Media Campaign on Prevention of Illegal Drug Use Expands to Promote Treatment

Continuation of media campaigns to reduce demand for illegal drugs and broaden awareness of treatment

SUMMARY

From 1997 to 2006, the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, worked with advertising agencies, media companies and experts in the field of substance abuse on media campaigns to curb teen demand for drugs that emerged as growing problems in the 1990s.

Beginning in 1998, the partnership also served as the primary supplier of creative content and was one of several strategic advisors to the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign, a $929 million initiative of the federal government to reduce adolescent use of marijuana and inhalants.

Key Results

- Each year, between 1999 and 2004, the partnership coordinated the development and production of about 60–75 television, radio and print ads for the federal anti-drug campaign. Many ads encouraged parents to monitor their children's behavior and intervene early—an idea summarized in the tagline: "Parents: The Anti-Drug."

- Outside the federal campaign, the partnership launched new anti-drug initiatives focused on inhalants, Ecstasy, methamphetamines, steroids and over-the-counter medications such as cough syrup.

- Expanding beyond its original focus on drug prevention, the partnership launched two campaigns for teens who were already experimenting with or addicted to drugs.

Key Findings

A survey sponsored by the partnership (2005 Partnership Attitude Tracking Study) examined changes in teens' behaviors and attitudes toward marijuana and other drugs during the period of the three grants. It found:
The percentage of teens that had ever tried marijuana declined from 41 percent in 1998 to 37 percent in 2005. The percentage of teens who had used it in the past year or the past month also declined.

The percentage of teens that saw great risk in more dangerous drugs increased from 1998 to 2005. For example, in 2005, some 82 percent of teens saw getting hooked on methamphetamine as a great risk compared with 77 percent in 1998.

Use of Ecstasy declined from 12 percent of teens in 2001 to 8 percent in 2005.

The National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) funded an evaluation that looked exclusively at the impact of the federal National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign from 1999 to 2004. The final evaluation report found that:

- Some 72 percent of parents and 77 percent of youth recalled exposure to campaign anti-drug messages.
- The campaign had a positive effect on parents' beliefs and behaviors about talking to their children about drugs.
- Exposure to the campaign did not appear to have a direct influence on marijuana use by adolescents, despite their recall and favorable assessments of advertisements.

The University of Michigan's annual Monitoring the Future survey (a repeated series of surveys funded by NIDA) also showed significant declines in teen substance abuse, for example, a 28 percent decline in 8th, 10th and 12th grade use of illicit drugs between 1996 and 2007.

Funding

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) funded the project through three grants from November 1997 to November 2006 that totaled $40,499,534.

THE PROBLEM

Changing Trends in the Ongoing Health Threat of Youth Drug Use

Ever since illicit drug use by American youth began to rise in the 1960s, dramatic changes in patterns of use have occurred in the use of nearly all the drugs, ranging from marijuana to heroin. Periods of declining use are followed by surges in the use of "newer," popular drugs, such as Ecstasy and methamphetamines in the 1990s.

These changes in the use of drugs are linked closely to perceptions of risk and disapproval, according to Monitoring the Future, an annual survey of drug use behaviors and attitudes among American youth. Generally speaking, as consumers come to view
drug use as more risky and increasingly disapprove of drugs, consumption declines. The opposite also holds true.

The media plays a large role in shaping youth perceptions about risk. In the early 1990s, media attention to the drug issue declined sharply. At the same time, the entertainment industry began to "glorify" drug use, delivering pro-drug message through movies and television channels such as MTV and the Internet. As students' perception of risk declined, their use of marijuana rose sharply, along with other illicit drugs such as Ecstasy and methamphetamines.

**Partnership for a Drug-Free America: The Advertising World Responds**

In 1987, in an effort to help change perceptions about illegal drugs and cut future demand, the American Association of Advertising Agencies launched the Partnership for a Drug-Free America. The idea behind the partnership was that if ads could sell products to people, they could also "unsell" drugs to youth.

Advertising agencies recruited by the partnership volunteered their time and talent to craft ads based on research findings from Monitoring the Future and other national surveys. National television and radio stations and newspapers agreed to run the ads free of charge.

From 1989 to 1997, the partnership secured more than $2.3 billion in donated advertising and developed more than 1,000 public service ads (PSAs) for print, television and radio outlets. During that period RWJF provided $13.5 million through three grants to the partnership to expand and intensify its national drug education media campaign (see Program Results).

**Declining Pro Bono Support and the Need for Paid Media**

In the mid-1990s, partnership leadership recognized that it would be difficult to continue to persuade media outlets to run public service ads, in part because of consolidation and changed regulations in the media industry, which reduced the availability of public service ads.

