

Progress in Underage Drinking Prevention: Positive results in Massachusetts



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Learning Objectives

- Describe how to create data-driven objectives for ATOD social marketing campaigns
- Identify the critical steps to creating effective media based on prevention science
- Delineate principles of using media to make healthy lifestyles attractive

FFY97 & FFY 98

- The Bureau of Substance Abuse Services, as the single substance abuse state agency in MA, initiated a social marketing campaign to prevent underage drinking by increasing the age of first use of alcohol.

Age of First Use in Massachusetts



MYRBS

Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance 2006

FFY 97 & FFY 98 cont.

- The first flight of a professionally-produced radio ad, “Police,” resulted in a myriad of requests for additional information from the Massachusetts Substance Abuse Information and Education Helpline.
- To complement the radio ad, BSAS produced a brochure for parents “Talk to Your Kids about Alcohol.”

FFY 97 & FFY 98 cont.

- At their request, parents were sent the pamphlet, a NIAAA booklet, and referred to the Regional Prevention Centers and other programs for additional prevention support. Youth in need of treatment were referred to a local program.

FFY 97 & FFY 98 cont.

- Results from a quantitative study of parental behavior after the FY 97 parent-oriented radio campaign indicated a change in behavior ($<.05$). When parents who remembered the ad were compared to parents who did not remember it, statistically significant differences were found:
 - in the number of alcohol-related conversations parents had with their youth.
 - parents were more likely to disagree that they should wait until their children began experimenting to talk to them about alcohol.

FFY99 & FFY2000

- The Bureau continued its public information campaign to prevent underage drinking. A second and third flight of the radio ads (aired during drive times for one month plus bonus weight) resulted in over 3,000 packets of literature being distributed.



- BSAS developed and aired a radio ad “ABCs” targeting parents of youth 8-12 years old. As a result, the number of calls to the Helpline requesting prevention materials and information about youth treatment increased.
- BSAS led the production of a second radio ad, “It’s Cool Not to Drink,” which was focused on youth. It aired as part of the ONCDP collaboration program’s “bonus weight” for over a month.

FFY 2001 cont.

- To reach youth directly, BSAS collaborated with other agencies to create “Choose to Keep your Freedom,” a pamphlet which spells out the consequences of underage drinking.





- BSAS distributed social marketing materials to youth and parents in settings as diverse as rock concerts and court-based trainings.
- BSAS continued to air a radio ad targeted to parents.
- Collaboration with other Massachusetts Department of Public Health units increased the visibility of our products.



- BSAS contracted with MA Health Promotion Clearinghouse of The Medical Foundation to create and distribute the English version of “Be the First to Talk to Your Pre-teen about Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs (6,200).”
This colorful booklet features sections on how to start an effective conversation, creating and enforcing family rules, laws about alcohol and other drug abuse, risks and signs of use of specific drugs, and resources for further information.

FFY 2003 cont.

- The communications campaign expanded to include statewide transit ads.
- To complement this media campaign, sample booklets were distributed to all BSAS Regional Centers for Healthy Communities, Prevention Programs as well as publicly-funded treatment programs.

FFY 2003 cont.

- ONDCP newspaper ads listed the Helpline number. Parents and other callers were sent guidebooks on how to talk to their youth about alcohol and other drugs.



- The underage drinking reduction efforts expanded to include a parent-oriented public relations, radio and transit campaign. Providers were encouraged to use a “Substance Abuse Prevention Public Relations Resource Kit,” to raise underage drinking issues in their local press.

FFY 2004 cont.

- Two sixty-second paid radio ads and a statewide transit ad featured the theme “Thinking or Drinking? What Will it Be for Your Kid?” which encouraged parents to talk to their pre-teens about the effects of alcohol on their child’s brain and dreams, and to call the Helpline for targeted materials.

FFY 2004 cont.

- BSAS distributed “Don’t Give Kids Alcohol,” a parent-oriented pamphlet that supports parents in setting clear and caring limits for their children regarding alcohol.
- BSAS distributed “Be the First to Talk to Your Pre-teen about Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs” and “Choose to Keep Your Freedom” in English and Spanish.



FFY 2004 cont.

