Center for Public Health
Systems Science

GEORGE WARREN BROWN
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Health Communications in Tobacco Prevention and Control

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Best Practices User Guides

BEST PRACTICES USER GUIDES

Since 2008, the Center for Public Health Systems Science at the Brown School at Washington University in St. Louis has collaborated with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Office on Smoking and Health to develop a set of user guides to accompany the *Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs—2014*. Each guide is developed through a three-step process of consultation with topic experts, literature review and analysis, and external review. Three User Guides have been published to date: *Coalitions*, *Youth Engagement*, and *Health Equity in Tobacco Prevention and Control*.

Project Goals

- Provide evidence-based rationale for developing specific components of comprehensive tobacco control programs
- Translate broad evidence-based guidelines into practical implementation strategies
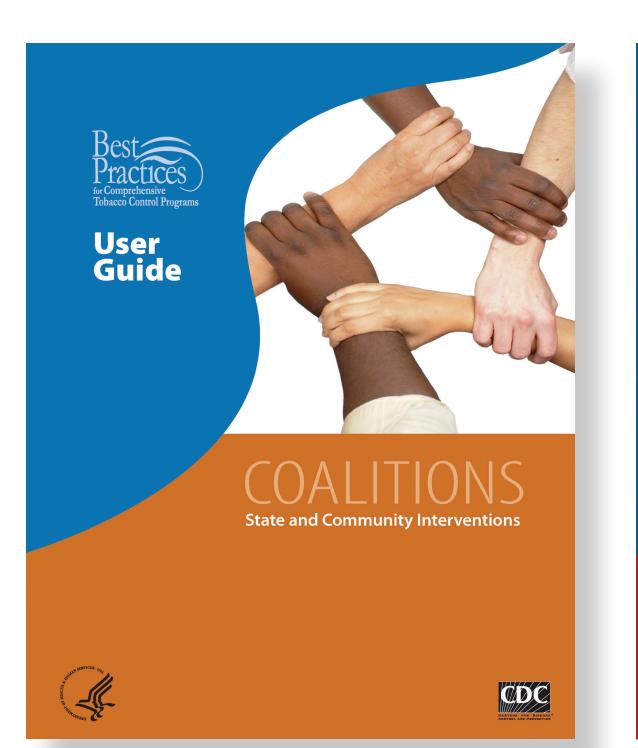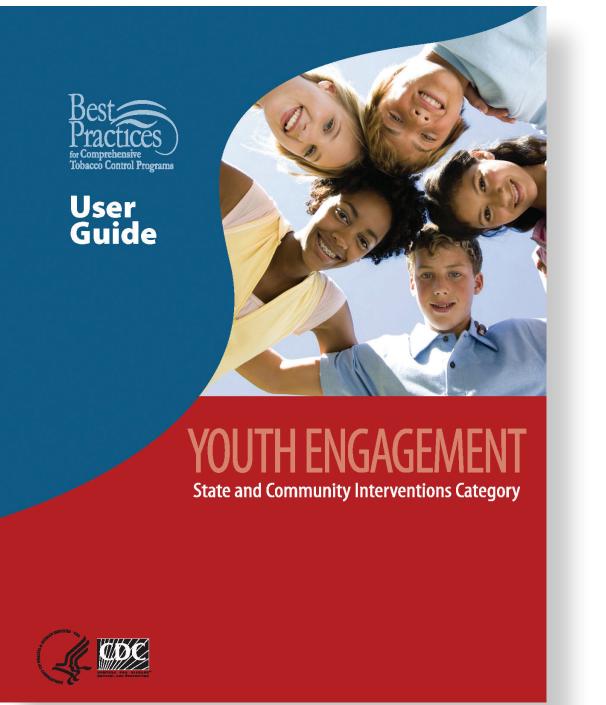
Guide Audience

