



HEALTH ANSWERS

Talking About Smoking So Teens Will Listen

(NAPSA)—Parents know it's hard to get teenagers to listen—even when discussing their health and safety. Fortunately, one effective public health campaign has found a way to reach teens and reinforce the dangers of smoking.

Since 2000, the truth® youth smoking prevention campaign, from the American Legacy Foundation®, has been broadcasting advertisements about the health effects of tobacco use and the marketing tactics of the tobacco industry. The campaign has been cited as being a key contributor to significant declines in youth smoking.

A three-year, \$3.6 million matching grant from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is making it possible for the campaign to expand to a number of additional cities across the country. The campaign rolled out in 2006 and featured two television ads, “Body Bags” and “1200.” The two commercials consistently rank among the most recognized truth® ads ever among teens. The first ad illustrates the deadly toll of tobacco use each and every day in America. In the “1200” ad, a group of teens marches toward what is identified on-screen as “outside a major tobacco company.” Each teen wears a T-shirt with a number separated by a slash from the number 1200 (e.g., 1/1200 or 25/1200). Viewers eventually see 1200 numbered teens on the street in front of the building. All at once they fall to the ground, unmoving. One teen remains standing and holds a sign that says “Tobacco kills 1200 people a day.” On the sign's reverse side it reads “Ever think of taking a day off?”

In the “Body Bags” ad, a van and semitruck pull up to what is



Effective ads are helping young people to reject tobacco and show them that if they have started smoking, it is possible to quit.

identified as “outside a major tobacco company.” Teens pile out of the van and begin unloading heavy body bags, then stack them on the sidewalk until there is a wall of body bags covering the corner. A teen speaks into a bullhorn and asks people working in the building if they know “how many people tobacco kills every day,” then tells them “We're going to leave these here so you can see what 1200 people actually looks like.”

Reaching youth is especially important for the foundation, given that more than 80 percent of smokers start before they turn 18 years old. In 2006, the University of Michigan reported in its annual health findings, “Monitoring the Future,” that the historic decline in daily smoking among younger U.S. teens has leveled off. This news makes expanding the campaign even more important. A new wave of commercials will air in 2008 as part of the second phase of the grant.

For more information, visit www.americanlegacy.org.

Note to Editors: CDC funds for grant years 2007 and 2008 are being matched 2.1 to 1 by the American Legacy Foundation and will continue for an additional year (2009) subject to availability of funds. The federal share of the money accounts for 33 percent, or \$2.4 million, of the total funds being used for the truth® or Consequences youth prevention project (Grant #5H75DP000610-02). The remaining 67 percent will be the matching, nonfederal share provided by the foundation, for approximately \$4.9 million.