

# Health Communication and Marketing



RTI International helps social marketing and health communication clients develop, test, disseminate, and evaluate health and risk communication messages directed at target audiences. With backgrounds in public health, social sciences, and communications, our staff work on a range of topics from health promotion to health care treatment for federal agencies, states, foundations, and private sector organizations.

RTI staff are skilled in using a variety of qualitative and quantitative research methods, including

- formative message development and evaluation
- focus groups and case studies
- materials design
- cognitive and usability testing
- process and outcome evaluations
- experimentally designed studies
- large-scale data collection and statistical analysis.

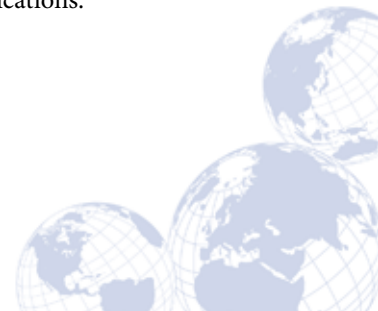
We also use interactive forums, emerging technologies, and Web-related resources to promote health communication initiatives, and we have examined the effectiveness of using social networking Web sites to disseminate information. The selected projects described highlight our specific health communication experience.

## Our Clients Include

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- U.S. Food and Drug Administration
- Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
- National Institutes of Health agencies

## Health Literacy and Decision Making

- Develop 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 and publicly available measures that can be used in intervention studies and to monitor health literacy at the population level.
- Collaborate with the Institute of Medicine's Evidence Communication Innovation Collaborative to develop a communication initiative that promotes the use of medical evidence in health care decision making.
- Develop and evaluate direct-to-consumer print and television ads to determine which content and format is most effective in helping consumers make informed decisions about prescription medications.



## 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.
- Adapt tailored messaging health communication strategies for use with couples managing chronic illness, specifically lupus and arthritis.

## HIV/AIDS and STDs

- Conduct formative research to inform the development of HIV social marketing campaigns targeting health care providers to make HIV testing a routine part of medical care, to encourage health professionals to screen HIV-positive patients for transmission behaviors and offer brief prevention messages, and to offer HIV testing as an opt-out practice for pregnant patients. Design and implement process and outcome evaluations to assess effectiveness.
- Plan and conduct a series of formative process and outcome evaluation tasks for HIV prevention and testing campaigns targeting men who have sex with men.
- Develop a toolkit and operational guide to be used in implementing and evaluating CDC's revised guidelines for HIV and STD partner services.

## Public Health Preparedness and Environmental Health

- Assess social cognitive factors underlying understanding and acceptance of pandemic influenza messages and 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 (SAIFE) program, focusing on its implementation in North Carolina. Findings will include long-term effects of the community-based interventions on changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors.
- Assess and address obstacles to local participation in community-based TB prevention programs and promote partnerships with affected communities. Develop a video (with an appearance by former

Surgeon General David Satcher) and toolkit to be used by local health departments in raising awareness of TB and coordinating prevention activities in the community.

## Media Campaigns

- Conduct an experimental efficacy study to evaluate the Parents Speak Up national campaign, a nationally televised advertising campaign that encourages parents to talk "early and often" to their children about waiting to have sex.
- Coordinate evaluation and research efforts for the Indiana tobacco control program, including community programs, a media campaign, smoke-free laws, and a tobacco quitline.
- 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 study 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

- Determine whether publications developed by several states are effective in communicating public health messages and strategies to people with disabilities.
- Conduct research on how to best deliver information about the prevention of birth defects and the early detection of developmental disabilities to women and men of reproductive age, parents, early educators, and health care providers.
- Collaborate with researchers at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to develop a Web site and other materials designed to provide physicians with up-to-date information on the use of anti-epileptic drugs for mood disorders.

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### More Information

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