

A Campaign to Decrease Tobacco and Alternative Tobacco Use at Franklin High School and to Restore State Tobacco Prevention Funding Recently Cut by the Legislature

The goal of this under \$8,000, shoestring-budget campaign is two-fold. First it is designed to discourage tobacco-product (smoking and smokeless) initiation and use by high-school age youth who attend Franklin High School (**first phase**) and ultimately other Seattle and King County high schools (**second phase**, pending results of phase 1). Second, it seeks to influence three state lawmakers from the district that includes Franklin to increase funding for youth-oriented tobacco prevention and cessation at the state level from settlement funds sent to the State of Washington through the Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) (**third phase**).

Background/Problem: Data from 2010 collected from the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBS) survey of Seattle Public Schools (SPS) show that by grade 12, 4 in 10 Seattle high school seniors and 24% of freshmen have tried smoking.¹ However, the YRBS survey of the SPS show that the percentage of students who smoked one or more times in the last 30 days fell from 11.1% in 2008 to 8.5% in 2010—a far cry from 1995, when the number was 28.2%.¹ However, declines in smoking rates since 1999 among youth have leveled off in Washington since 2004, remaining mostly flat, with the statewide average at 12.7% in 2010.² The same Healthy Youth Survey data for the state also shows a rise in alternative tobacco product use. In 2010, about half of all youth tobacco users reported using some type of candy-flavored tobacco. In addition, 10.6% of 10th-graders used flavored tobacco products including little cigars, bidis, cloves, chew, spit, snus, or hookah.²

Goal 1: This campaign aims to have the percentage of Franklin students who smoked one or more times in the last 30 days fall 25% from 2010 levels, as measured by the YRBS Survey in 2012. The second goal is to record a drop in 25% of tobacco use and the use of alternative tobacco products (candy flavored tobacco products, bidis, etc.) in 2012 at Franklin from 2010, as measured by the Healthy Youth Survey, which gathers information on these behaviors and on these products' use.

This campaign will use photovoice advocacy by students at Franklin to develop a social marketing campaign that will target students at Franklin and other Seattle and King County high schools and the three lawmakers from the 37th Legislative District: Sen. Adam Kline, Rep. Sharon Tomiko Santos, and Rep. Eric Pettigrew (all Democrats, representing one of the state's most ethnically diverse districts). Photovoice is a process used by groups to identify, represent, and strengthen their communities by using photographic documentary techniques to provide evidence of community concern. It can focus on issues impacting vulnerable populations that can help inform community health interventions by providing perspectives on problems unknown to health professionals or outsiders.³ This low-cost social marketing and advocacy technique will seek to create behavior change—discouraging tobacco and alternative tobacco product use and initiation—among youth and, more importantly, educate lawmakers of the socio-ecological conditions in the district that are still promoting these products to minority youth and all youth. The campaign will involve direct advocacy to the three lawmakers with a policy objective of requesting additional state funding to support ongoing and additional tobacco cessation and prevention statewide and for Public Health-Seattle & King County (PHSKC).

Goal 2: The CDC recommends that Washington spend \$67.3 million annually on tobacco cessation and prevention programs, but the state as of 2011 allocated only \$13.4 million and has cut state those programs by 50% in the last 2 years.⁴ No new anti-tobacco media ads are being created, and the state’s quit line has reduced services.⁴ The goal is to increase funding for tobacco cessation advertising directed to youth minority audiences by 50 percent within 2 years from 2011, using MSA funds directed through the biennial budget. This could eventually pay for TV and radio ads similar to the state’s “Dear Me” campaign from January-February 2011, and it could support youth-to-youth messages based on research and media created by youth from Franklin and, if possible, from other schools that mimic Franklin.

Research on the truth® campaign, the anti-tobacco counter-marketing campaigns targeting youth, show it was responsible for reducing smoking by 22% nationwide among youth from 1999-2002.⁵ Washington state’s experience shows that a funded, comprehensive tobacco program drastically decreased tobacco use—all gains now in jeopardy because of drastic budget cuts. There will be a need by 2012 to backfill grant funding disappearing from the 15 Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) grants given by PHSKC for tobacco prevention to schools, local governments, and community organizations, including SPS.

Identify/justify the approach you’ve taken (education, advocacy, counter-advertising, etc)

This will be a social marketing campaign using photovoice techniques that will later be leveraged for issue advocacy at the state level to lobby to increase state funding for tobacco prevention. There is already CPPW grant funding in SPS to cultivate and organize student activists, who are working to educate their schools on the campus tobacco policy and related issues regarding youth tobacco use.⁷ The vision is for student leadership and student advocacy to promote tobacco and smoking cessation and initiation.

