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## **CREATING AN EFFECTIVE PUBLIC HEALTH CAMPAIGN REGARDING THE POTENTIAL HEALTH RISKS OF CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE**

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Creating an effective public health campaign regarding the potential health risks of Chronic Wasting Disease

**Introduction:** Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a neurodegenerative disease in the family of Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSE), also known as Prion diseases. CWD has recently been detected in cervids in Montana, posing a potential health risk to game meat consumers. Appropriate places to obtain information on CWD and test meat for infection are low profile. The purpose of this study is to identify and create an effective public health campaign about CWD.

**Methods:** Information regarding CWD is being obtained from the scientific literature and government websites. Additionally, presentations are being made to obtain ideas from the public. Both print and online educational materials will be made and disseminated to the MSU and Bozeman public.

**Results:** Recent experiments have shown that CWD can be transmitted to Macaques, genetically closely related to humans, via feeding infected muscle or brain tissue from elk and deer, including from asymptomatic cervids. Although there are no reported cases of animal to human transmission of CWD, people who have contact with and consume game meat are at possible risk of becoming infected. Prion diseases are 100% fatal. The State of Montana is offering the opportunity to get your game meat tested.

**Conclusion:** Despite all the risk factors, education regarding CWD in the community is limited to a couple State websites. More detailed information is needed, especially for hunters and butchers and must be disseminated to the local public.