

# Health Communication and Marketing



RTI International develops, tests, disseminates, and evaluates health communication interventions directed at various target audiences. With backgrounds in public health, social sciences, and communication, our health communication researchers work on a range of topics—from health promotion to health care treatment—for federal agencies, states, foundations, and private sector organizations.

RTI's researchers are skilled in using qualitative and quantitative research methods, including

- Formative message development and testing
- Focus groups, in depth interviews, and case studies
- Materials and intervention design
- Cognitive and usability testing
- Process and outcome evaluations
- Experimentally designed studies
- Large-scale data collection and statistical analysis.

We also use interactive forums, emerging technologies, and Web-related resources to promote and evaluate health communication initiatives. The following selected projects highlight our specific health communication experience.

## Selected Project Highlights

### Health Literacy and Informed Decision Making

- Develop and evaluate a clinical decision support tool to help primary care providers screen women for BRCA gene mutations associated with an increased risk of breast and ovarian cancer. This tool, with both patient and provider portals, will provide education about hereditary breast and ovarian cancer; collect a patient's family history of cancer; and calculate a patient's risk of having a BRCA mutation

- Advance the field of health literacy by developing comprehensive measures that can be used in intervention studies and to monitor health literacy at the population level
- Develop and evaluate direct-to-consumer print and television ads to determine how content and format help consumers make informed decisions about prescription medications

### Health Information Technology (Health IT), Social Media, and Mobile Technology

- Organize a toolkit of data sources and analytic methods for rigorously evaluating innovative web 2.0 (Health 2.0) and mobile technology health (mHealth) interventions
- Track exposure, information sharing, and engagement with content from a health campaign on social media sites including YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook
- Design and implement a Web-hosted Short Message Service (SMS) application for evaluating the use of text message-based mHealth interventions to support disease prevention and management
- Develop, implement, and evaluate a multifaceted, tailored, proof-of-concept intervention delivered through SMS aimed at improving health care quality and outcomes for HIV-positive patients treated in an ambulatory care setting



- Develop a marketing communication strategy for AHRQ's National Resource Center based on an assessment of existing health IT products and audience research regarding needs and interests
- Refine and expand the Electronic Preventive Services Selector (ePSS) tool for primary care clinicians, which was designed to provide real-time decision support for physicians as they select the proper preventive service for their patients

### Cancer and Other Chronic Diseases

- Assess the experience of smokers, lung cancer survivors, and physicians related to lung cancer screening
- Explore information needs of hematologic cancer patients, caregivers, and family/friends; identify gaps in existing materials; and create and evaluate an interactive, computer-based toolkit to address the audiences' needs
- Based on a comprehensive framework, create measures to reflect patient-centered communication in cancer care. Develop an inventory of existing measures, identify leading measures, then develop and test new measures to be used in population-level surveillance and quality of care monitoring
- Adapt tailored messaging strategies to help couples manage chronic illnesses, specifically lupus and arthritis

### HIV/AIDS and STDs

- Conduct formative, process, and outcome evaluation in support of CDC's Act Against AIDS communication campaign and its phases
- Collaborate with CDC in developing the next generation of HIV prevention messages for men who have sex with men through literature review and expert consultation
- Conduct exploratory, ethnographic research to inform the development of a potential social marketing intervention to address the disproportionately high rates of sexually transmitted diseases in the African American population

### Public Health Preparedness, Environmental, and Community Health

- Assess social cognitive factors underlying individuals' understanding and acceptance of pandemic influenza messages and their self-efficacy to implement recommended behaviors. Test preparedness toolkits and educational materials and assess communication channels

- Evaluate the effectiveness and cost implications of the Smoke Alarm Installation and Fire Safety Education program, focusing on its implementation in North Carolina

### Media Campaigns

- Conduct an experimental efficacy study to evaluate "Parents Speak Up," a nationally televised advertising campaign that encourages parents to talk "early and often" to their children about waiting to have sex
- Evaluate the nationally televised "truth" youth smoking prevention campaign using national media tracking surveys, data from national drug and substance use surveys, and media-market data on advertising reach
- Conduct a Web-based efficacy experiment to evaluate the impact of the "Take Charge. Take the Test" campaign for HIV testing among African American women. Assess receptivity to campaign ads and the relationship between exposure to ads and changes in HIV testing-related outcomes.

### Other Topics

- Conduct research on how best to deliver information about the prevention of birth defects and early detection of developmental disabilities to individuals of reproductive age, parents, early educators, and health care providers
- Develop and evaluate the impact of graphic images on newly federally mandated warning labels depicting the risks of cigarette smoking on consumer attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, and intended behaviors related to cigarette smoking using focus groups and a Web-based questionnaire

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#### More Information

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