In 1996, partnership staff and other experts in juvenile drug use began talking with General Barry R. McCaffrey, Director of the federal Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), about the possibility of a youth-oriented anti-drug campaign. In 1997, with bipartisan support, Congress created the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign, administered by the ONDCP. The five-year $929 million paid media campaign was the largest and most comprehensive public health communications campaign ever undertaken by the federal government. (No RWJF funds were used to influence the legislation.)
THE PROJECT

From November 1997 to October 2006, RWJF awarded the three grants described in this report that allowed the partnership to:

- Serve as unpaid creative and strategic advisor to the ONDCP in the development of the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign.
- Increase its presence outside the federal paid media campaign, ensuring that the partnership’s message continued to reach target audiences independent of the campaign.

A Private-Public Effort to Reduce Youth Substance Abuse: The Partnership and the ONDCP

The federal government launched the National Youth Anti-Drug Campaign in January 1998 shortly after the first of the three RWJF grants began. Although the original proposal to RWJF had not anticipated a role in the federal media campaign, the partnership, with support from the Foundation, became the unpaid strategic and creative advisor to the campaign early in 1998.

During the period covered by the first two RWJF grants (ID# 023957 and 030248), the partnership devoted considerable effort to collaborating with the ONDCP and overseeing the production of ads for the national campaign.

Unlike the partnership’s earlier work, which relied on donated time and space from media outlets, the federal program paid for the placement of ads during prime viewing times and for the production costs. In return, the media outlets had to donate an equal amount of time to anti-drug messages in their programming. The partnership’s volunteer ad agencies continued to donate the creative content for the ads.

See Appendix 1 for more information on the campaign.

Partnership Activities Outside the Paid Media Campaign

Under all three grants, the partnership worked to produce more ads outside the scope of the government program, which focused primarily on marijuana and inhalants. The partnership based these new campaigns on its Attitudes & Tracking Survey as well as other research that indicated that drugs such as Ecstasy and methamphetamines were becoming popular among some youth.

In addition, the partnership expanded its work by:

- **Providing parents and families with useful, research-based tools and information.** In a long-term strategic evolution, the partnership moved beyond its
reliance on advertising to embrace public relations, online communications, community-based activity and cause-related marketing.

- **Focusing on early intervention and treatment.** The partnership responded more broadly to the problem of substance abuse by moving beyond its traditional focus on prevention to direct messages to teens who were already experimenting with drugs. During the third grant (ID# 038020), the partnership expanded further by creating a pilot program to encourage teen drug users to seek treatment and another pilot in two markets directed at family members and friends of people struggling with substance abuse.

See [Results](#) for more details.

**Challenges**

**Working with a Tightly Controlled Federal Anti-Drug Campaign**

The partnership's work with the ONDCP led to several challenges.

- As an unpaid advisor, the partnership had to coordinate its efforts with paid contractors, such as advertising agencies, and with a government advisory group, which provided direction on and reviewed the ads. The additional layers of approval sometimes led to differences of opinions and delays in completing ads and receiving payment for them. Some staff also felt they were marginalized with limited influence over the campaign.

- Annual federal appropriations for the campaign decreased from $195 million in 1998 to $99 million in 2006, which made it more difficult for the partnership and ONDCP to get the airtime it felt it needed to make an impact on teens and parents.

- For its work outside the federal campaign, partnership staff continued to rely on media outlets to run PSAs for free. It was difficult to persuade these outlets to donate their time and space when they saw other stations getting paid under the government program.

- With its heavy emphasis on curbing marijuana use, the largest illegal drug behavior among adolescents, the federal campaign paid little attention to Ecstasy, the drug of choice for growing numbers of adolescents through the late 1990s.

**Reaching Savvy Adolescents**

- Another challenge was finding an anti-drug message that would appeal to adolescents who were alert and resistant to any message with an apparent agenda (something the "my anti-drug" branding may well have telegraphed to teen viewers).

- The increasingly fragmented media marketplace made it more difficult to reach teens and parents. With the proliferation of cable television, satellite radio stations and
Internet sites, it was increasingly challenging to reach the targeted teen viewers/listeners effectively with public service advertising and news stories.

**EVALUATION**

Three evaluations, differing in scope and methodology, looked at the effectiveness of the partnership's anti-drug initiatives.

- **Evaluation of the National Youth Anti-Drug Campaign** was a science-based evaluation of the federal campaign conducted by Westat, a health survey research company. The Westat evaluation, supported by a $45 million contract from NIDA, looked exclusively at the federal campaign.

