

Social Marketing Activities

North Carolina's Turning Point

North Carolina used a portion of its Turning Point funds to create and fill a Full Time Equivalent social marketing consultant position, and to have monies available to support planning and “intervention” activities that would develop a social marketing capacity. Under the auspices of the grant, the principle investigator established the Social Marketing Matrix Team in the spring of 2001. She charged the team to create a plan to institutionalize social marketing within all the programs of DPH and to develop the resources to implement the plan. Members of the team consist of staff representing various program areas, who currently are using social marketing, who are interested in learning to use it, or whom the division management considered to be good candidates for learning about social marketing. It was envisioned that team members would both advocate for the use of social marketing in DPH, and develop their skill level in using social marketing, thereby enhancing the capacity of their program areas to do so.

The team has met on a monthly basis for the life and the grant. It has undertaken a variety of activities that have resulted in “normalization” of the use of social marketing within the programs of the division of public health.

Activities

Social Marketing Convenience Contracting Process utilized. An expedited process, established under the grant, that allows division programs to contract with a pre-approved list of approximately 25 outside vendors for all or parts of the social marketing process. Time reduced from three months to one month to put contract into place. The social marketing consultant has assisted six programs in the division to use this process for 13 projects.

Introductory level training for program staff.

Presentations about social marketing and, the team's availability for consultation **to program management teams**, the division's Public Health Management Team and key program staff and managers in one-on-one discussions.

Communication about social marketing utilizing blast e-mails, on-on-one meetings, and “social marketing bulletin boards” at key entrances and gathering places in various NCDPH buildings (based on expressed media preferences of staff).

2002 Annual State Health Director’s Conference dedicated to social marketing. (This one-and-a-half day conference draws program managers from the division, the directors of the state’s 86 local health departments, and selected staff from these programs and agencies. The conference consisted of plenary sessions and workshops, presented by nationally recognized experts in social marketing, as well as by state and local staff. The conference show cased the social marketing approach,, created interest and excitement among staff, and increased staff’s level of knowledge.

November 2002 and 2003 declared as “Social Marketing in Public Health Month” by the state health director. Each week included a variety of promotional and educational activities about a different aspect of the social marketing process. In 2002, the month’s activities culminated in a “poster day” to which all NC DPH staff were invited. The team offered poster sessions illustrating the social marketing process and applications to various health issues on which the division works.

Dissemination of an endorsement from the state health director supporting the use of social marketing (and consultation from the Matrix Team for grants and work projects).

Social marketing certification training for local health department health educators, using a standardized curriculum and text. Approximately 75 staff have been trained.

Continuing education opportunities for Matrix Team members, including support of attendance at the University of South Florida Social Marketing in Public Health Conference, a bimonthly journal club and bi-monthly educational speakers at meetings

Although the grant period is ending, the Social Marketing Matrix Team will continue to function.

Interventions currently under development include:

Development of a social marketing web site with case studies, formative research results relevant to North Carolina public health programs and populations, and links to other web sites as an in-state resource; and, establishment of a division-wide library with social marketing texts and journals.

Development of a **basic training dealing with issues for managers** (this is entailing additional formative research).

Creation of **social marketing tasks for personnel work plans.**

Establishment of a new personnel classification of “social marketing consultant.”

User training for CDCynergy-Social Marketing Edition.

Accomplishments

There is encouraging progress toward the team's goal of incorporating social marketing into the work of the division's programs.

Over 50% of staff attending trainings requested additional consultation.

Consultation Requests Have Increased

During the first year of the Matrix Team's existence, seven programs sought consultation about 11 projects. Over the next two, 17 programs requested consultation on 29 projects and grants. This represents a 41% increase in the number of programs requesting consultation, and a 264% increase in the number of projects and grants for which consultation has been provided.

Requests for assistance occur earlier in the planning process

The team believes this indicates an increased understanding that social marketing is a strategic process which requires time and resources to conduct as a "best practice," not something that is done the day before a grant application is due. For certain programs, it is becoming normative to request assistance in preparing a grant proposal on a recurring basis, or to request consultation on how to apply social marketing when a new health issue arises.

Division Wide Social Marketing Project Funded

Perhaps the most telling indicator of the team's success came recently in DPH's response to an RFA related to childhood overweight. The various programs that

deal with issues affecting this health problem convened and decided that they wanted to submit a single application, and that the application should use a social marketing approach. They requested that the social marketing consultant and the Matrix Team take the lead in writing the application, and in implementing it. The application subsequently was approved, and funded for three years

Access to PRIZM Commercial Marketing Database

North Carolina's Turning Point has used grant funds to pay for a four year license to access PRIZM, the commercial marketing database, used by CDC, NCI and other health programs for health program planning. This allowed two other NC DPH programs to obtain PRIZM licenses at half price, leveraging the original investment of funds.

Continuing Support of Social Marketing Consultant Position after grant period

The state health director has moved the consultant to a source of continuing funds.

Recognition

Subject of Doctoral Research

A doctoral marketing student from The Fielding Graduate Institute interviewed Matrix Team members as a governmental/nonprofit example of developing organizational marketing capacity for his doctoral research.

Conference Presentations

The USF Social Marketing in Public Health Conference has accepted in past years two presentations on North Carolina's efforts to incorporate social marketing into the division. The University of Lethbridge, Alberta invited the social marketing consultant to make a presentation on the social marketing Matrix Team concept at its international Social Marketing Advances in Research and Theory Conference in November, 2004.

Consultation Requested by other State and Federal Government Programs

The division's social marketing consultant has been invited to present over 40 trainings and conference offerings on socially marketing nationally. He has provided consultation to local, state and federal health programs, including US DHHS Title X Family Planning program, the CDC Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity and the US Environmental Protection Agency, Drinking Water Protection Branch. Maine and the Colorado Springs, CO health departments have established social marketing Matrix Teams based on the North Carolina model.