

Title of Intervention: Massachusetts Excise Tax Increase and Anti-Smoking Campaign

Website: http://www.mass.gov/Eeohhs2/docs/dph/tobacco_control/design.pdf

Intervention Strategies: Campaigns and Promotions, Environments and Policies

Purpose of the Intervention: To increase smoking cessation among Massachusetts residents

Population: Adult residents of Massachusetts

Setting: The state of Massachusetts; community-based

Partners: American Cancer Society, Coalition members, local businesses, local policy-makers, local media

Intervention Description:

- **Campaigns and Promotions:** The Massachusetts Coalition for a Healthy Future was created with almost 250 Massachusetts businesses and organizations. The Coalition hired political and legal consultants to assist in the planning and implementation of the campaign. The campaign's goal was to gather enough signatures for and passing a ballot initiative that would establish the Health Protection Fund for tax revenues from tobacco sales. There were two signature drives that gathered almost 150,000 signatures. At the end of the drives, children from the "Smoke-Free Class of 2000" sponsored a "kids only" press conference and delivered the petitions to the office of the Secretary of State in a red wagon. The tobacco tax initiative became "Question 1" on the fall Massachusetts ballot. The Coalition faced opposition from the tobacco industry, who created a group called the Committee Against Unfair Taxes to campaign against Question 1. The Coalition had a budget of \$800,000 while the Committee had \$7.3 million. The Coalition sought free media from state-wide and local newspapers, television stations and radio outlets. They were able to gather several favorable editorials, endorsements and steady news coverage. The Coalition's slogan was "Tax Tobacco-Protect Kids" since their theme was promoting healthy children. They were able to have actress Keshia Knight-Pulliam act as spokeswoman for the campaign and hold a press conference. The Coalition released one television commercial that featured smoky cigarette packages arrayed like tombstones and urged voters to support Question 1. Volunteers distributed one million brochures asking voters to "Help the American Cancer Society Fight the Tobacco Industry."
- **Environments and Policies:** As a result of the campaign, the Massachusetts excise tax rose from 26 cents to 51 cents per pack of cigarettes.

Theory: Not mentioned

Resources Required:

- **Staff/Volunteers:** Coalition partners, campaign managers, field staff, communications director, outreach organizers, PAC treasurer, fundraiser
- **Training:** Not mentioned
- **Technology:** Television commercial production, computer equipment for each staff member, voter database
- **Space:** Campaign headquarters with possible regional offices
- **Budget:** \$800,000
- **Intervention:** Free media through newspapers, radio and television, brochures, pamphlets, promotional material, voter database, petitions
- **Evaluation:** Not mentioned

Evaluation:

- **Design:** Pre- and post-test
- **Methods and Measures:**
 - The study used data derived from the Tobacco Institute on tax receipts in order to determine taxable cigarette consumption.

- Data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System was used to estimate the annual prevalence of cigarette smoking among adults in Massachusetts and other states.

Outcomes:

- Short Term Impact: Question 1 passed with 54% of the vote. The first 18 months of the tax increase raised \$96 million for the Health Protection Fund. With this, the state created the Massachusetts Tobacco Control Program. This allotted \$33 million to the Department of Education for comprehensive school health education, \$28 million for local community tobacco control initiatives, \$18 million for media counter-advertising and \$5.5 million for statewide initiatives including a Smoker's Quitline. Tax money also funded a tobacco education clearinghouse, research and evaluation, DARE programs, substance abuse treatment, the WIC Supplemental Nutrition program and breast cancer and AIDS research.
- Long Term Impact: The consumption of taxable cigarettes per capita declined substantially in Massachusetts after the implementation of the campaign and tax increase. The prevalence of smoking in adults also decreased slightly.

Maintenance: Between 1992 and 1996, five other states succeeded in passing tax increases.

Lessons Learned: A positive, streamlined, active campaign with quality leadership and staff can still win when the opposition has nine times the money and a poor message.

Citation(s):

Center for Disease Control. (1996). "Cigarette smoking before and after an excise tax increase and an antismoking campaign-Massachusetts, 1990-1996." MMWR 45: 966-70.

Koh, H. K. (1996). "An analysis of the successful 1992 Massachusetts tobacco tax initiative." Tob Control 5(3): 220-5.