  Westat and its subcontractors (the Annenberg School for Communication and the National Development Research Institute) conducted an initial wave followed by three subsequent waves of interviews with a nationally representative sample of youth and parents living in the same household. The interviews examined the exposure of the youth and parents to the campaign from 1999 to 2004 and its impact on their attitudes, beliefs, intentions and behaviors.

- **Monitoring the Future**, also funded by NIDA, is a repeated series of surveys conducted by the University of Michigan. These surveys present the same segments of the population (8th, 10th and 12th graders; college students; and young adults) with the same set of questions over a period of years to see how answers change over time.

- **The Partnership Attitude Tracking Study (PATS)**, supported in part by RWJF, is an annual survey conducted by the partnership to gauge changes in attitudes about illegal drug use. Parents and adolescents complete self-report questionnaires under supervision from Roper Public Affairs and Media, a market research company that has administered the survey since 1993.

**RESULTS**

The partnership described results of its work on the federal campaign and on non-campaign initiatives in reports to the Foundation.

**Results Related to the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign**

- **From January to June 1998, the partnership contributed strategic and media planning support to the pilot phase of the campaign.** During this "learning lab" phase, ads ran in 12 cities (Atlanta; Baltimore; Boise, Idaho; Denver; Hartford, Conn.; Houston; Milwaukee; Portland, Ore.; San Diego; Sioux City, Iowa; Tucson, Ariz., and Washington). The partnership:
— Obtained the continued pro bono support of advertising agencies, the Screen Actors Guild and the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists.

— Provided over 60 television, radio, print and outdoor ads from its existing portfolio.

— Participated in the July 9, 1998, public launch of the campaign in Atlanta, attended by President Bill Clinton, House Speaker Newt Gingrich, Attorney General Janet Reno and other federal leaders.

• Following the pilot phase, the partnership firmly established its role as the ONDCP’s primary creative partner for the first five years of the campaign.

— Partnership staff worked with a team of behavioral scientists to develop research-based communications strategies to reduce teen use of marijuana and inhalants.

— Campaigns encouraged parents to monitor their children’s behavior and intervene early—an idea summarized in the tagline: “Parents: The Anti-Drug.”

— In an average year, the partnership coordinated the development and production of about 60–75 television, radio and print ads for the campaign.

• In 2003, Congress reauthorized the campaign for another five years and the legislation specifically named the partnership as the lead creative partner.

Results of Initiatives Conducted Outside the National Campaign

• The partnership launched new media campaigns and provided parents and families with tools and information on a wide range of drugs, including inhalants, Ecstasy, methamphetamines, steroids and over-the-counter medications such as cough syrup.

— A regional campaign to curb methamphetamine abuse focused on Southern California, Arizona and Iowa, states where research showed that the drug was becoming a problem.

— In 2001, the partnership launched an anti-Ecstasy campaign in response to a sudden increase in teen use of the drug. The partnership released new television, radio and print messages, interactive support, news content and collateral materials about the dangers of Ecstasy. A press conference generated an estimated 1217 news stories across the country.

— In May 2006, the partnership and the Consumer Healthcare Products Association, in Washington (an association that represents manufacturers and distributors of nonprescription, over-the-counter medicine), launched a campaign to urge parents to talk to their teen about the dangers of prescription and over-the-counter drug abuse. This generated $17.5 million of publicity in the first four months.
With the Alliance for Consumer Education, a nonprofit organization in Washington founded by manufacturers of household cleaning products, the partnership alerted parents to the dangers of inhalant abuse.

The partnership formalized relationships with its network of state and local alliances and affiliates, providing them with a voice via an affiliate council and recovering from them some of the cost of developing the advertising provided by the partnership.

- **From 1997 to 2000**, the partnership developed and placed mentor recruiting advertising for the Harvard School of Public Health Mentoring Work Group, America’s Promise, the National Mentoring Partnership and the New York Mentoring Partnership.

