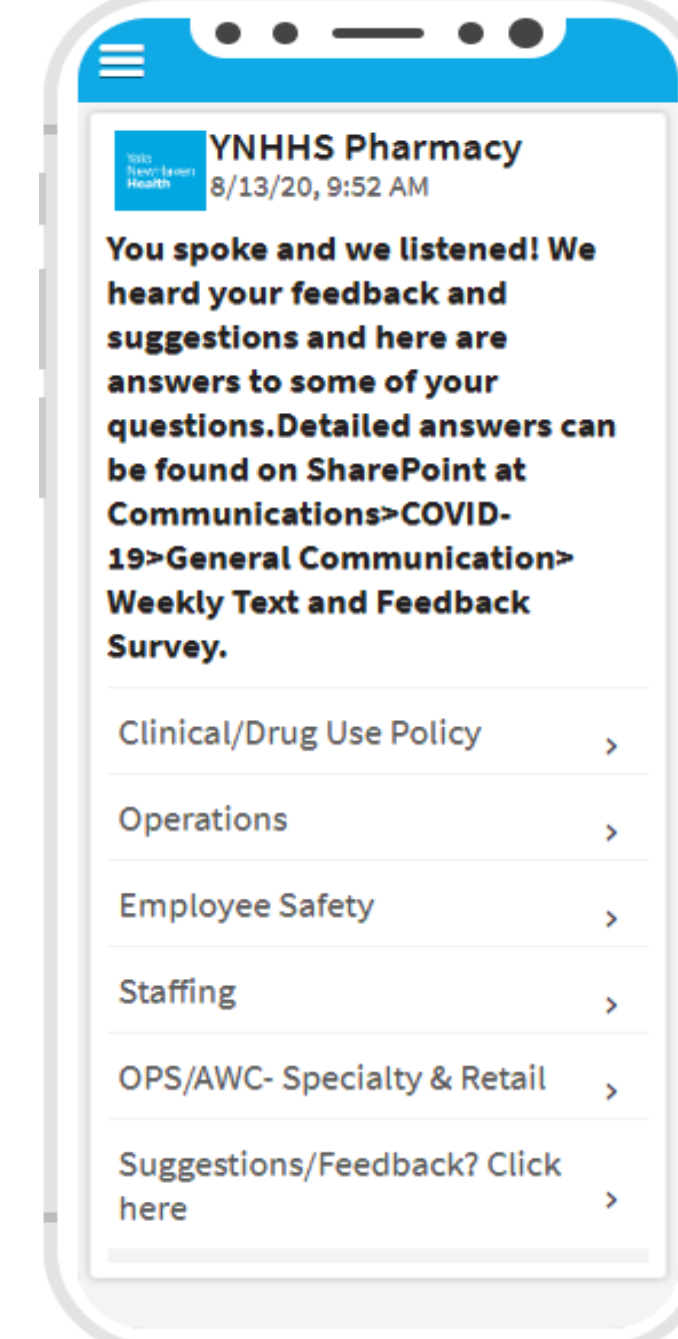


Figure 5: The addition of a meditation link and an employee wellness resource link was included.