At Franklin, 3 classes of 10th and 11th graders will be recruited by faculty to work with student tobacco activists. The classes will be briefed that the desired “product” is a reduction in tobacco use by their peers in their school. Student activists will be the primary motivators. The classes also will show the problem of tobacco product and smokeless tobacco product advertising in the Central District. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) now prohibits outdoor advertising near schools and playgrounds, but it cannot ban tobacco sales in any particular type of sales outlet.⁸

Franklin’s ethnic makeup reflects the surrounding area of south and central Seattle. All told, 56% of the students are Asian, 31% African American, 8% Latino, 1% American Indian, and just 5% white.⁹ However, there is a higher degree of advertising for tobacco products in the area immediately near Franklin—a problem noted by instructor Miles Smith. The tobacco industry’s marketing techniques have historically targeted minority communities with corporate sponsorships and by using media to promote pro-tobacco messages and with now-banned billboard ads and especially with ads visible to youth at gas stations and convenience stores.¹⁰ What’s more, some non-whites have greater burdens of tobacco-related illnesses and deaths and are less likely to have cessation counseling and quit aids than whites.¹¹ However, in Washington, data show that a higher percentage of white high school age youth (19.4%) reported tobacco use compared to Asian youth (9.7%) and African American Youth (7.4%).¹²

Following class instruction from students activists and teachers about tobacco advertising to minorities and past practices of targeting youth, students will be instructed to document businesses within a 2-mile area of the school that feature tobacco product promotions (the “place”). Photovoice techniques by students will let them to capture the socio-ecological

environment that promotes tobacco use and initiation, through their eyes. The results of the survey work will be individual and group products. The students will receive some faculty guidance, but their products will be guided by their findings and their messages to their peers on evidence of tobacco companies marketing harmful products to them and their peers.

Show some preliminary work – messages, visuals

The messaging products will be branded by youth at Franklin for youth at Franklin, and for other youth in the city and county. The products (the “promotion”) to be created by students can be:

- YouTube videos lasting no more than 2 minutes with hard-hitting visuals and messages showing deliberate efforts by tobacco companies to hook youth on deadly products;
- Community maps highlighting businesses that cater to youth with tobacco company ads and their proximity to the school and public spaces like parks or places used by youth;
- Posters appealing for youth to rebel against manipulation by companies trying to exploit minority communities for profit;
- Facebook pages controlled by youth to promote their project and highlight their findings;
- A collection of printed images arranged to tell a story shaming state officials and lawmakers that by cutting tobacco prevention funds they are abandoning youth to companies that are peddling poison;
- A contest for musicians/spoken-word artists resulting in a song to portray the problem musically, but specific to the Central District;
- One-page flyers with historic images of past marketing practices by tobacco companies to minorities and the most egregious photo by Franklin students of tobacco products peddled in the Central District to raise outrage level in youth of exploitation.

Identify and justify your selection of the campaign’s target audience

The primary target audience is the entire student body at Franklin, and, if successful, other high school students in the city and county. They are potential future users of tobacco and related products, and they are targets of messaging of those products in the Central District. Research shows that initiation of and addiction to tobacco normally occur before young people are legally able to buy tobacco products—when they are also highly targeted by the tobacco industry. Research also shows that youth are strong allies to lead in tobacco control efforts and key partners in "denormalizing tobacco use."¹³ For this social marketing campaign to work, it must create significant buzz at the school, with the students themselves as owners of the message and leaders pushing for change in their immediate environment (school and surrounding areas, the “place.”) Through peer-to-peer communication from the SPS students engaged in tobacco advocacy, the program at Franklin can be shared informally with students throughout the SPS and with other high schools in King County.

The second primary audience will be lawmakers representing the 37th Legislative District, who will be engaged once the products by the youth are created. They are the “influencers” who will be able to debate funding issues for tobacco prevention at the state level. They can be motivated by: shame and self-interest (primary motivations), moral outrage, and a desire to promote policy in order to control products responsible for \$3 billion annually in direct and indirect state costs.¹⁴

Identify and justify the campaign’s primary messages

Recall the goal is to see a drop in tobacco product use and initiation at Franklin. The primary messages of this campaign’s first phase, targeting peers at Franklin, will be:

- Minorities and minority youth have historically been targeted by tobacco companies with products that harm youth and their communities.

- Past practices by large corporations continue today, but with new “disguises” such as smokeless tobacco products, and also traditional lethal products like cigarettes.
- Companies that don’t care about you want your money and want you hooked for life on products that kill nearly a half million people a year—yes they are ripping you off and playing you like fools and chumps.
- Minority neighborhoods continue to receive unfair treatment through the promotion of products that adversely harm many minority residents.
- Your state government is not helping you when it could—why aren’t your state lawmakers (one African American, one Japanese American, one Caucasian) spending big money from tobacco companies to solve this problem; why are they abandoning you.

The secondary messages to state lawmakers, direct from the students, in the third phase of the campaign roll-out would be:

- You are our representatives, and two of you reflect the ethnic makeup of Franklin, so why are you allowing these predatory companies to target young people, specifically minority youth, in our community with these ads?
- Why is the state not spending the money from tobacco companies on tobacco cessation and prevention programs, which help young people like Franklin students?
- Why has the state cut funding tobacco prevention programs in half the last 2 years?
- What pledge will you make to Franklin that you do not want us using products that can kill—will you not only restore lost funding, but increase funding for tobacco prevention programs that we know work like those run by PHSKC?

