

Public Health Communications Awards

APPLICATION: CAMPAIGN WITH THE MOST IMPACTFUL OUTCOMES

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Jurisdiction size (Please check one):	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Large (Population exceeds 700,000)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Medium (Population less than 700,000; more than 200,000)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Small (Population less than 200,000; more than 50,000)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Very Small (Population less than 50,000)	

ABOUT THE COMMUNICATIONS CAMPAIGN

Name Of Communications Campaign	Protect Your Pets, Vaccinate Them Against Rabies
Brief Campaign Overview (200 Words Or Less)	This campaign was designed to increase rabies vaccination rates in San Mateo County, and once people vaccinate their pets, we can capture their contact information and follow up and encourage licensing. We shifted from historical "it's the law!" messaging to focus instead on the impact of rabies and lost pets on pets, their owners, and the community as a whole.
Campaign Start Date	6/9/15
Campaign End Date	Main rabies messaging done 9/1/15, licensing work ongoing

CAMPAIGN PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

What is the purpose of this campaign? Does it address an underlying community need? Please describe why the campaign was developed. You are encouraged to submit evidence of need (e.g., local news stories, internal reports, testimonials, data, community health assessments) as an addendum to this form.

This campaign was designed to increase rabies vaccination rates and pet licensing rates in San Mateo County. In cities across the County, licensing rates hovered around 20%, and rabies vaccination rates were not much better. This creates a public health issue because rabies is endemic in San Mateo County and can infect pets (see [CDPH data on infected animals](#)). In 2014, San Mateo County had 922 reported animal bites, and only 28% of those were by licensed, vaccinated dogs or cats. Rabies is almost always fatal in people.

Does your campaign address an issue related to health equity? How?

Yes, everyone has the right to live in a healthy neighborhood, and that includes being able to spend time outside and not have to worry about getting bitten by a pet that may have rabies.

What population was this campaign targeted to reach? How did you plan to reach them?

This campaign had several target audiences:

- > San Mateo County pet owners. We reached them through web and social media posts, advertising (including billboards, targeted [TV and movie theater ads](#), public transport ads, targeted print/online local newspaper ads), significant media coverage, and through several cities in our county, who helped us spread the word via their digital channels and at community events. This outreach and advertising generated more than 10 million impressions. After the initial rabies focus of the campaign, we're continuing to refine our licensing materials (e.g. application, reminder postcards) to try new channels and messaging to increase licensing.
- > Local veterinarians and breeders (both to encourage them to report the rabies vaccinations they give and to use them as a conduit for reaching the public). We reached them via letters from a fellow local vet.
- > Local providers (to inform them about bite reporting procedure). We reached them via the CAHAN message system.

Could this campaign be replicated or transferred to other jurisdictions? Please explain.

Yes, any other jurisdiction could replicate this campaign using our messaging and outreach ideas.

What partners did you work with in planning and implementing this campaign?

We worked with several local city officials, a few local vets, and our animal control and licensing contractor, Peninsula Humane Society. We also worked with advertising vendors.

To what extent does the campaign leverage existing resources without creating new costs?

It leveraged existing relationships to help push the word out via city, vet, and provider networks for free or at a low cost. It also leveraged web and social media tools to get the word out for free. The remaining advertising budget came from a dedicated portion of the County's animal licensing revenues.

OUTCOMES

Did you test or evaluate your campaign? If so, how?

Yes, we measured the number of reported rabies vaccinations and licenses per month before and after the campaign.

What were the outcomes of this campaign? To what extent were your objectives achieved?

Various pieces of the campaign began in June and continued through August. From June to July 2015, the number of rabies vaccinations/month increased 27% (and July 2015 was up 19% over July 2014, so that increase wasn't just a seasonal variation). The number of vaccinations/month continued to stay high in August 2015, which was up 35% over August 2014, and for the rest of the year: September-December 2015 was up 15% over September-December 2014. Following our strategy of beginning with rabies and transitioning to licensing, the monthly number of licenses issued from September 2015-March 2016 was 8% higher than the number issued from September 2014-March 2015.

To what extent does the campaign shift thinking about health from individual medical care to community / public health / equity issues?

The campaign helps increase the public's awareness of the larger community consequences of failing to vaccinate their pets—that someone else could get sick or die from rabies, and that it's our responsibility as a community to ensure that everyone feels safe walking down the street or enjoying time outside.

To what extent were earned media articles, letters to the editor, and op-eds published about this project?

We used the California drought as a timely hook to get media attention to our campaign launch (the drought draws wild animals, which may carry rabies, closer to homes in search of water).

- [Warning: Drought Increases Rabies Risk For Pets, People](#), *CBS Bay Area*
- [Drought Increases Rabies Risk For Bay Area Pets](#), *ABC 7*
- [County officials say rabies risk up with drought](#), *San Mateo Daily Journal*
- [Bay Area Officials Warn of Rabies Risk as Drought Worsens](#), *NBC Bay Area*
- [Drought Causing Increase Risk of Rabies in San Mateo County](#), *Belmont Patch*
- [Drought could worsen rabies risk](#), *Half Moon Bay Review*
- [California drought raises the risk of rabies](#), *The Huffington Post*
- [Drought increases Bay Area rabies risk](#), *KRON 4*

To what extent does the campaign inform and lead to personal and collective action to improve population health?

The goal of this campaign was to educate people and motivate them to vaccinate their pets, which has the larger population health benefit of protecting the community against rabies.

How have you used what you have learned from this experience? How will use what you have learned to improve your next communications campaign?

From this experience, I learned to focus on the benefits related to what people care about the most, e.g. health benefits to their pets, their families, and their communities, versus taking a tougher “it’s the law” messaging stance. I will continue to use this audience-first approach in all future communications campaigns.

IMPACT

Was baseline data collected for the target audience prior to campaign implementation?

Yes, we collected data on the number of reported rabies vaccinations and licenses per month before the campaign.

Were results among the target audience measured during the campaign?

Yes, we collected data on the number of reported rabies vaccinations and licenses per month during the campaign.

How were youth, disadvantaged populations, and other groups at high risk included in the development and public voice of the campaign?

Our goal was to reach all pet owners, regardless of age, socioeconomic status or other factors. We made sure to include information on low-cost vaccination clinics in all our outreach materials to help those who may not be able to afford vaccination. We also reached a younger audience via social media, including using several popular animal-related memes:





Were social media, mobile phones, and other technology utilized in the campaign?
Yes, we created many social media posts for this campaign and distributed them via San Mateo County Health System's Facebook and Twitter handles, as well as giving them to our community and city partners for them to use on their own social media platforms.

Can we share this application with other local health officials who are interested in communications best practices?
Of course!

Please email your completed application by Friday, May 27, 2016 to:

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