

PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAM SURVEY- Other PH Prevention

Contact Information

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Short Title: **truth®**, the nation's largest youth smoking prevention media and grassroots campaign and the only such national campaign not directed by the tobacco industry.

Program Location: United States, nationwide.

Objectives and Goals:

The objective of **truth®** is to reduce youth smoking and change social norms about tobacco use, the largest cause of preventable death in the United States. Over 400,000 Americans die every year from tobacco-related disease and another 8.6 million suffer from tobacco-related disease. Because nearly 80% of all smokers begin before the age of 18, and one out of three starts before the age of 14, preventing young people from ever starting to smoke is one of the most effective ways to stem the tobacco epidemic.

Methods:

The **truth®** campaign uses blunt, edgy, and in-your-face information to engage 12 to 17-year-olds who are open to smoking. **truth®** taps into the natural rebel in most teens and exposes them to the tactics of the tobacco industry, the truth about addiction, and the health effects and social consequences of smoking, encouraging teenagers to be wary consumers that resist tobacco. **truth®** is a multi-dimensional, constantly evolving campaign, featuring television, radio, print and web advertising, a Web site (www.thetruth.com), social networking sites, interactive elements, and grassroots outreach through a summer tour. **truth®** uses evidence from the most successful anti-tobacco campaigns, research with teen audiences, marketing research more broadly, and a highly sophisticated social science evaluation and research function to inform its strategies.

Program Length:

truth® launched in February 2000 and continues through today.

Number of target population reached by effort:

As of December 2008, the most recent date for which this information is available, **truth**® reached 43% of all U.S. 13-15 year olds and 47% of 16-18 year olds. There were approximately 25,233,000 U.S. teens in all between 13 and 18 years old, and **truth**® reached approximately 11,366,680 of them.

Demographic Info:

Among all 13 – 18 year olds, **truth**® reached 39% of white, 63 % of African-American, 56% of Hispanic, 26 % of Asian-American and 66% of Native American teens. It reached 45 % of both male and female teens. While we do not have definitive data on **truth**®’s reach to rural and urban communities across the country, we have been aware that as a result of uneven cable television penetration, youth in some rural and low population density areas of the country were exposed to the campaign’s anti-tobacco messages less frequently than youths nationally. This is of particular concern because rural youth are more likely to smoke as compared to those living in urban and suburban areas. With a CDC grant awarded in 2006 for a program called “**truth**® or Consequences,” we have been able to increase the dose of **truth**® messages in rural and low population density communities to the mean national level of advertising in 18 states across 41 Designated Market Areas.

Overall Cost:

In its first year, **truth**®’s annual budget was approximately \$104 million, not including research and evaluation or staff salaries. In our fiscal year ending on June 30, 2008 (the last year for which we have audited numbers), the Foundation spent about \$40.4 million, with the same limitations. Through June 30, 2008, the Foundation spent a total of nearly \$600 million on the campaign. Due to an effective sunset clause in the Master Settlement Agreement (see below), budgets for **truth**® have declined precipitously in recent years.

Funding Sources:

 <1 % Federal (based on total expenditures on **truth**®) Starting in 2006, **truth**® benefitted from a three-year \$3.6 million matching grant from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which has helped increase delivery of the campaign to youth in rural communities that typically have less exposure to the campaign because of low cable television penetration.

 99 % Other, The American Legacy Foundation, a Washington, DC-based national public health foundation, provides funding and strategic direction for **truth**®. During its decade in operation, the Foundation has been funded almost entirely from settlement payments made pursuant to the 1998 Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) between the states and the tobacco industry.

percentages are NOT estimates

Outcomes: *costs deferred, outbreaks averted, deaths prevented.*

truth® kept an estimated 450,000 young people from smoking in its first four years (2000-2004), according to a peer-reviewed article published in the April 2009 of the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. (Farrelly et al, “*The*

Influence of the National truth® Campaign on Smoking Initiation”). Because one out of three youth smokers will die from tobacco-related disease, this translates into approximately 150,000 lives saved. Farrelly’s finding buttressed a 2005 study published in the *American Journal of Public Health*, which found that **truth®** was directly responsible for 300,000 fewer smokers in the first two years of its existence. **truth®** also saved as much as \$5.4 billion in medical care costs in its first two years, according to another peer-reviewed article from the April issue of the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. (Holtgrave et al, “*Cost-Utility Analysis of the National truth® Campaign to Prevent Youth Smoking*”). An explanation of the two 2009 estimates is provided in the answer to the next question.

Did you make any estimates regarding costs deferred, outbreaks averted or deaths prevented?

Farrelly’s estimate that **truth®** prevented 450,000 youth from starting to smoke in its first four years is based on data from a longitudinal sample of youth who were ages 12-17 when the study began in 1997.

Holtgrave’s estimate that during its first two years **truth®** recouped its costs and averted between \$1.9 and \$5.4 billion in medical costs relied on standard methods of cost and cost-utility analysis set out by the U.S. Panel on Cost-Effectiveness in Health and Medicine.

For more information on these studies, see: Farrelly et al, “*The Influence of the National truth® Campaign on Smoking Initiation*” and Holtgrave et al, “*Cost-Utility Analysis of the National truth® Campaign to Prevent Youth Smoking*.”

Additional Information:

truth® has won more than 300 advertising awards in a wide range of categories, including advertising efficacy.

Future Plans:

Currently, the Foundation faces a serious budgetary drop-off that may jeopardize its ability to develop and sustain its effective campaigns, including **truth®**. This is the result of two converging factors: (1) an effective sunset provision in the Master Settlement Agreement, whose multi-million payments provided the vast majority of the Foundation’s funding over the past decade; and (2) the global economic crisis. Although the Foundation’s Board of Directors and staff wisely set aside more than half of the first five years’ worth of settlement funds, the investment market crisis has had a severe, negative impact on these long-term reserves. The Foundation is currently hard at work to expand its network of partners and explore a range of alternate funding mechanisms to ensure the future of its public health programs, including **truth®**.