- State and local tobacco control program managers
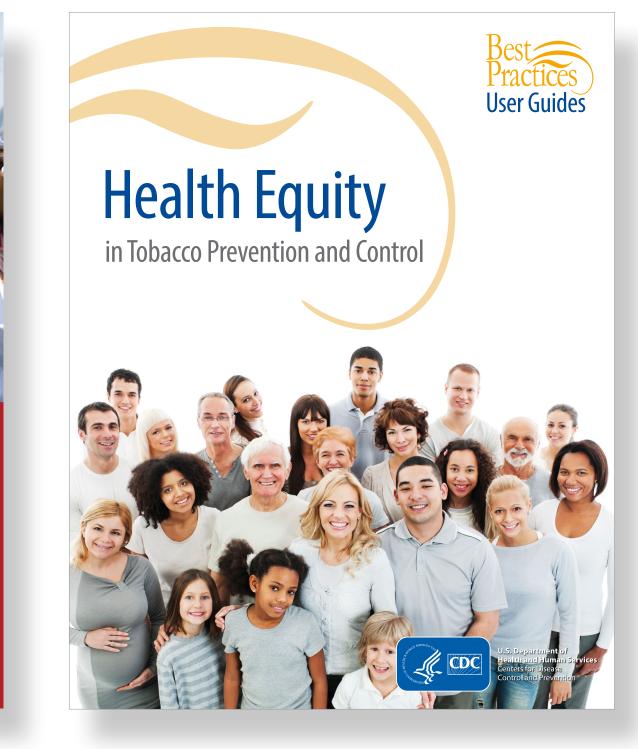- National, state, and local networks, foundations, and other groups in tobacco control

Tour of a User Guide

Each user guide is organized into seven sections:

- **Making the Case** – Presents key points about why it is important for tobacco control programs to work on the topic
- **Brief History** – Provides background and history of the topic
- **How to** – Gives instructions on how to develop, implement, and manage the topic
- **Providing Support** – Shares suggestions on how state programs can support the topic
- **In Action** – Provides real-world examples of the topic
- **Case for Investment** – Presents information about the importance of the topic
- **Resources** – Identifies publications, toolkits, and websites to help in planning efforts

HEALTH COMMUNICATIONS USER GUIDE

The *Health Communications in Tobacco Prevention and Control* User Guide is currently in CDC clearance. This user guide focuses on how tobacco control programs can implement effective health communications strategies. Health communications strategies are an essential part of programs because they help to:

- Reduce tobacco use and secondhand smoke exposure;
- Counter the tobacco industry's extensive advertising and promotion efforts;
- Shape patterns of population-wide tobacco use;
- Reduce tobacco-related disparities; and
- Create a return on investment.

Types of Communications Strategies

Health communications strategies empower people to change behaviors and encourage communities to adopt policies to reduce tobacco use, prevent initiation, and limit exposure to secondhand smoke. Health communications include three types of strategies:

- **Paid Media** strategies pay to place ads on TV, radio, billboards, online platforms, or in print;
- **Earned Media** strategies generate free coverage in the press, on social media, and through public service announcements; and
- **Program Communications** strategies deliver messages through program websites, community engagement, and communicating with stakeholders.
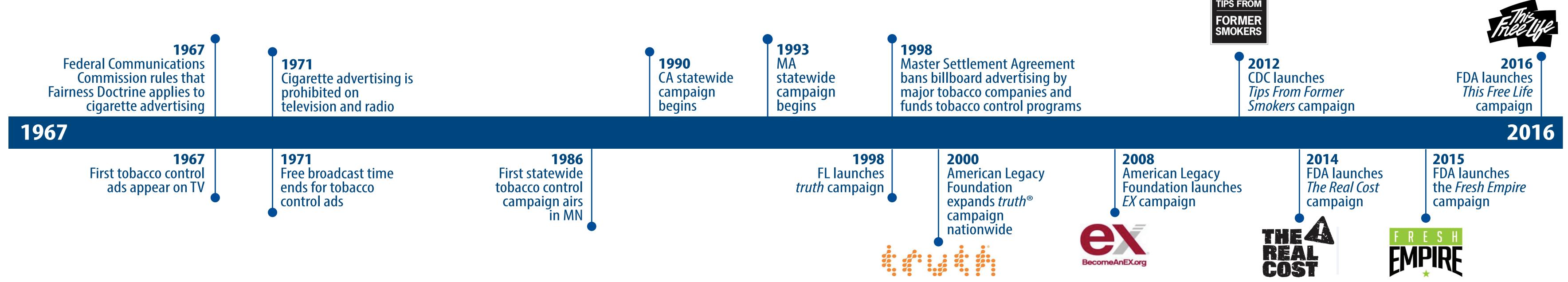
Implementing Health Communications Strategies

