LeShaundra Cordier, MPH, CHES
Associate Director of Communication
CDC’s National Center for Injury Prevention and Control
Division of Overdose Prevention (DOP)

cdc.gov/drugoverdose/
Rx AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Creating & Delivering Opioid Messages that Matter

LeShaundra Cordier, MPH, CHES
Associate Director of Communication
Division of Overdose Prevention

December 2019
Challenges in Opioid Communications
The Changing Opioid Landscape

• Shifting demographics nationwide

• Rise in opioid overdose deaths can be outlined in three waves

Learn more about the evolving opioid overdose crisis: [www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose](http://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose)
Opioid Communication Challenges

- Evolving crisis
- Stigma/assumptions around substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery
- Terminology
- Limited time and resources
- People not “hearing” the message
- Communication noise
- Misinterpretation of data
Appropriate Language (Terminology)

- Person in recovery or person with a substance use disorder/opioid use disorder
  - Not “addict” or drug abuser, etc.
- Positive or negative toxicology screen
  - Not “clean” or “dirty”
- Medication-assisted treatment
  - Not “replacement” or “substitution”

Source: Office of National Drug Control Policy, Changing the Language of Addiction, 2017
Reducing Stigma

- Don’t use scare tactics
- Humanize the topic/issue
- Avoid imagery of paraphernalia
- Ensure that the tone is empathetic, supportive, and informative
- Include a call to action or link to more information
Creating Effective Communication Resources
Effective Communication Contributes to Success and Sustainability

• Raises awareness and increases knowledge
• Persuades others that you can help
• Generates buy-in for programs
• Encourages behavior change
• Establishes credibility
• Deepens old partnerships and forges new ones
Creating Materials

Step 1: Setting a communications goal
- Begin with the end in mind.
- What do you want people to know?
- How will you know if you are successful?

Step 2: Identifying and prioritizing audiences
- Audiences have different needs.
- You cannot reach everyone in the same way.

Step 3: Creating and delivering messages
- People want to know what’s “in it” for them.
- It is not what we want them to hear, it is what they are able (and willing to hear).
Best Practices for Creating Materials

- Always keep your audiences’ needs, beliefs, and values in mind.
- Meet them “where they are”
- Have a purpose for the kind of product you are creating
- Consider the messenger(s)
  - From whom will your audience want/need to hear?
- Pretest Messages
- Plan for evaluation
Rx Awareness: Communication Goals

- Increase awareness that prescription opioids can be addictive and dangerous
- Lower nonmedical, or recreational, opioid use
- Increase the number of patients seeking nonopioid options for pain management
Rx Awareness: Identifying and Prioritizing Audiences

- Designed to reach as many people as possible about this public health crisis
- Considered prevalence/overdose death rate data
- Conducted and reviewed research
- Prioritized, despite broad audience segment
Rx Awareness: Audiences

- Adults Ages 25–54
- Have taken prescription opioids at least once for medical or nonmedical (recreational) use
Rx Awareness was Designed for States

- Engaged CDC-funded states as campaign messengers
- Tested campaign materials and resources with state partners
- Developed materials in customizable/taggable formats
- Ensured materials were adaptable to state efforts
Rx Awareness: Campaign Resources

- **Digital**
  - Thirty-second testimonial videos
  - Web banner ads
  - Online search ads
  - Five-second bumper digital video ads
  - Social media ads

- **Radio**
  - Thirty-second ads

- **Out-of-home**
  - Billboards
  - Newspaper ads

- **Website**
  - [www.cdc.gov/RxAwareness](http://www.cdc.gov/RxAwareness)
Rx Awareness: Tagline and Reality Statement

- Campaign tagline and reality statement were developed with input from the target audience.
- Tagline: It only takes a little to lose a lot.
- Reality statement: Prescription opioids can be addictive and dangerous.
Rx Awareness: Real Stories

"Knowing that it could have been prevented made it worse."
-Tamera

"I was given a prescription opioid pain medication that lasted a lot longer than the pain itself."
-Mike

