

Public Health Communications Awards

APPLICATION: MOST INNOVATIVE CAMPAIGN

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Jurisdiction size (Please check one):	
<input type="checkbox"/> Large (Population exceeds 700,000)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medium (Population less than 700,000; more than 200,000)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Small (Population less than 200,000; more than 50,000)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Very Small (Population less than 50,000)	

ABOUT THE COMMUNICATIONS CAMPAIGN

Name Of Communications Campaign	STD ET² (Education, Testing and Treatment)
Brief Campaign Overview (200 Words Or Less)	See Attached
Campaign Start Date:	2013
Campaign End Date:	2016

CAMPAIGN PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

What is the purpose of this campaign? Does it address an underlying community need? Please describe why the campaign was developed. You are encouraged to submit evidence of need (e.g., local news stories, internal reports, testimonials, data, and community health assessments) as an addendum to this form.

The overall goals of the project were to reduce the transmission, morbidity and mortality of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) and improve the health of youths, especially among the African American community, in the city of Vallejo through focused education and improved screening, testing and treatment practices (ET²).

A 2012 report published by the Public Health Institute entitled “No Time for Complacency: Teen Births in California” (Appendix A) showed a 59% decrease in teen birth rate in California from 1991 (70.5 births per 1,000) to 2010 (29.0 births per 1,000). Similar to the decreasing trend in teen birth rate in California, the teen birth rate in Solano County decreased by 6.7% between 2006-2010.

The same report looked at the incidence of gonorrhea and chlamydia among the same population and showed the association between teen birth rates and chlamydia and gonorrhea rates by county. While some counties had both low rates of teen pregnancy and low rates of chlamydia and gonorrhea, Solano was one of the outliers among counties with lower teen birth rates. Although Solano County had a lower teen birth rate compared to California, it has one of the highest rates of chlamydia and gonorrhea in the State in the same age group.

The number of new cases of STDs in Solano County increased by 61% between 2003 to 2012. Similar to the epidemiology of STD seen nationwide and in California, STD rates in Solano County showed racial and age disparities with non-Hispanic African Americans (African Americans) and youth under 24 years old having disproportionately higher rates of STD infections compared to non-Hispanic Whites (Whites) and older adults, respectively.

Of all the reported new STDs in Solano County in 2012, 42% were among African Americans and 23% were among whites; however, African Americans represented only 14% of the population in the County while Whites represented 41% of the population. Adolescents and young adults 15-24 years old accounted for 67% of all reported STDs in Solano County in 2012, yet this same age group represented only 14% of the total population in Solano county.

In 2012, the rate of gonorrhea among African Americans 15-17 years old were 6X the rate of gonorrhea among their White counterparts. The differences were even greater for young adults; gonorrhea rates among African American 18-19 years old and 20-24 years old were 23X and 11X higher, respectively, the rates among their White counterparts (Appendices B and C).

The City of Vallejo is one of the most ethnically diverse city in Solano County, yet it has one of the highest rates of STDs. In 2013, 45% of gonorrhea cases in Solano County were residents of Vallejo County while they only accounted for 28% of the County population (Appendix D).

The “No Time for Complacency” report in conjunction with data showing high rates of STDs among African American youths and the extremely high rates of STD in the City of Vallejo prompted the president of the Vallejo chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

(NAACP) and Planned Parenthood to bring attention to “this epidemic” and challenged the Solano County Board of Supervisor to take action to reduce this health inequity, thereby reducing the health disparity.

This “call to action” formed the basis for the collaboration between NAACP, Planned Parenthood and Solano Public Health. This collaboration was developed with the guiding principle that our community partners (NAACP and Planned Parenthood) take ownership of the campaign to reduce STD rates among African American youths in the City of Vallejo. Hence, ET² (Education, Testing and Treatment) project and “Pee in a Cup” campaign was born!

Does your campaign address an issue related to health equity? How?

The City of Vallejo has the highest rate of chlamydia and gonorrhea in Solano County and African American youths have traditionally been disproportionately affected by STDs.

Social and economic conditions are known to affect individual’s ability to protect their sexual health. African American families in Vallejo have high rates of poverty, and may have difficulty affording quality sexual health services. Even if health care services are available, there may be myths and stigmas associated with seeking care, especially among disenfranchised youth. They may have inequitable access to education and risk reduction information, inequitable access to transportation, family support, and may have built in suspicion of government messages regarding birth control and condom use.

Our campaign sought to address such health inequities and to ensure that communications reached all Vallejo youth. The marketing and communication plan was tailored with input from a Youth Advisory Panel, and developed utilizing concepts and approaches suggested during focus groups among youths in the City of Vallejo.