- The partnership expanded its circle of strategic partners by building new relationships in the entertainment industry, media, business and public health. For example:
  - In 1998, the partnership began an initiative with the California-based Musicians' Assistance Program, a treatment referral service for musicians recovering from drug and alcohol problems. The group helped the partnership enlist major celebrity musician role models to counteract the image that using drugs is cool.
  - Celebrity volunteers helped produce more than 40 public service announcements. Among them were the Dixie Chicks, Mary J. Blige, Lauryn Hill, Lorrie Morgan, KISS, No Doubt, Chuck Negron (former lead singer of Three Dog Night) and Serena and Venus Williams.
  - In 1999, the partnership and the Palm Springs International Short Film Festival co-sponsored a new contest, *Faces of Drugs*, which awarded prizes to emerging filmmakers for films that raised awareness about drug addiction.
  - In 2004, Comcast made a three-year, $51-million commitment to provide the partnership with pro bono support across its cable TV footprint, the largest in the United States. (This commitment was renewed in 2007.)
  - By 2002, the partnership had attracted 144 local businesses to sponsor anti-drug ads, which accounted for about 25 percent of pro bono local advertising.
  - In 2003, the partnership began to pursue national marketing partnerships. MetLife Foundation purchased radio time valued at $1.5 million for the partnership's campaign to parents, and has continued to sponsor an annual radio campaign targeted to parents.
  - In June 2003, the partnership worked with volunteer pediatricians from the American Academy of Pediatrics on a pilot program in St. Louis and Phoenix to convince parents that experimenting with Ecstasy and methamphetamines poses significant health risks to their kids.
• **The partnership developed** [Check Yourself](#), **a campaign focusing on youth most at risk for using drugs.** Moving beyond prevention, this campaign aims to persuade 15-to-18-year-old recreational drug users to curtail use. The [Web site](#) features stories, quizzes to help teens determine if they have a problem with drugs and resources teens can turn to for help.

• **In 2005, the partnership launched** [Hope, Help and Healing](#), **an 18-month pilot campaign in Houston and Cincinnati that encouraged friends and family members of someone with a drug or alcohol problem to seek help for their loved one.** The partnership chose the two cities in part because of the availability of treatment programs there.

  — The project tested the idea that a media campaign might reduce the barriers that prevent or delay people from seeking help for alcohol and other drug problems. It included:

    • More than a dozen messages for television, newspapers, radios and billboards.
    • A Web site with screening tools and links to resources.
    • Local telephone numbers to call for help.
    • Town hall meetings sponsored with the Arts and Entertainment network to discuss addictions with local drug and alcohol experts.

  — A rigorous evaluation guided strategic and creative development. Focus groups and interviews tested the message prior to the campaign launch. Following launch, researchers interviewed consumers and surveyed treatment providers, and monitored media coverage and phone calls to helplines to measure the program’s impact.

  — During the pilot, monthly calls to a local helpline increased 39 percent and more than 228,000 individuals visited the Web site.

  — The research yielded 10 Lessons Learned. See Appendix 2.

• **Through development efforts, the partnership reduced the percentage of its revenue derived from RWJF from 65 percent in 2000 to 33 percent in 2006.** The partnership hired an executive vice president for development and restructured its board, adopting a more strategic and aggressive approach to fundraising.

  — In 2003, the partnership introduced an annual gala that generates more than $1.5 million in unrestricted income annually.

• **The partnership created a new Web site with expanded resources on drug and alcohol abuse for parents, teens, the news media and the general public.** The partnership also launched newsletters (discontinued in 2006) directed to advertising agencies editorial writers and news directors and affiliated programs at the state and local level around the nation. See Bibliography for details.
EVALUATION FINDINGS

The 2005 Partnership Attitude Tracking Study and Monitoring the Future: National Survey Results on Drug Use: 1975–2006 noted the following trends:

- **Between 1998 and 2005, teens’ use of marijuana declined as their perception of its risk increased.** *(Partnership Attitude Tracking Study)*
  
  — The percentage of teens that had ever tried marijuana declined from 41 percent in 1998 to 37 percent in 2005. The percentage of teens that had used it in the past year or the past month also declined.
  
  — The percentage of teens who considered using marijuana regularly to be a great risk increased from 60 percent in 1998 to 65 percent in 2005.
  
  — Specific risks associated with marijuana included getting hooked, getting in trouble with the law and driving dangerously. In 2005, some 70 percent of teens saw these behaviors as a great risk, compared to 64 percent or fewer in 1998.
  
  — The percentage of teens who agreed strongly that "marijuana is everywhere these days" declined from 52 percent in 1998 to 39 percent in 2005.

- **Ecstasy use declined as perception of its risk increased from 2001 to 2005.**
  
  — Use of Ecstasy declined from 12 percent of teens in 2001 (before the partnership's anti-Ecstasy campaign began) to 8 percent in 2005. *(Partnership Attitude Tracking Study)*
  
  — The percentage of teens that saw getting hooked on Ecstasy as a great risk increased from 73 percent to 79 percent during the same period. *(Partnership Attitude Tracking Study)*
  
  — Ecstasy use fell by half in 2004 among college students. Among all age groups (adolescents to adults age 45), use was at rates that ranged from one-half to three-quarters lower than their peaks in 2001. *(Monitoring the Future)*
  
  — Decline in use among secondary school students was predicted by an increase in perceived risk in 2001—an increase that continued through 2004. *(Monitoring the Future)*
  
  — The Monitoring the Future Report cited the partnership's anti-Ecstasy media campaign, which began in 2001, as one of several changes in the social environment that may have influenced the declines.