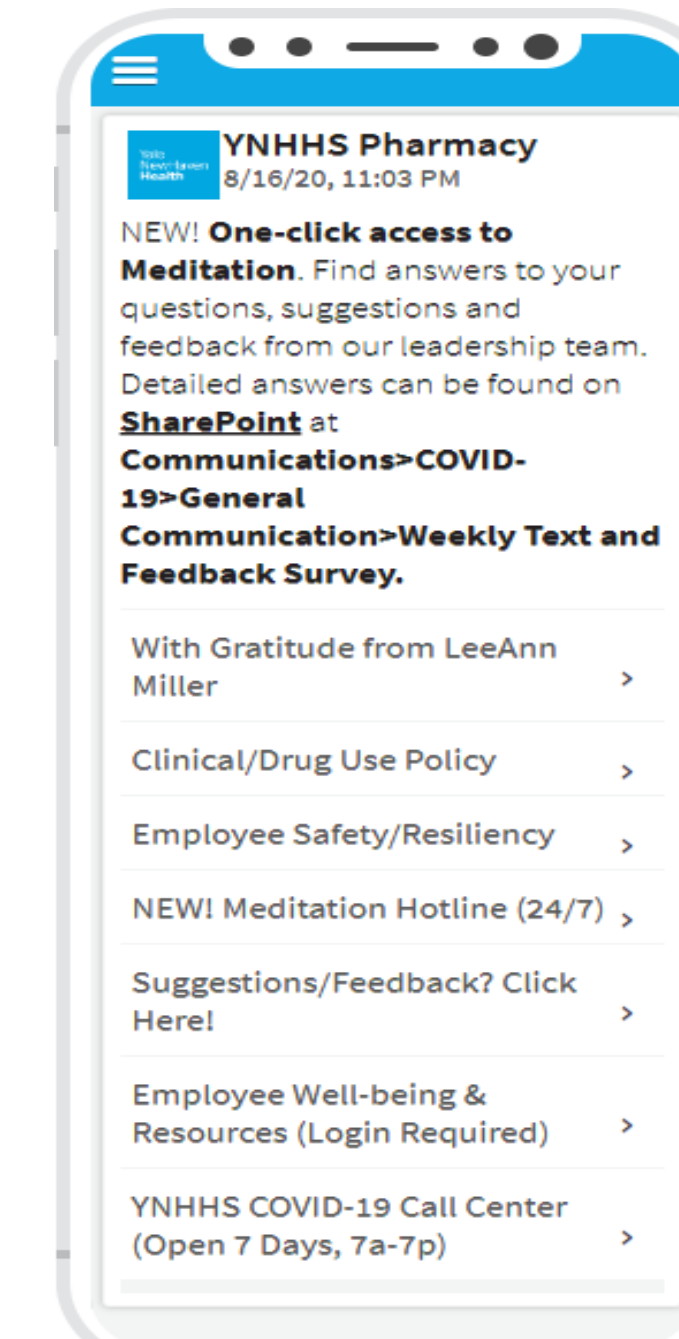
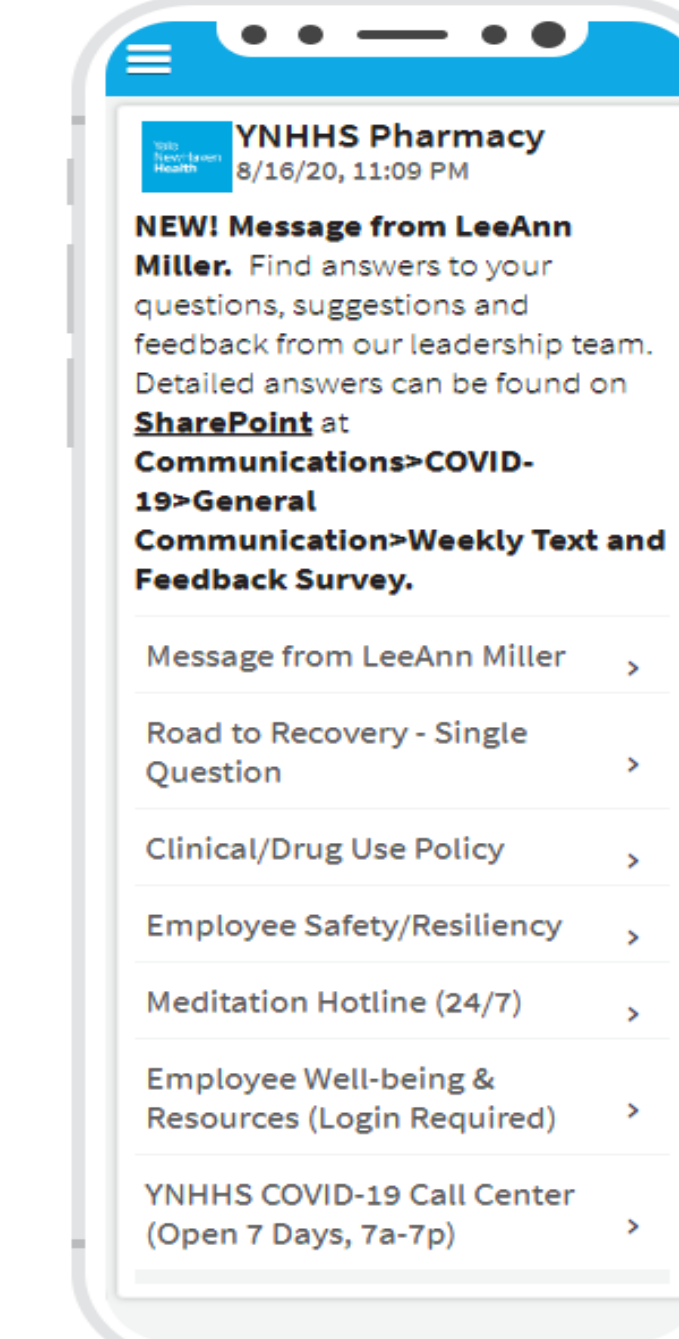


Figure 6: Another example of the weekly message including the pharmacy chief officer's name in message.



Discussion

- The click rate remained consistent at 40% despite the addition of new content and slight format modification suggesting a sustainable reach and impact.
- The click through rate in our pilot at 40% is much higher than the average rate for SMS messages which stands at 19%. This may be due to the nature of message, intended recipients, or desire for information due to the pandemic.
- Incorporating meditation links, videos, and executive messages highlight the versatility of digital technology as a communication tool.
- It is unclear the reason behind the 60% no click rate. Possible cause identified early by our team was mistaking the message for telemarketing spam.
- A transformation survey showed staff ranking digital messages 3rd in a communication strategy for COVID-19 behind direct communication with managers and weekly executive presentation.

Conclusions

- Utilization of digital technology in the form of a text messaging tool during the Covid-19 pandemic was successful and well received by the staff.
- Digital technology is a versatile communication tool with the ability to deliver different information in different formats and to reach a high number of staff compared to traditional methods.
- Evaluation of reasons behind no click rate (day/time of message, preference, privacy concerns) is warranted.

Future Directions

- Evaluate new areas of utility including sending staffing notification to find replacement or to disseminate information regarding responses to disasters.

Disclosure: The authors of this presentation have the following to disclose concerning possible financial or personal relationships with commercial entities that may have a direct or indirect interest in the subject matter of this presentation: **Vinay Sawant:** Nothing to disclose, **Ayse Hursid:** Nothing to disclose, **Osama Abdelghany:** Nothing to disclose, **Terri Sue Bukowski:** Nothing to disclose.