To maximize interest, the campaign included new materials and messages every two weeks, and placed messages in atypical locations (Appendix E). The identifying brand, “Pee in a Cup” was selected to highlight the importance of knowing their STD infection status and getting tested, and it was designed to appeal to Vallejo youths. It was also designed to stimulate dialogue among teens and promotion through social media, thereby reducing the inherent suspicions regarding messages from ‘the authority.’

Our campaign also sought to address the lack of access to STD services and clinic offices that are youth-friendly or youth-oriented.

What population was this campaign targeted to reach? How did you plan to reach them?

The population that the campaign wanted to reach were youth 15-24 years old, with special focus on high school students and African Americans. The campaign also sought to increase and promote community awareness on STD; therefore, parents, elders, older siblings, church leaders, schools, athletic directors, and the general community were included in the messaging and education campaign.

The campaign used a multi-pronged approach that reached different audiences using age and culturally appropriate approaches.

The youth were reached using messages and approaches developed by youth for youth. The “Pee in a Cup” messaging campaign was developed based on message testing from youth focus groups. Four rotating messages were developed for the campaign with each message lasting for two weeks allowing for new and fresh messaging that the youth stated would have a more powerful impact. Educational materials were developed for distribution in locations where youth congregate the most and in places that are atypical places for such materials.

Social media was used including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.

Adults were reached through community presentations and community outreach events using flyers, posters and infographics.

Could this campaign be replicated or transferred to other jurisdictions? Please explain.

Yes, we believe that the campaign can be replicated to other jurisdictions. The plan was to pilot the project in the City of Vallejo and replicate it in other cities in Solano County based on results of the project.

The core principles of the campaign, such as a commitment to involving the youth from project planning to implementation, using youth voices in developing age-appropriate messaging, working closely and collaboratively with the schools and the trusted community members and the importance of trust in transparency for all interactions and in the presentations of data, can be replicated in any jurisdiction.

Also, the project was presented at the Regional NAACP Convention in October 2015 and the project concept was well received by the NAACP community prompting the President of the NAACP to adopt a declaration to initiate the same campaign amongst other local NAACP branches.

What partners did you work with in planning and implementing this campaign?

The following partners were instrumental in the planning and implementation of the campaign:

- NAACP
- Planned Parenthood
- Solano County Public Health
- Vallejo City Unified School District
- Faith-based Organizations
- *Hire Our Youth Program*

In addition, the campaign was fully supported by the Solano County Board of Supervisors, especially by Supervisor Erin Hannigan who represents District 1 (Vallejo).

To what extent does the campaign leverage existing resources without creating new costs?

The campaign leveraged existing community partners with strong ties to the community, such as the NAACP, school staff, Faith-based organizations, through regular involvement in the project. High school students were engaged in the development and distribution of educational materials and in the development and creation of public service announcements (PSAs). STD testing for the Solano County Family Health Services Clinic was streamlined by creating a process that enabled people who requested STD testing to be tested the same day. Existing staff from NAACP, Planned Parenthood and Solano Public Health were used in the distribution of educational materials and in providing technical assistance.

OUTCOMES

Did you test or evaluate your campaign? If so, how?

The campaign has a draft evaluation plan and we plan to evaluate the “P in a Cup” messaging by conducting a survey of all Vallejo high school students. A survey instrument has already been developed in collaboration with Touro University, California. Although we were not able to administer the survey this school year, we plan to administer the survey this coming fall.

In addition to the evaluation survey, we plan to administer a Knowledge, Attitudes, and Behaviors (KAB) survey about sex and condom use to all high school students in the City of Vallejo. A survey instrument was developed and was pilot tested among high school students. We plan to administer the survey at the same time as the evaluation survey.

We are currently assessing gonorrhea and chlamydia rates by tracking the proportion of positive laboratory tests for these diseases in Vallejo.

The message campaign utilized social media including Facebook and Twitter and the number of “hits” were monitored. The progress of the project was also shared amongst partners through regular meetings and monthly activity report.

What were the outcomes of this campaign? To what extent were your objectives achieved?

The three main objectives of the campaign were to increase and promote community awareness on STDs; promote and increase access to screening, testing, and appropriate treatment for STDs and improve education and reporting practices among providers; and develop strategies for monitoring, evaluation and data dissemination of the ET² project.

The objectives were met through the following outcomes:

1. Youth engagement. A Youth Advisory Panel was created to assist in the development of message content and marketing and communications plan, and in the development and creation of public service announcements (PSAs). High school students participated in the distribution and posting of educational campaign materials and in community outreach events.