- **Use of methamphetamines declined from 12 percent of teens to 8 percent between 1998 and 2005.** In 2005, some 82 percent of teens saw getting hooked on methamphetamine as a great risk compared with 77 percent in 1998. *(Partnership Attitude Tracking Study)*
• The use of cough medicine to get high remained about the same—9 percent of teens in 2004 and 10 percent in 2005. (*Partnership Attitude Tracking Study*)

• Exposure to anti-drug advertising dropped significantly in 2005. In 2003, some 52 percent of teens saw anti-drug ads almost every day, compared with 40 percent in 2005. Exposure remained higher than it had been before the national media campaign began when only 32 percent of teens saw anti-drug ads every day. (*Partnership Attitude Tracking Study*)

Westat's *Evaluation of the National Youth Anti-Drug Campaign: 2004 Report of Findings*, found that:

• Most parents and youth recalled exposure to campaign anti-drug messages. About 72 percent of parents and 77 percent of youth reported exposure to one or more messages weekly through all media channels. In both groups, recall of television advertising doubled across the four and a half years of the campaign.

• Parents' exposure to the campaign changed their beliefs about talking about drug use with their children and the extent to which they had these conversations.

• The campaign did not appear to directly affect youth behavior or attitudes about marijuana.
  — Evaluators found no evidence linking the campaign to the decrease in both lifetime and past month use that occurred between 2002 and 2004.
  — Evaluators found no evidence that the campaign had an influence on the favorable changes over time in anti-drug attitudes and beliefs or on the proportion of youth saying they would definitely not try marijuana.

**CONCLUSION**

The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) summarized Westat's evaluation findings in a 2006 report (*ONDCP Media Campaign*) and concluded that "the evaluation provides credible evidence that the campaign was not effective in reducing youth drug use, either during the entire period of the campaign or during the period from 2002 to 2004 when the campaign was redirected and focused on marijuana use."

The Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy provided a written response (included in an Appendix to the GAO report) that generally disagreed with this conclusion. See Appendix 3 for a summary of the ONDCP comments.

**LESSONS LEARNED**

1. Use consumer research to plan anti-drug campaigns that meet emerging needs.
   Any campaign must meet consumers where they are and go from there. Research
helped staff identify emerging problems, such as teen Ecstasy use, and shape new messages, such as the importance of parental monitoring. (Grantee/Bonnette, Pasierb)

2. **Address drug problems at a local level.** Blanket national campaigns alone are less effective than campaigns that combine national and local efforts to address drug abuse as a local issue. The partnership worked closely with local and state alliances to learn how drugs affected a particular part of the country. (Grantee/Bonnette, Pasierb)

3. **Design messages that appeal to the needs of different audiences.** (Grantee/Pasierb)
   - **People need to hear a message many times before they take action, so communicate frequently.** The partnership often aimed to reach 90 percent of parents at least 12 times with an anti-drug message.
   - **Take advantage of the fragmentation of the media world to reach key audiences.** Look for Internet sites and other outlets that target the audience you want to reach, such as mothers of young teens who have been expelled from school for drug use.
   - **Craft messages that appeal to savvy adolescents.** The partnership worked with advertising agency Foote Cone Belding to devise a new campaign urging teens to avoid peer pressure to use marijuana. Rather than claiming that marijuana poses physical risks, the "Above the Influence" campaign implies that the drug makes teens "less than" themselves.
   - **Find the right messengers.** Over the years, the partnership also recruited youth culture role models as anti-drug messengers to teens and has relied increasingly on "peer to peer" messaging.

4. **Enlist the talents and resources of volunteers, collaborators and staff.** (Grantee/Bonnette, Pasierb)
   - **The partnership could not have achieved what it did without volunteer efforts by advertising agencies, the media and alliances at the national, state and local levels.** To guide these efforts effectively, the partnership stresses the importance of offering volunteers ongoing information and motivational contacts.
   - **When the partnership broadened its focus from prevention to early intervention and treatment, it learned the importance of opening up to outside points of view and not feeling compelled to "own" all aspects of every project.** Working more collaboratively with other groups was helpful in reaching new audiences.
   - **Partnership leaders did not initially appreciate the demands that a $1-billion federally funded communications campaign placed on the organization.** About halfway through the project, the partnership began to add dedicated staff to satisfy the needs of the campaign while permitting the existing partnership staff to focus on other key priorities.
5. **Focus on substance abuse as a health problem.** This emphasis turns attention away from the political, legal and moralistic considerations that in the past have sometimes been impediments to effective solutions. Focusing on substance abuse as a chronic health problem opens doors to new allies and funders who are primarily concerned with health and health care. (Grantee/Bonnette, Pasierb)

