

Partnership For A Tobacco-Free Maine

Why I Don't Smoke - Youth Media Campaign

Background and Overview

Recent data may indicate that for the first time in over a decade, Maine youth smoking may be on the rise. Many factors may contribute to this trend including the relentless activities of the Tobacco Industry. Last year Big Tobacco spent \$59 million dollars in Maine on advertising and is continuing to introduce enticing new products aimed at getting young people hooked on tobacco. Previous statewide counter-marketing campaigns have had great success reaching youth, but there is now a new population of Maine children that have not yet been exposed to counter-marketing messaging.

Current Landscape

- Big Tobacco spent \$59 million dollars in Maine last year on marketing and advertising
- Nearly 90 percent of smokers begin while in their teens, or earlier, and two-thirds become regular, daily smokers by the time they reach the age of 19.
- Roughly one-third of all youth smokers will eventually die prematurely from smoking-caused disease.
- 1,600 kids (under 18) become new daily smokers each year in Maine.
- 79,000 packs of cigarettes are bought or smoked by kids each year in Maine.

Target Audience

- Primary Audience: Middle school youth, ages 11 - 14
- Secondary Audience: Elementary school youth and possibly high school youth

Goals of the Youth Media Campaign

Short term

- Promote positive social norms and healthy self-identity among youth
- Raise awareness among youth of the number of youth who don't smoke
- May help to encourage youth to quit tobacco use if they are thinking of experimenting or have recently started

Intermediate

- Empower youth to refrain from tobacco use and arm them with the confidence to say "no" to peer pressure
- Increased anti-tobacco attitudes and decreased normative beliefs about popularity of tobacco use
- Increase quitting attempts and cessation among youth

Long term

- Contribute to PTM's statewide goals of reducing initiation of tobacco use among youth
- Reduce the smoking rates among youth

Messaging

There is no doubt that smoking remains a highly social activity. Recent research has shown that health behaviors are directly linked to the social networks of which an individual is a part. Youth in particular are very influenced by their peers and consistently search for belonging whether it is through social activities, school, or family.

Using social norm theory, this concept seeks to play on this social theory of “belonging” by utilizing the geographic locations, and social groups of youth as empowering forces for refraining from tobacco use. Messaging focuses on creating a bond between social groups and promoting the tobacco-free message. Messages are delivered by youth, who define their identity as tobacco-free.

For the filming of the TV messages, youth were given free reign to describe why they choose to be tobacco free. Filming included capturing raw footage from youth as well as straightforward statements of why they remain tobacco-free.

Campaign Components

- **Facebook:** A campaign Facebook page will house the media messages and will include an option to sign a pledge in order to engage youth in the movement. The Facebook page includes an interactive map to showcase the responses by location.
- **Television:** Two TV messages will run on popular TV networks statewide.
- **Web Advertising:** Paid web advertising will be placed on sites frequented by youth in order to drive traffic to the Facebook page.
- **Posters:** Posters will be placed in schools and other venues frequented by youth (e.g., community centers, libraries, fitness centers, restaurants, bowling allies, etc.)

Action Steps

- **Visit** the Facebook page (www.facebook.com/whyidontsmoke) to “like” the page and enter a submission on the interactive map.
- **Share** the Facebook page and the map with your friends. This can be done through the “share” button on the interactive map, or you can send a direct message.
- **Distribute** posters throughout your community. You will be receiving 10 posters in the mail. If you need additional posters they will be available on the PTM store.
- **Download** supporting resources for this campaign at <http://www.hmpgranteesresources.org/content/media>.