The primary messages target high-school-age students, and they are specific to the ethnic make up of Franklin and the surrounding area. They also are specific to the group that is being impacted by the health problem the campaign is targeting for change. The benefits offered will be more control by the youth against conspiring and outside interests who want to harm them and who have relentlessly preyed upon them for decades, and who continue that practice where they live today. Control will be quitting tobacco products or not using them. The secondary messages are tailored to the lawmakers who serve the Central District, and they focus on motivating lawmakers to reallocate MSA funds to tobacco prevention they have been cutting in past years. Research in Washington shows that when tobacco prevention and control efforts received sufficient funding to combat tobacco use, its use declined among residents.¹⁴

What message appeals will you use?

Empowerment will drive this social marketing effort. The messages seek to empower youth that they are victims of a past injustice that continues today, and that in rejecting this injustice by not supporting it, by not using tobacco products (smoking and nonsmoking), they help themselves and their community. These messages also will tap into negative emotions such as distrust and anger, similar to those successfully harnessed during the truth® campaign. The “medium as the message,” which can be “edgy” and anti-authoritarian, also is fundamental to the success of this effort. Providing persons with photography/video tools to document their community lets them engage in change and overcome barriers to change (the “price”). The technique also can sustain participation in a desired outcome, such as not starting tobacco products or quitting them, between the time of implementation and the assessment of an intervention.³

What media channels will you use and why?

Social Media/School Space: The media channels will be those already described for the first phase at Franklin: social media used by youth (Facebook, YouTube, etc.), printed materials to be shared at Franklin (photo displays and poster displays), and music through a contest. The first

phase will a display of the products created by the three classes at Franklin, featured prominently in a public place in the school with support from school administration. Franklin is still the focus of the campaign, and the media products and rollout reflect that. This project would include: 10 videos (30 seconds to 2 minutes in length, 3-5 posters, a collection of still images (15-20), 2,000 8.5x11 and 2,000 11x7 flyers/posters. Information would be shared by students reaching out to other students at high schools in Seattle, with the help of the student tobacco prevention leaders. If possible, students from Franklin could invite their peers from other schools to visit Franklin for a possible mini-summit of students fighting harmful practices by tobacco companies. (This is the phase two element of the campaign). If the messages are credible, they will become “sticky” and be consumed by other students in the area.

News Media: The student tobacco activists (those funded by the CPPW grant) also would be charged with organizing a media event about the school’s work by writing press releases to be shared with major media (TV and radio stations, Seattle Times, Cable News Northwest, wire services), specialty media (the Skanner, Asian community newspapers, neighborhood papers). SPS also would need to support a rollout event by sending releases from its communications office. This likely would draw media attention if it is a student-driven event. During a media event, the youth participants will specifically emphasize that state funding for tobacco prevention has been cut, that their communities are at risk, and that without help from the state, minority communities will continue to suffer. Media coverage would circulate the issue into the public’s consciousness and motivate advocacy and political allies.

Direct Advocacy: The final phase engaging lawmakers would be one of three approaches: invitations to them to visit Franklin and get a tour of the neighborhood by the student documentarians. Media products would be displayed and shared in a half-hour get-together. A group of youth leaders from the three classes also could attend the town hall meetings the lawmakers host throughout the year to share their findings and publicly shame the lawmakers for allowing tobacco prevention funding to be cut. For a final approach, and perhaps also very effective because of the Olympia press corps, students could present their findings (posters on foam core boards, handouts, a display board) during a hearing by a state House or Senate committee addressing health issues. For this outreach, teacher collaboration with student tobacco activists would be needed.

How will you evaluate the campaign?

The campaign’s impact can be judged using several metrics. Its success can be measured by its process evaluation objectives, of organizing and executing a student-led photovoice initiative to raise awareness of youth smoking and the sale of tobacco and related product and to give students leadership and communications skills. By 2012, results from the YRBS and Healthy Youth Surveys will be collected, from which measurements against 2010 data can be made if the impact objectives occurred for a 25% reported reduction in students who smoked one or more times in the last 30 days and a reported 25% drop in tobacco use and the use of alternative tobacco products. The more ambitious impact objective, of motivating local state lawmakers to secure funding allocations in a hostile budget environment, will be easier to determine in the supplemental budget process in the spring of 2012. Even if this does not succeed, the advocacy could lay the groundwork for restored tobacco prevention funding in following legislative sessions. Finally, additional process objectives of attracting media attention to a photovoice initiative by students should be measurable in terms of the number of stories generated, the number of visitors to any of the student Facebook pages generate, the viewer count on any YouTube videos, and the number of high schools (ideally in greater King County, and even

Pierce and Snohomish counties) that embrace this project to raise awareness about the marketing of smoking and nonsmoking products to youth by tobacco and smokeless tobacco companies.

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