The User Guide includes information for program staff and partners on developing and implementing successful health communications strategies, including how to:

- **Develop a communications plan** to guide how health communications strategies will be implemented
- **Research the intended audience** to select influential messages and identify communications channels that will reach the audience
- **Use a mix of communications strategies** to increase the likelihood that messages reach the intended audience, increase the number of times people see or hear messages, and enhance message credibility
- **Develop, pretest, and place paid media ads** to reach large numbers of people with key messages
- **Generate coverage in the press and on social media** to extend the reach of messages at a low cost
- **Develop program communications** to share campaign updates with internal program staff and external partners
- **Reduce tobacco-related disparities** by recruiting diverse staff, developing cultural competence, and creating that messages resonate with special populations
- **Make adjustments and respond to problems** that may arise when strategies are implemented
- **Evaluate communications efforts** to determine if communications strategies are reaching the audience and having the desired impact

Published user guides are available on the CDC's website at:
https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/stateandcommunity/

History of Tobacco Control Communications

1967 Federal Communications Commission rules that Fairness Doctrine applies to cigarette advertising	**1971** Cigarette advertising is prohibited on television and radio		**1990** CA statewide campaign begins	**1993** MA statewide campaign begins	**1998** Master Settlement Agreement bans billboard advertising by major tobacco companies and funds tobacco control programs		**2012** CDC launches *Tips From Former Smokers* campaign	**2016** FDA launches *This Free Life* campaign

1967 —— **2016**

1967 First tobacco control ads appear on TV	**1971** Free broadcast time ends for tobacco control ads	**1986** First statewide tobacco control campaign airs in MN	**1998** FL launches *truth* campaign	**2000** American Legacy Foundation expands *truth* campaign nationwide	**2008** American Legacy Foundation launches *EX* campaign	**2014** FDA launches *The Real Cost* campaign	**2015** FDA launches the *Fresh Empire* campaign

IN ACTION

Case Study #1: North Carolina

North Carolina Tobacco Prevention Control Branch reduces tobacco-related disparities by launching digital communications campaign

North Carolina realized that a small amount of funding available from CDC could have a greater impact by reaching a smaller, high-risk group than by trying to reach the general population. They decided to use digital media to focus on the LGBT population not reached by their typical communications strategies. The campaign placed CDC's *Tips From Former Smokers* ads on smartphones, tablets, and computers. In just eight weeks, the campaign resulted in:

Brian's Tip digital ad used by North Carolina

- 1.75 million views of campaign ads
- 2,000 click-throughs from ads to QuitlineNC.com
- 45% increase in quitline activity
- 7% increase in quitline from LGBT smokers

Case Study #2: Florida

Tobacco Free Florida uses social media to engage and connect with audiences

After beginning a hard-hitting media campaign about the health effects of tobacco use, Tobacco Free Florida (TFF) felt it needed a positive counterpoint to the serious tone of campaign ads. TFF began a Facebook and Twitter campaign to create a supportive community and focus on the positive health outcomes of quitting. The campaign features:

Example of TFF engaging followers on Facebook

- Content planned in advance and developed in real-time to respond to current events
- Daily interaction with followers encouraging them to quit, congratulating them on their successes, and responding to requests for information with helpful resources
- Frequent evaluation using social media analytics to refine the strategy

Washington University in St. Louis