

Project: Promotion of Cervical Cancer Awareness Month

Background

BreastCare is a program managed by the Arkansas Department of Health that provides free breast and cervical cancer screening and treatment for uninsured and underinsured Arkansas women ages 40-64. But only recently was a separate task force established to help raise awareness of cervical cancer in Arkansas women. The Cervical Cancer Task Force (CCTF) developed an awareness plan and needed to announce it while distributing messages to physicians about the importance of cervical cancer screening and early detection. The task force also needed to communicate with legislators, upon whom they are dependent for funding.



*Arkansas
Cervical Cancer
Task Force*

Research & Planning

Both TCG and the BreastCare staff believe strongly in researching a concept before implementing it. We envisioned a media campaign targeting Arkansas women to raise awareness of continued screening and early detection of cervical cancer. Our research revealed information that led us to a tactical plan.

The Arkansas Department of Health has statistics that revealed a large majority (over 70 percent) of Arkansas women are regularly screened for cervical cancer. Our focus group testing confirmed that most of our target audience (women 40-64) was already aware of the importance of having Pap tests on a regular basis.

Focus groups let us know that there was too much information about cervical cancer's cause and prevention for a 60-second radio spot and that

print messages were confusing. When the human papillomavirus (HPV) was discussed as a cause of cervical cancer and the fact that the virus is sexually transmitted, focus group participants were alarmed that the wrong message would be delivered. They were afraid that cervical cancer would be portrayed as an STD and they just didn't want to go in that direction.

TCG also met with the Cervical Cancer Task Force and learned from the physicians on the CCTF that there are many doctors who do not remind their patients to have a Pap test. This was a surprise to both TCG and BreastCare.

Goal

The overall goal had been to educate and raise the awareness of women across the state with messages about cervical cancer and the importance of regular screening with a focus on areas of the state with the highest mortality and lowest screening rates. However, after research, the campaign took another direction. The goal then became the development of a communication plan that reached primary care physicians and legislators and enlisted an army of grassroots volunteers to reach at-risk women.

Target Audience

The target audience for cervical cancer messages was primary care physicians who needed to be reminded that their patients might not remember to get screened for cervical cancer and might need to be reminded by their doctor to be screened regularly. TCG also targeted state legislators

because they ultimately control the funding for the administration and activities of the Cervical Cancer Task Force. Our public relations staff also focused on the Alpha Kappa Alpha (AKA) sorority as a means to communicate the Pap test message to the female African American community at the grassroots level.

Implementation

Print ad – With a smaller, targeted audience, TCG determined that radio and newspaper were probably not appropriate given the budget

The Pap Test
Still Routine. Still Important.

When detected early, cervical cancer is one of the most treatable cancers with a five-year survival rate of 92 percent.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates half of the women diagnosed with cervical cancer have never been screened and an additional 10 percent have not been screened in the past five years. BreastCare, a program of the Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services, provides coverage for breast and cervical cancer screening for eligible women. Refer your patients to 1-877-670-2273 for eligibility determination.

Although some women are receiving the new HPV vaccine, the Advisory Council for Immunization Practices only recommends it for females between ages 9 and 26. The vaccine does not replace the routine Pap test. It's still important to include a Pap test as part of a woman's physical examination.

Pap Facts

- Cervical cancer screening should begin approximately three years after a woman becomes sexually active, but no later than 21 years old.
- Women over 21 years of age should have a Pap test at least once every three years after three consecutive negative tests.
- Women 70 years of age who have had at least three consecutive normal Pap tests and no abnormal results in the last 10 years may decide to stop screening.

Source: American Cancer Society

A Message from
Arkansas Cervical Cancer Task Force
Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services
www.ArkansasCancerCoalition.org
and click on Cervical Cancer Task Force

Physician Magazine Ad

limitations, but that print could still be utilized with trade publications and targeted to physicians. TCG developed a simple, full-page ad with the headline "The Pap Test. Still Routine. Still Important." The information in the ad goes on to remind physicians how important early detection is and how successful early treatment has proved to be a lifesaver.

News Conference & Legislative Luncheon – January is Cervical Cancer Awareness Month across the nation. So TCG recommended hosting

Thousands of Arkansas Women are *not* Being Diagnosed with Cervical Cancer.
Let's Keep it that Way.

Join Us on January 22 for an Important News Conference

Invitation

an event at the state capitol targeting our state legislators. Our public relations staff developed a Cervical Cancer Awareness Day that was two-fold. It began with a news conference in the Capitol rotunda. TCG asked Arkansas Representative Wilhelmina Lewellen to

serve as host. Through her involvement, TCG was able to secure the participation of the state's first lady and the lieutenant governor to participate in the news conference and underscore the importance of cervical cancer awareness.

Our past experiences have taught us that as busy as our state legislators are, they will often make time for a lunch meeting. So at the conclusion of the news conference, TCG moved across the street to the Capitol Hill event room for a legislators' luncheon. A cervical cancer survivor was on hand at luncheon to tell her early detection story, along with a physician who underscored the importance of still recommending cervical cancer screening and continued funding for the program. Approximately 60 legislators attended the luncheon.



Rep. Wilhelmina Lewellen



Legislators attending the luncheon



Lt. Gov. Bill Halter