6. **Use past accomplishments to attract new resources.** (Grantee/Pasierb)
   - **Document your outcomes from the start.** From the beginning, the partnership conducted its annual survey of teens and parents to gauge how well its messages were coming across. When the partnership approached other funders for support, these survey results served as evidence of the effectiveness of its campaigns.
   - **Build off earlier work.** The partnership used its experience on *Hope, Help and Healing* and its regional methamphetamine campaign to launch Meth360, a $9-million prevention and education campaign funded by the U.S. Department of Justice.

**AFTERWARD**

In 2006, RWJF made two final grants to the Partnership. The first was a transitional grant while the organization sought new funding (ID# 059181). The second was a matching grant in which RWJF provided $2.5 million that had to be matched by other funders (ID# 059439). Both grants closed in 2007.

As of June 2007, the Partnership had raised $2.7 million in new grants and support.

As of January 2008, the Partnership was continuing much of its work. Its Web site was attracting one million visitors each month.

As part of their efforts to expand resources for parents, the partnership launched **Time to Talk™** in August 2007. This online community offers advice and a toolkit to help parents “connect with their kids” to keep them healthy and drug-free. Parents who register at the Web site receive free updates, alerts and tools throughout the year.

The Partnership planned to launch a new Parent Resource Center on its Web site in the spring of 2008. The resource center would have a separate section for prevention, early intervention and intervention so parents could get detailed advice depending on what issues they faced with their children.

The Partnership continued to act as a strategic advisor to the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign, which was re-authorized by Congress until 2011. The Campaign addresses prescription drug abuse, methamphetamines and marijuana.

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APPENDIX 1

The National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign

The National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign is administered by the Office of National Drug Control Policy. It has three goals:

- Educate and enable America's youth to reject illegal drugs.
- Prevent youth from initiating use of drugs, especially marijuana and inhalants.
- Convince occasional users of these and other drugs to stop using drugs.

From 1999 to 2006, the federal government appropriated more than $1.4 billion for the campaign, which targets audiences aged 9-18 and their parents. This period of the campaign had three phases.

- Phase I was a pilot phase of ads in 12 cities. It took place from January to June 1998. In this phase, the government primarily used ads already developed by the Partnership for a Drug-Free America.
- Phase II, which ran from June 1998 to the summer of 1999, ran existing partnership anti-drug ads nationwide.
- Phase III, which began in mid-1999, continued the national advertising campaign started during Phase II, featuring new advertising informed by ONDCP, contractor agency Ogilvy and a team of behavioral science advisers (the Behavior Change Expert Panel). Advertising was coupled with outreach efforts including public relations, Web-based resources and collateral materials.

According to a 2006 evaluation by researchers at Westat, the Office of National Drug Control Policy performs overall management of the campaign in collaboration with the following groups:

- The Partnership for a Drug-Free America, which provides the creative advertising for the campaign through its existing relationship with advertising companies.
- A Behavioral Change Expert Panel of outside scientists who help to inform the content of the advertisements to reflect the latest research on behavior modification, prevention and target audiences.
- Ogilvy (through September 2004), a national advertising agency with responsibility for media buying (as well as for carrying out some supportive research and assuring a coherent advertising strategy).
- Fleishman-Hillard, a public relations firm, which coordinates the nonadvertising components of the campaign.
• The Advertising Council, a coordinator of national public interest advertising campaigns, which supervises distribution of advertising time to other public service agencies.

APPENDIX 2

Lessons Learned from the Hope, Help and Healing pilot project

(Current as of the time of the grant; provided by the grantee organization; not verified by RWJF.)

From January 2005 to June 2006, the partnership carried out a pilot campaign in Houston and Cincinnati called Hope, Help & Healing that was designed to motivate people to seek help for themselves or loved ones who may have an alcohol or drug problem, educate them about the problem and connect people with resources for counseling and treatment.

A brochure, Hope, Help and Healing: A Guide to Helping Someone Who Might Have a Drug or Alcohol Problem, provides a brief summary of the program.

A May 2006 report, entitled "Hope, Help & Healing: Using Media to Connect People With Help for Addiction," by the Partnership for a Drug-Free America noted the following 10 lessons learned from the project:

Lesson I: Attitudes are barriers to help-seeking.

The campaign identified three public attitudes that had to be counteracted:

• Denial and/or lack of understanding of the nature of addiction as a chronic, but treatable, illness calling for early and urgent action—rather than a social behavior or moral issue.