"It's important to share my story of loving someone with an opioid use disorder."
-Kate

"You never expect that you're going to lose a child. It's all out of order."
-Judy

"Our secrets keep us sick."
-Devin

"It took time to repair the enormous trail of wreckage I had created."
-Cortney

Rx Awareness Campaign
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Rx Awareness: Pilot

- Pilot in 4 states, 9 counties
- Digital: 14-week flight (launched in December 2017)
- Radio and out-of-home: 10-week flight
- Counties
  - **West Virginia**
    - Cabell
    - Kanawha
    - Berkeley
    - McDowell
  - **Ohio**
    - Cuyahoga
  - **Oregon**
    - Multnomah
    - Lane
    - Jackson
  - **Rhode Island**
    - Providence
Rx Awareness: Launch

- Digital launch in 4 states, 16 counties
  - Fourteen-week flight
- Campaign materials
  - Video testimonials (8)
  - Static banner ads (2)
  - Dynamic banner ads (2)
  - Bumper digital video ad (1)
  - Radio ads (7)
  - Billboard (1)
- Radio and out-of-home
  - Ten-week flight

Main launch states
Rx Awareness: Results

- Campaign messaging was successful and widely viewed across channels.

- Billboards: 36 million
- Digital media: 112 million
- Digital video views: 5.6 million
- Radio: 21.8 million
- Website click-thrus: More than 370,000
- Online searches for “opioid abuse”: More than 138% increase
**Campaign Exposure Led to Increased Awareness and Intention**

- Consumers exposed to the *Rx Awareness* campaign reported higher:
  - Awareness and knowledge of the risks and dangers of prescription opioids
  - Intentions to seek information or talk to others about prescription opioids

- **35% increase** in planning to ask a doctor for alternatives to prescription opioids, if needed
- **27% increase** in planning to avoid prescription opioids recreationally and/or medically
Rx Awareness: What We Learned

• The audience connected with personal stories and emotional messages
• There was common concern across communities about opioid overdose
• There is a need for multichannel dissemination strategies that reach the whole community
• Despite audience prevalence on digital platforms, billboards were important
Rx Awareness: Key Takeaways

• Ensure a multichannel, strategic approach
• Leverage testimonial stories to highlight the impact
• Use tested materials, resources, and tools
• Host webinars and trainings to help organizations adapt materials
• Work with a marketing/media buying expert to expand the reach of the campaign (if budget allows)
• Partner with other groups/organizations in your area to disseminate
Resources

- **Rx Awareness Campaign** ([www.cdc.gov/rxawareness](http://www.cdc.gov/rxawareness))
- **Opioids Portal** ([www.cdc.gov/opioids/](http://www.cdc.gov/opioids/))
- **Drug Overdose Data** ([www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/data](http://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/data))
- **Opioid Shareable Graphics and Videos** ([www.cdc.gov/rxawareness/resources/socialmedia.html](http://www.cdc.gov/rxawareness/resources/socialmedia.html))
- **Opioid Materials for Patients** ([www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/patients/materials.html](http://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/patients/materials.html))
- **CDC Opioid Guideline Resources**
  - Guideline resources ([www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/prescribing/guideline.html](http://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/prescribing/guideline.html))
  - Clinical tools ([www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/prescribing/clinical-tools.html](http://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/prescribing/clinical-tools.html))
  - Provider training ([www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/training/online-training.html](http://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/training/online-training.html))
  - Mobile app ([www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/prescribing/app.html](http://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/prescribing/app.html))
- **Opioid Overdose Prevention for States Microsite** ([www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/microsite/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/microsite/index.html))
THANK YOU!

For more information, contact CDC: 1–800–CDC–INFO (232–4636)
TTY: 1–888–232–6348
cdc.gov/rxawareness

LeShaundra Cordier
guw5@cdc.gov

Brittany Curtis
gnk2@cdc.gov

The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.