

Florida launches \$17 million anti-tobacco campaign

Aimed at teens, parents

SPECIAL TO FLORIDA WEEKLY

The Department of Health has launched a \$17 million statewide social marketing and public relations anti-tobacco campaign – the largest in a decade. The multi-faceted Tobacco Free Florida campaign showcases print, television, radio and online advertising; and features cutting edge interactive platforms, community events, educational outreach and branded programs. Partnerships with renowned brands are expanding the vast reach and impact of this vital campaign to combat the pervasive problem of tobacco use in the Sunshine State where each year, more than 28,000 Floridians die from smoking.

Targeting the Florida market with particular emphasis on the 11-17 age group, adults 18-24, small businesses, chronic disease sufferers, pregnant women, low-income households and parents, the campaign will touch millions statewide.

“Tobacco Free Florida promotes healthy habits among Florida’s youth, emphasizes that smoking cessation is the single most important step that smokers can take to enhance the length and quality of their lives, and educates the entire population about the dangers of cigarettes, smokeless tobacco and secondhand smoke,” said Florida Surgeon General Dr. Ana Viamonte Ros.

The comprehensive media campaign features compelling print, billboard, broadcast

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and online advertising. The initial series of ads educates consumers on tobacco cessation, the dangers of smokeless tobacco and smoking during pregnancy, and encourages businesses to comply with the Florida Clean Indoor Air Act. More than 200,000 television and radio spots will air in every major market in Florida, and online geo-targeted impressions will exceed 400 million.

The first campaign ad, targeting adult smokers, depicts a child playing catch by himself as a cautionary voiceover warns of smoking’s annual death toll – 31,000 children are left fatherless. Launched during Super Bowl XLII, the highest rated championship game in a decade, the commercial surpassed all expectations with more than 10 million viewers statewide. The commercial was also featured on YouTube and

amassed more than 270,000 views online. Print and television coverage of the commercial’s launch extended into nine major markets – Miami, Jacksonville, Orlando, Tampa/St. Petersburg, Tallahassee, Fort Myers/Naples, Gainesville, West Palm Beach and Panama City. The commercial continues to receive significant airtime, running during primetime shows such as “American Idol.”

The Tobacco Free Florida website, www.tobaccofreeflorida.com is a comprehensive resource for both smokers and non-smokers including cessation tools, tobacco statistics and a calendar of statewide events that campaign teams will visit. In addition, the site features all the interactive components of the campaign, free music downloads from Florida bands and broadcast commercials.

Given that 90 percent of smokers begin before the age of 18, and 87% of teenagers are online, the campaign reaches this key demographic by using non-traditional marketing methods and taking advantage of the tremendous popularity of online interactive technologies like YouTube. The campaign has partnered with YouTube to sponsor the YouCare video contest where entrants share why they don’t smoke. The contest allows users to vote for their favorite submission and the top 50 videos will be shown on the first ever statewide On-Demand channel devoted exclusively to the campaign, reaching more than 2 million subscribers to Comcast and Bright House Networks Digital Cable. A panel of judges will pick the grand prize winner who will receive an Apple iMac computer and an iPod touch.



Quitline (1-877-U-CAN NOW) offers free nicotine replacement therapies such as nicotine patches, gum, and lozenges and provides confidential telephone counseling to cigarette or chewing tobacco users. For the first time, Quitline will leverage web-based communication strategies to increase the use of this cessation tool. The Tobacco Free Florida website provides the technology for smokers to enter their phone number, click the “Call to Quit” icon, and be automatically connected to a Quitline representative. Users also have the ability to schedule their call from a Quitline representative by submitting an online form. ■

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