

# BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES MARIJUANA USE AWARENESS

November 2015

Better Health for All



## BACKGROUND

The Board of Supervisors requested that a *Marijuana Use Awareness Campaign* be conducted.

The Board approved overall communication activities for the primary audience of pre-teen and teenage young people.

## THE GOALS

The goals of the campaign are:

- Cut through the advertising “noise” to get the attention of the primary audience;
- Engage our primary audience; and
- Raise awareness with our primary audience.

## THE RESULTS

Sneak peak at the results:

- Over 6,000 websites visits;
- Engagement on social media.



# THE PROCESS

# CAMPAIGN DEVELOPMENT

SCVHHS Communication conducted an extensive Request for Qualifications process recommended by the County's Procurement Department.

Better World Advertising qualified to conduct communication services. They were selected for the Marijuana Awareness Campaign because of the scope of their experience in addressing social issues. They have conducted awareness campaigns on a number of topics including tobacco use, suicide prevention, diabetes, meth use, HIV, binge drinking, and LGBTQ issues.

They developed ads for the Public Health Department's "When You Smoke They Smoke" campaign, the 2014 World No Tobacco Day and California ads to increase Medi-Cal enrollment statewide.

BWA has contracted with a number of organizations, including the city of Chicago, Contra Costa County, Sonoma County, and the New York State Department of Health.

# RESEARCH REVIEW

Better World Advertising (BWA) conducted extensive research. Articles, abstracts and case studies by psychiatrists, pharmacists, researchers in the field of drug and alcohol use, researchers in cognitive brain functioning, and communication specialists were reviewed.

The topic of marijuana use among young people was specifically researched. Teens recognize when they are being manipulated to think or behave a certain way. Research showed that when education programs use scare tactics in their messaging “they are either counterproductive or ineffective, and that students learn better with a low fear appeal message and with a credible communicator.” (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1997).

Further, with teens, fear appeals may cause them to tune out a message or not believe it, or worse be encouraged to do the opposite of the intended behavior because they like taking risks.<sup>[1]</sup>

<sup>[1]</sup> Prevention First (2008). Ineffectiveness of Fear Appeals in Youth Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug (ATOD) Prevention. Springfield, IL: Prevention First

# FOCUS GROUPS

BWA's initial research and information-gathering led to the development of initial concepts, content and graphic design for the campaign. These concepts were then reviewed in focus groups conducted with the primary audience.

Informal research was conducted with individuals between the ages of 14 and 18, both males and females. They reviewed art and messaging. When asked, which poster and message will get your attention, the *Marijuana makes you dumb* message consistently ranked 1<sup>st</sup>.

Formal focus groups were conducted with students were ages 14-17 years. Initial findings showed this audience had a positive response to the ads and did not find them confusing. They felt the ads were intended to discourage marijuana use (anti-drug) and in no way were the ads perceived as encouraging drug use. They commented that they like the ads because they were, “honest, “not cheesy,” and “not extreme”.

A horizontal green banner with a dark green background. On the left side, there are several overlapping, semi-transparent light green diamond shapes. The text "THE CAMPAIGN" is written in white, uppercase, sans-serif font, centered horizontally within the banner.

# THE CAMPAIGN

# CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

Based on research, communication best practices and local focus groups with the target audience, Better World Advertising recommended strategy, message and designs for the Marijuana Use Awareness Campaign.

For the primary audience, and considering the limited budget, the focus of activities is where young people are (movie theaters, buses, etc.) and where they communicate (social media).

# CAMPAIGN ELEMENTS

- Website established [www.weedisdumb.org](http://www.weedisdumb.org)
- Social Media: Facebook, Pandora, Twitter
- Bus Ads
- Movie Theater Ads



The image shows a Facebook post from the Santa Clara Valley Medical Center. The post is sponsored and features a campaign titled "Weed is Dumb". The main text of the post reads: "Weed lowers your IQ, ruins your grades and can land you in a lower-paying job. Marijuana doesn't kill you." Below the text is a photograph of a young man's face with the text "It just makes you dumb." overlaid. At the bottom of the post, there is a "Learn More" button and the website address "weedisdumb.org".

**Santa Clara Valley Medical Center**  
Sponsored · 🌐

Weed lowers your IQ, ruins your grades and can land you in a lower-paying job. Marijuana doesn't kill you.

**It just makes you dumb.**

**Weed is Dumb**  
Weed affects teens differently ... [Learn More](#)  
weedisdumb.org



# RESULTS

# CAMPAIGN ELEMENTS

## Facebook Analytics Overview:

Ad 1 (boy): 38,148 reached

Ad 2 (girl): 39,683 reached



**Santa Clara Valley Medical Center**  
Sponsored · 🌐

Weed lowers your IQ, ruins your grades and can land you in a lower-paying job. Marijuana doesn't kill you.

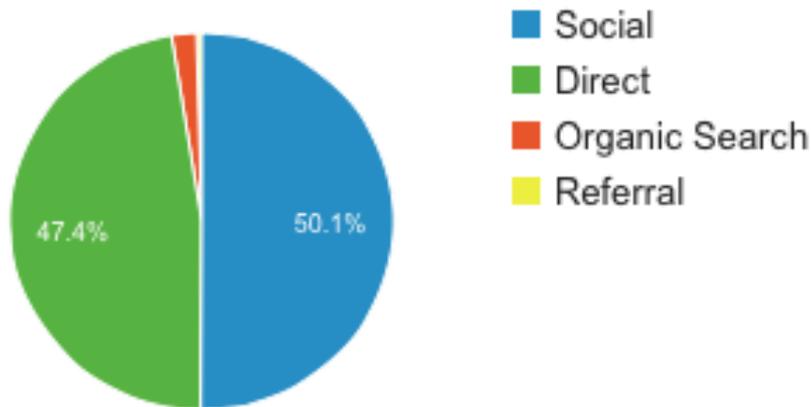
**It just makes you dumb.**

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weedisdumb.org

# CAMPAIGN RESULT

## CALL TO ACTION: GO TO WEBSITE

### Top Channels



Social: Facebook & Twitter.

Direct: Saw an add and directly typed the url into their browser.

Organic: Searched for information.

Referral: It was shared from Facebook.

# CAMPAIGN RESULT WEBSITE VISITORS

Visitors to the website have been consistent - an average rate of about 150 per day, of which over 80% are new visitors.

■ New Visitor ■ Returning Visitor

