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A TRUE STORIES CAMPAIGN UNIFORMLY INCREASED AWARENESS OF STATE-ASSISTED SMOKING CESSATION PROGRAMS IN MASSACHUSETTS

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Background: Media campaigns increase awareness of public health programs that assist smoking cessation (e.g. telephone quitline and insurance benefits). The True Stories Campaign launched in Massachusetts (MA) from Nov-Dec 2006 promoted the use of the telephone quitline and a new Medicaid insurance benefit that provided low-cost cessation treatment as part of Health Care Reform.

Objective: We evaluated the effectiveness of the True Stories Campaign on awareness of 1) the state telephone quitline and 2) the Mass Health smoking cessation benefit among the target population and by select demographic characteristics.

Methods & Analyses: MA adults age 18-98 were surveyed at baseline (n=3,000) and 2 months later (post-campaign, n=3,000). Awareness of the quitline and MassHealth benefit prior to and post-campaign were estimated and compared using proportion tests and logistic regression models.

Results: Awareness of the quitline increased from 26.6% at baseline to 52.5% after the campaign (Odds Ratio (OR) = 3.1, p<.001). Increases were largely invariant by respondent gender (men: OR = 3.3, women: OR=2.8), race (white/non Hispanic: OR=2.9, minorities: OR=3.7), insurance status (MassHealth recipient: OR=4.3, other insurance: OR=2.8), smoking status (former: OR=2.9, nondaily: OR=3.1, daily: OR=3.9) and age group (18-44: OR=2.7, 45-64: OR=3.1, 65+: OR=5.0). The campaign also increased awareness of the MassHealth Benefit from 15.7% to 23.7% (OR=1.7, p< 0.001) across many subpopulations including gender (OR=1.7 for both gender), race (OR=1.7 for all groups), insurance status (MassHealth recipient: OR=2.0, other insurance: OR=1.6), and slightly varied among age group (18-44: OR=2.7, 45-64: OR=1.9, 65+: OR=1.6). The results were robust to whether respondents correctly recalled their exposure to the campaign.

Conclusions: The brief media campaign increased awareness of the state telephone quitline and the insurance benefit in the target population. It was effective across several demographic groups, suggesting the applicability to the general adult population and potential cost-effectiveness of a larger campaign.