

10 Weeks to a Smoke-Free Life

Authors: Meredith Casey, BSE, CTTS-M, Tobacco Treatment Coordinator and Alice J. Dalla Palu, MPA, CTTS-M, CAC, Partnership for a Tobacco Free Northeast PA; Lindsey Knox, Producer, WFMZ TV; Ed Frack, Media Director, Klunk & Millan Advertising

Background

The Partnership for a Tobacco Free Northeast PA's mission is to improve the quality of life in our communities by reducing tobacco use. The Partnership oversees tobacco control programming in the 10-county PA Northeast Health District through a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Health.

The PA Clean Indoor Act was implemented in September 2008. In partnership with our marketing firm, Klunk & Millan Advertising, we created a 10 week topic series on the steps to quitting tobacco use to encourage individuals who were contemplating a quit attempt to seek out treatment services. Klunk & Millan, working on our behalf encouraged WFMZ-TV, which reaches 5 of the 10 counties served by the Partnership, to run the campaign with the Tobacco Treatment Coordinator as the key 10 week topic on air personality to entice smokers to consider quitting and offer weekly tips and referral resources. We planned for the final segment to air on the 2008 Great American SmokeOut.

Methods

The 10 series' segments covered topics as: preparing to quit, reasons why you smoke, what to expect the first few weeks, how to avoid weight gain, stress management and staying quit. To reach the largest audience the segments were aired on the Sunrise edition of the morning news show at 7:50 AM.

WFMZ-TV expanded the initial project to feature a local business owner who successfully completed a local treatment program. They featured 5 taped segments with "Ray" on the evening broadcast prior to the morning show.

Program segments were posted on both the Partnership website, www.tobaccofreeNE.com and WFMZ-TV website, www.wfmz.com to reach additional viewers. During each segment, WFMZ-TV posted a banner with the Partnership's toll-free telephone number and web address.

We followed up with this earned fall media campaign with a paid cessation driven TV campaign in February 2009. Tobacco service providers were asked to tally referrals to their treatment program in February to monitor media campaigns. The 15 provider agencies reported

Results

- Through this opportunity, we promoted the new Partnership website offering local tobacco programming and contacts in prevention, advocacy and cessation.

- The TV segments raised awareness of existing tobacco treatment resources and encouraged tobacco users to seek treatment.
- Through this collaboration, the Partnership enhanced treatment opportunities for citizens *and* created a powerful collaboration with earned media, ad firm staff and tobacco service providers and clients.

Conclusion

Building a rapport with local media provides opportunities for collaboration on many levels, including earned media and follow-up programming. Data on the specific number of tobacco users who sought treatment either through the website or toll-free telephone number reveals that _____