## Before

Dear [Hospital President and CEO],

I've been closely following your efforts to address the social needs of your patient population, especially given some of the challenging socioeconomic demographics of our community and the changing ways in which public and private insurance are offering reimbursements for services. As you may know, we in the Public Health Department are also looking at many of these issues, but we're going a step further to focus on the root causes of poor health outcomes in the community. Like you, we aim to identify and address key drivers that require a community–wide investment. I wonder if we could meet to discuss how we can collaborate to improve the health of the community.

Sincerely,

Communicators can feel pressure to be as brief as possible, but too little information can stop the conversation before it starts. Take time to make a compelling case for partnership by establishing public health's value and sharing more detailed explanation of what collaboration could look like.

This timid proposal and unclear agenda do little to pinpoint what a public health approach can do. A better strategy: emphasize goals that will appeal to the health sector, for example, how using public health data can enhance the hospital's efficiency and effectiveness.

## After

Dear [Hospital President and CEO],

As a member of the public health department, I've been closely following your efforts to address the social needs of your patient population. Like you, our department is looking at how to mitigate the effects that socioeconomic status and insurance coverage can have on people's health. We are keen to explore how we might work together to address the root causes of poor health outcomes in our community.

In particular, our mandate to collect population health data offers opportunities to identify and address key drivers of community health. We have found through other collaborations that public health data often serves a GPS–like function, helping to navigate a complex map of challenges and identify accessible roads to a needed solution. A public health data approach can add to the effectiveness of the solutions you are putting in place. We'd appreciate the chance to meet with you to get your perspective on these issues and to discuss how partnering together could be an efficient route for solving our community's most pressing health challenges.

Sincerely,

Slight tweaks can have big framing impact. This opening is similar to the "before" version, but now the socioeconomic demographics and insurance industry are explicitly named as contributing factors to people's health, not just vaguely related phenomena.

The magnitude of data the public health field collects is a largely invisible resource to other sectors that might benefit from it, so be sure to name and explain it.

Use the GPS Navigation metaphor to help audiences visualize how public health data can improve their work and help them reach their objectives.

Increase the "stickiness" of a tested metaphor by weaving it throughout a message. "Navigate," "identify accessible roads," and "efficient route" are all different ways of referring back to the GPS metaphor.