- The “Pediatric Clinician Update: Preventing Alcohol and Other Drug Use by Pre-teens” was sent to every pediatrician and health center in the Commonwealth.
- BSAS in partnership with the social marketing firm GEOVISION developed a new product, “7 Ways to Protect Your Teen From Alcohol and Other Drugs.”





- Two sixty-second paid radio ads and a statewide transit ad featured the theme “Kids Are Like Sponges. What’s Yours Absorbing?” which encouraged parents to talk to their 3-5th graders, and to call the Helpline for our targeted material “Preparing Your Young Children for a Healthy Drug-Free Future.”

FFY 2005 cont.

- BSAS continued to reprint and distribute the English and Spanish version of “Be the First to Talk to Your Pre-teen about Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs.”

FFY 2005 cont.

- BSAS produced “For Adults Who Work With Children: Preparing Children for a Drug-free Future” and coordinated within the MA Department of Public Health to present our materials to after-school programs, school-based health centers, YMCAs, and other young serving programs.



Age of First Use in Massachusetts





- To maintain the downward trend, prevention efforts continued with 2 sixty-second paid radio ads, print media and a statewide transit ad. “Start Talking Before They Start Drinking” was the theme, building on the federal campaign. The ads encouraged parents to talk to their elementary aged children, as well their teens, and to call the Helpline.

FFY 2006 cont.

- The Helpline distributed hundreds of publications to parents of elementary age, pre-teenage age, and teenage youth, including the targeted materials discussed above.
- BSAS continued to distribute “Preparing Your Young Children for a Healthy Drug-Free Future” to parents of 3rd-5th graders.

FFY 2006 cont.

- BSAS distributed “For Adults Who Work With Children: Preparing Children for a Drug-free Future and coordinated within the MA Department of Public Health to offer printed materials to hundreds of school nurses.
- Second flight of two radio ads targeting parents were broadcast during the high-risk holiday times (est. over 2 million listeners).

FFY 2006 cont.

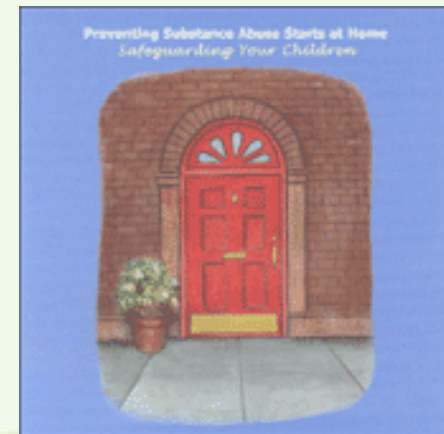
- In addition to continuing to disseminate the English (57,065) and Spanish (14,294) version of “Be the First to Talk to Your Pre-teen about Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs,” a Portuguese adaptation was distributed (5,893).

FFY 2006 cont.

- BSAS continued to disseminate “7 Ways to Protect Your Teen From Alcohol and Other Drugs” in English (32,117) and Spanish (6,525).
- BSAS distributed the “Pediatric Clinician Update/Preventing Alcohol and Other Drug Use by Pre-teens.” (6,549)

FFY 2006 cont.

- The new "Preventing Substance Abuse Starts at Home/Safeguarding Your Children" fold out brochure takes parents on a tour of their home. It guides them on how to keep their children safer by making alcohol, inhalants and prescription drugs less accessible.



FFY 2006 cont.

- BSAS coordinated the media campaign with the federally-sponsored Town Meeting initiative. BSAS, in partnership with the social marketing firm causemedia, the Regional Community Health Centers and local coalitions, orchestrated 44 Town Meetings across the Commonwealth.
- BSAS distributed “Working Together to Reduce Underage Drinking A Strategy to Keep Massachusetts Kids Alcohol-Free” (9,950) through the 40 Town Meetings.

FFY 2006 cont.

- BSAS distributed over 65,000 English version pamphlets, and almost 13,000 of the Spanish translation of “Choose to Keep Your Freedom.”
- BSAS reprinted and distributed nearly 90,000 copies of “Don’t Give Kids Alcohol,” a parent-oriented pamphlet.

Conclusions

- Ability to attribute success to any one social marketing approach is difficult.
- Most dramatic improvement seen 2001-2005 when radio and print dissemination had been in place for several years.
- Parents and youth may profit from repeated exposure to the message in public media as well as school and health settings.
- Over time, support for the message grows among professionals, as well as parents.