2. Creation of an age and culturally appropriate educational messages and materials. Campaign materials were posted at school bathrooms, nail salons, beauty shops and barber shops that were frequented by African American youths.
3. School engagement. The project and media campaign was fully supported by the Vallejo City Unified School District Superintendent which allowed us to provide reproductive health education to students and to post campaign materials on campus.
4. Increased awareness of STD among community members through presentations to various community groups (including Fighting Back Partnership, Vallejo City Manager, Vallejo Unified School District Board of Trustees) and through the distribution of educational and campaign materials at community event.
5. Faith-based organization engagement. A summit with representation from several African American church leaders and subsequent meetings and presentations were held to keep the church leaders informed and engaged.
6. Streamlined process for STD testing at Solano County Family Health Services (FHS) in Vallejo. Feedback from youth regarding the poor process of STD testing at FHS and the fact that they were turned away led to the change in the STD testing policy at FHS.
7. Dissemination of new STD guidelines to providers.
8. We are currently in the process of determining if the number of testing has increased due to our campaign and if the percentage of positive laboratory results have decreases (or increased).
9. Regular meetings are held to provide project updates to stakeholders and to ensure that the goals and objectives of the project are being met.

To what extent does the campaign shift thinking about health from individual medical care to community / public health / equity issues?

The ET² project used the collective impact approach in achieving the project goals. The project included main participation from different sectors of the community including a community based organization (NAACP), a federally qualified health center (Planned Parenthood and Solano County Family Health Services) and a governtal agency (Solano Public Health); as well as active participation of other sectors including school (Vallejo City Unified School District), Faith-based organizations, elected officials, and other members of the community. The project developed agreed upon actions that served as a basis for the ET² action plan in decreasing STD rates among high risk youths in the City of Vallejo.

The need to address the high rates of STD among African Americans was seen by the participating groups not as an individual person’s problem but as a social, economic and community problem. Some of the issues and questions that the project wanted to address included:

- What are the myths about condom use in African American youth and how do we address something that has been ingrained in their culture?
- What policies and systems do we have in place that create and perpetuate racial, age and overall health inequities that affect the youth and African Americans?
- What systems do we have in place that disregards youth or discourages youth to access the care that they need?

To what extent were earned media articles, letters to the editor, and op-eds published about this project?

A press release was developed and a press event to kick-off the project was held. Local newspaper articles about the project were published, a YouTube video of a Board of Supervisor talking about the high rate of STD in the City of Vallejo and the ET2 project was created and posted, a PSA was created that will be shown at movie theaters and social media were used to disseminate information about the project and the media campaign.

To what extent does the campaign inform and lead to personal and collective action to improve population health?

Strong leadership from NAACP and the strong commitment from all partner to reducing STD rates not just through education and behavioral change but also through systems and policy changes has led to the success of the project.

A strong and continued support and involvement from elected officials, youth, African American leaders, Faith-based organization and the community were instrumental in achieving the project goals and objectives.

A more educated and informed youth lead to better choices in reproductive health in the individual and to their partners.

How have you used what you have learned from this experience? How will use what you have learned to improve your next communications campaign?

The key to the success of the message campaign and the project as a whole is knowing our target audience and engaging them throughout the whole process, from planning to implementation. Youth and African Americans were instrumental in creating messaging, educational campaigns, and in keeping the community engaged.

As a governmental entity, we had to learn how to step back and let our partners, who are trusted members of the community, take ownership and lead the project since they know their community best and they have the knowledge on the best approaches in getting their community engaged. Having leadership from NAACP and with the strong support from African American pastors were instrumental in communicating the high risk of STD infections among African Americans.

INNOVATION

How were youth, disadvantaged populations, and other groups at high risk included in the development and public voice of the campaign?

The success of the project and the communication campaign relied on the inclusion and engagement of the project target – the youth and African Americans – from campaign development to implementation.

A Youth Advisory Panel was recruited early in the project to hear young people’s thoughts and opinions on the issue of STDs among the youth in the community and to gather input to help guide the content direction and dissemination strategies for the messaging campaign. The first meeting collected information on barriers to testing, benefits to testing, and identifying key influencers. Subsequent meetings reviewed focus group findings and helped guide the formation of the final communications plan. The Youth Advisory Panel provided input on possible sites for message dissemination and identified individuals who would have the most influence regarding the issue of STDs; older siblings, doctors, and individuals that had experienced STDs were identified as key influencers. The Youth Advisory Panel also identified the “P in a Cup” concept as a likely approach to resonate with Vallejo youths while reflecting the goal of lowering rates by encouraging testing.

Youth were also engaged in the development and creation of a PSA that will be shown at movie theaters in the City of Vallejo.

Were social media, mobile phones, and other technology utilized in the campaign?

Yes, social media were used in the campaign including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. Also, a website was developed using the campaign slogan (www.peenacup.org).

Traditional media strategies were also utilized including a press release, a press event, posters, flyers, brochures. A PSA that was developed and created by youth was developed and will be shown at movie theaters.

Can we share this application with other local health officials who are interested in communications best practices?

Yes

Please email your completed application by Friday, May 27, 2016 to:

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