• A sense of powerlessness about intervening effectively to get a loved one started on a path to recovery.

• Perception of the problem as hopeless due to lack of information about available professional help options and how to access them.

Although three-in-four believe intervention can work, a solid majority feared that their own personal intervention with a loved one would be ineffective and might cause friction.

The partnership's pilot program found that while the majority of the public accepts that addiction is an illness, a third or more still regard it as a "personal moral choice".
Lesson 2: Promoting intervention by family and friends is the top priority.

Consumer market research identified target audience segments and messages to which those segments within the public will respond. These strategy directions confirmed those posited by the field and from clinical experience:

- Address loved ones as well as individuals who are sick and engage them in treatment process and recovery.
- Reduce attitudinal barriers to seeking of information and help.
- Urge early intervention as for other serious illness.
- Encourage seeking of information about getting quality professional help in the community.

Lesson 3: Multiple messages are needed.

Another key lesson from the consumer research was that no single concept or media channel was effective for all audiences targeted or in isolation. In order to provide education about addiction as a health problem, a comprehensive set of messages was needed to address different aspects of the problem, as with educational campaigns about other illnesses such as cancer.

It was also clear that it was possible to address addiction in the campaign, rather than be limited to a single drug. People generally were able to see each message as relevant for a variety of addictive drugs, including alcohol, even when only one drug was shown in the PSA, the Web site feature or described in a personal testimonial story.

Lesson 4: Varied media channels are needed.

Additionally, a comprehensive program of media messages across a variety of channels had to be used to achieve a threshold level of exposure for impact, in today's fragmented media climate. Media channels included:

- Public service ads.
- A dedicated new Web site to educate, begin to build a support community and offer resources.
- A phone line for referral to treatment.
- Public relations to share first-person stories of recovery.

For instance, the television PSAs prompted one woman in Cincinnati to seek out treatment for her husband's serious heroin addiction problem; she called the toll-free number at 2:30 a.m., and her husband entered treatment the next morning. She
recommended that we air PSAs in the mornings when it is most helpful to those needing treatment.

"Over the past year, we have realized significant increases in the number of calls we receive from individuals seeking help for themselves or someone they love," says Nan Franks Richardson, CEO, Alcoholism Council of the Cincinnati Area. "The real strength of this campaign is that it has raised awareness that alcoholism and drug addiction is treatable and that there is help right here in Cincinnati.

"In fact, most people we speak to are unaware of the resources and range of treatment options available. This campaign has been very successful in reducing the stigma often associated with alcohol and drug problems and prompting people to get help right away. We feel its success in each and every call."

**Lesson 5: Referrals should be to local help, wherever possible.**

Families experiencing alcohol and drug problems wanted a referral phone line to complement the dedicated Web site for drug-related help, and the campaign was able to promote a local phone line for "help resources" in the community—both for oneself or for a loved one. For people moved to action by the campaign, the project found that it is ideal to have the dedicated help resource be identified as located within the community and co-signed by a local organization.

It helped to engage local treatment leadership and providers as partners in planning and executing the campaign and to set up and vet adequate referral links to help for those affected by the campaign.

With the help of the partner organizations in the community, more than 70,000 copies of a localized campaign intervention guide was distributed in English and Spanish versions in Houston and Cincinnati.

**Lesson 6: A comprehensive intervention Web site is an essential tool.**

The piloted messages concluded with a "call to action" to visit the partnership's dedicated Web site to learn more about options for help, call a local referral resource for quality treatment help and obtain a brochure about how to intervene effectively.

It was found that a dedicated Web site was an essential resource for the public on addiction issues, and that media can effectively promote this resource, generating strong traffic and lengthening visit time.

A qualitative survey of eight Web site users, conducted by *Sachsinsights* in December 2004, found the prototype site to be a valuable and trustworthy source of information pertaining to intervention. The look and feel of the site was appealing—as were the tone of
voice and the anonymity of online media. Two themes emerged in terms of the type of content visitors would like: relevant and actionable.

**Lesson 7: Stories engage the press and motivate the public to seek help.**

The pilot project also demonstrated the essential role to be played by aggressive public relations in educating people about the need for addiction treatment. News and feature press carrying first-person stories, complementing PSAs and promoting the Web site and phone line, were the best way to engage the media as "gatekeepers" to help disseminate key campaign messages and humanize the face of addiction.

