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Lessons Learned From Global Reviews of Mass Media Campaigns Designed to Reduce Smoking and Exposure to Secondhand Smoke

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The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is conducting several reviews of mass media campaigns to determine the kinds of campaign elements that contribute most to success. The purpose of the reviews is to aid states and other countries in developing their own campaigns to reduce smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke. The first 2 reviews (of campaigns to promote adult smoking cessation and youth tobacco use prevention) have been completed. Preliminary findings for the third review (of campaigns to reduce exposure to secondhand smoke) are available.

Media campaigns are an effective component of a comprehensive tobacco control program. Programs must determine ways to make their limited funds work most efficiently to change attitudes and behaviors related to smoking and secondhand smoke via media campaigns.

Data and results were solicited through a variety of channels, including CDC networks, GLOBALink, and the World Health Organization. Qualitative and quantitative data as well as published and unpublished data were analyzed to understand both study results and insights into target audiences. Key measurements used to determine

campaign effectiveness included changes in awareness, relevant knowledge, attitudes, and behavior.

Each campaign review produced unique findings on the following effective campaign elements: 1) a carefully targeted audience; 2) an effective message or combination of messages; 3) appropriate tone and format, including the use of emotion; 4) publicity and promotion through news media coverage; 5) sufficient media presence (reach, frequency, and duration); 6) thorough evaluation (formative, process, and outcome); and 7) synergy between the campaign and other elements of a comprehensive tobacco control program. Differences exist between the strategies and tactics needed for campaigns focused on individual change and campaigns focused on institutional or policy change.

The complete reviews illustrate key findings with examples of advertisements used in countries around the world.

Although limited by the incomplete and imperfect data collected globally, the findings provide a clear sense of direction to readers planning campaigns to encourage adult smoking cessation and youth tobacco use prevention and to reduce exposure to secondhand smoke.

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