2007 Evaluation of the North Carolina TRU Media Campaign:

Executive Summary

November 30, 2007
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North Carolina’s teen tobacco prevention and cessation initiative, funded by the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF), has included a statewide media campaign called *Tobacco.Reality.Unfiltered*, or TRU, since 2004. The campaign utilizes a theme of the serious health consequences of tobacco use affecting real people in North Carolina and is evaluated using telephone surveys with a sample of NC youth. After a baseline survey in early 2004, follow-up surveys to examine the impact of the campaign took place later in 2004 and in 2006. These follow-up evaluations showed favorable youth reaction to and increasing youth awareness of the campaign. The HWTF subsequently increased the budget for the TRU media campaign in the fall of 2006 from $1.1 million to $4.5 million annually. The 2007 TRU media evaluation began four months after the funding increase.

**Highlights from the evaluation of the 2007 TRU media campaign include:**

- Youth awareness of the TRU campaign increased by nearly one-third from 2006 to 2007.
  - Awareness of the campaign rose from 54% in 2006 to 71% in 2007 (Figure 1).
  - Over 500,000 youth (11-17) in NC have seen and are aware of the NC TRU campaign.
- Awareness of TRU campaign brands and slogans rose significantly from 2006 to 2007.
  - Youth awareness of the TRU brand rose from 42% in 2006 to 58% in 2007.
  - Youth awareness of the *Tobacco.Reality.Unfiltered* slogan increased from 48% in 2006 to 55% in 2007.
- NC youth responded well to the ads run in 2007.
  - More than 95% of NC youth who had seen the 2007 ads reported that they were convincing, attention-grabbing, and gave good reasons not to use tobacco (Figure 2).
  - Over 25% of NC youth reported that they talked to their friends about the ads, indicating high “chat value”.
- Anti-tobacco and pro-health attitudes among NC youth have remained stable and strong.
  - Over 90% of NC youth did not believe that young people who smoke cigarettes have more friends, that smoking cigarettes makes youth look cool or fit in, or that smoking makes youth look attractive.

**The 2007 evaluation also notes:**

- Current research continues to support inclusion of a mass media campaign as a critical component of North Carolina’s comprehensive tobacco prevention and control program.
- One-third (34.2%) of NC youth remain susceptible to smoking. While the long-term impact of the TRU campaign on this population is inconclusive, the TRU campaign must continue to target this group of at-risk youth.
- For the TRU media campaign to continue to move in the right direction in constructing and delivering effective messages that best impact NC youth, it should aim to:
  - Increase campaign awareness by 2008 to over 80% (a rate that would approach levels seen in other successful state and national campaigns).
  - Develop and air new ads on an annual basis to continue to capture youth attention. (Current ads may have reached their maximum impact in terms of receptivity among NC youth.)
  - Increase ad “chat value” (the percentage of youth that report talking to their friends about the ads) from the current rate of 25% to 30%.
  - Continue to integrate the TRU campaign with statewide community and school programs to maximize campaign effectiveness. (2007 data indicate that nearly one out of three youth participated in a school or community event in the last year to prevent tobacco use.)
Figure 1: Awareness of TRU Campaign among NC Youth (2004-07)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time 2 (2004)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time 3 (2006)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time 4 (2007)</td>
<td>71</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Reactions to 2007 TRU Ads among NC Youth

- Ad was convincing: 70%
- Ad grabbed attention: 60%
- Ad gave good reasons not to smoke: 80%
- Talked to friends about ad: 30%
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