Resulting feature stories and editorials in the press and interviews on radio and television talk shows supplemented increasingly scarce pro bono time in order to sustain media exposure levels. The use of a variety of stories helped counteract both denial about the problem and stereotypes of users by illustrating that substance use and abuse occurs across all population groups. It also helped diminish the sense of isolation often found in families with addiction, by illustrating a powerful theme developed through consumer research, "You are not alone."

**Lesson 8: Appealing to emotion helps the public see addiction as the illness it is.**

Emotions play a key role in consumer engagement on this topic. Across all media channels, it was effective to follow a strategy of consumer engagement, using both rational and emotional appeals in communications, bringing medical science to life with shared interpersonal experience that opens hearts as well as minds.

An emotional component to the communication is critical to reducing both stigma and denial for those addicted and loved ones, so that people can be empowered and supported in seeking help for addiction.

How you convey the message is critical. The tone of the communication that tested well was emotionally encouraging, morale-building to empower action, nonjudgmental and professionally neutral and informative to inspire trust and confidence, in light of profound shame and stigma associated with this illness.

Language and terminology used were deliberately that of health and healing to reinforce the message that addiction is an illness, rather than a personal moral choice.

The public is willing to be persuaded that addiction is an illness, when presented in interpersonal terms that engage the emotions. Backlash against the message was minimal versus what was expected. (One print ad generated five negative responses in Cincinnati, and the phone call referral line received several complaints; and the *Cincinnati Enquirer* received one letter of complaint.) Credible personal testimonials from real-life people
likely precluded backlash due to entrenched stereotypes about addiction as a failure of willpower.

**Lesson 9: The public doesn't view the problem the way the field does.**

Viewers of the PSAs also regarded the intervention/treatment messages as carrying import for prevention, as well. This suggests that substance use and disorders are not categorized with the distinctions made by those in the field and in policy and funding streams by drug, or by prevention vs. treatment, and public understanding of this aspect of the problem may be more sophisticated. Also, the concepts and terms of "intervention" and "intervening" were well understood in the context of addiction problems.

**Lesson 10: Communication about treatment can engage the community on the drug issue.**

Much was learned from the community response to the campaign. In the test cities, community leaders observed a positive side effect of the campaign was that it pulled together the prevention and treatment leadership in a direct collaboration for the first time. A number of cities as well as states expressed strong interest in having an intervention/treatment campaign from the partnership.

Engaging as spokespeople local treatment leaders, as well as well-known doctors in the community, worked well to:

- Underscore the communication that addiction is a chronic but treatable illness that runs in families.
- Keep the issue salient to enable effective implementation with the media as "gatekeepers" to the public.
- Enhance public receptivity for quality treatment.

Advocacy by local community leaders such as Join Together's Demand Treatment! program in Houston further enhanced implementation of the campaign. This follows a model developed by Boston University School of Public Health (which runs Join Together) to increase local leadership, establish new programs and change local policies to improve alcohol and drug treatment. (RWJF funded the establishment of Join Together and supported its work for many years. See [Program Results](#).)
APPENDIX 3

The Office of National Drug Control Policy’s Response to the General Accountability Office’s Summary of the Westat Evaluation of the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign

In an August 2006 report, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) reviewed Westat's evaluation of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) Media Campaign and concurred with its findings that the anti-drug media campaign was not effective in reducing youth drug use.

Given the Westat findings, the GAO recommended that Congress should consider limiting appropriations for the campaign, beginning in 2007, until ONDCP provided credible evidence of a media campaign approach that effectively prevented and curtailed youth drug use.

In a letter dated August 10, 2006, John P. Walker, director of the ONDCP, provided written comments that generally disagreed with Westat's findings and the GAO assessment of them. The GAO included the letter as an Appendix to the 2006 report.

The ONDCP director expressed six concerns about the GAO report and its assessment of Westat findings:

1. Westat's evaluation was ill-suited to judge the impact of an ad campaign.

2. The findings were "old news" that covered the first five years of the campaign, and, by 2006, were out of date and of limited relevance.

3. Conflicting evidence from other research, including the Parent Attitude Tracking Survey and Monitoring the Future, was given minimal attention.

4. The evaluation did not consider the encouraging results stemming from major changes that the campaign had undergone, such as introducing the "above the influence" theme.

5. The ONDCP's "due diligence" efforts to address the potential for harm are not well characterized.

6. The GAO recommendation that Congress limit further funding for the campaign did not offer sufficient detail to demonstrate satisfactory evidence of progress.

Finally, the ONDCP director identified probable negative consequences of further cuts to the campaign budget if Congress followed the GAO recommendation. One of these was the "chilling effect" that the cuts would have on the media companies who had donated over a billion dollars worth of media time and space for anti-drug ads. The director noted that the partnership had been instrumental in recruiting these companies.
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