

#HEALTH4ALL

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES that FAST TRACK POLICY CHANGE



HIGHLIGHTS

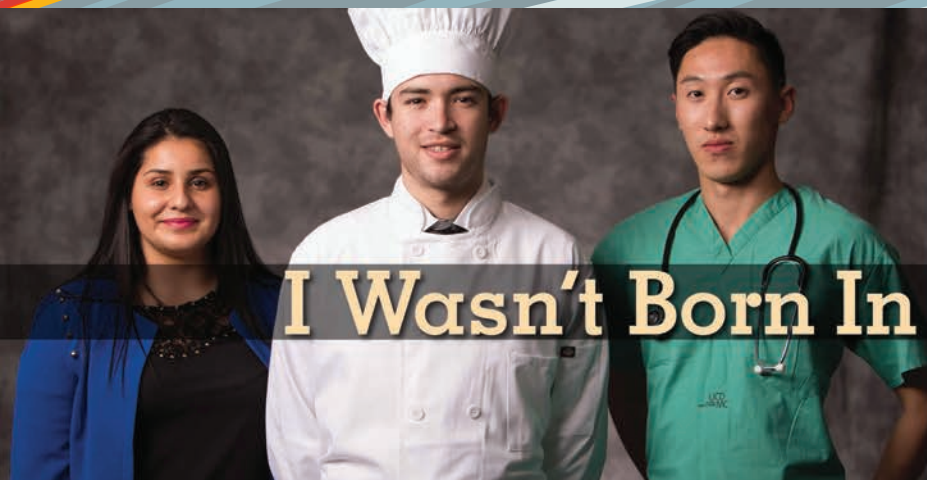
Issue Though the Affordable Care Act (ACA) has helped millions of Californians gain health insurance, over 1.4 million undocumented Californians remained uninsured. Given the combination of two controversial issues – immigration and healthcare – a shift in public perception is a prerequisite for policy change.

Strategy A foundation-branded advertising campaign demonstrating the contributions undocumented Californians make to their communities and the economy – #Health4All – supported by local organizing and media relations.

Who The California Endowment.

How Much \$35 million over four years including targeted local advertising spending of \$5 million in year one.

Biggest Result Preserved county healthcare safety net in state budget and paved the way for namesake “Health for All” legislation that fills the gaps between immigration status and ACA eligibility in California.



I Wasn't Born In

#Health4All



California
was Born In Me

**“WE BELIEVE IN OUR POWER TO CREATE PRODUCTIVE
DIALOGUE AROUND THE ISSUES WE CARE ABOUT MOST.”**
— MARICELA RODRIGUEZ, PUBLIC AFFAIRS MANAGER AT THE CALIFORNIA ENDOWMENT

INTRODUCTION

The California Endowment, the state’s largest health foundation, has a strategy aimed at reducing health disparities by combining deep sustained investment in 14 disadvantaged communities, with a focus on state policy change. The Endowment found that over 1.4 million Californians are ineligible for health care through the Affordable Care Act (ACA) due to their immigration status. As a result, the Foundation realized creating the public and political will to include these immigrants in the ACA would require overcoming the perception of undocumented populations as weighing down the system.

To overcome that perception, in December 2012, the Endowment led #Health4All — a multi-media communications campaign focused on the contributions of immigrants to California. Stakeholder efforts were dealt a blow in early 2013, when Gov. Jerry Brown proposed the elimination of county safety nets due to budgetary considerations. An immigrant youth development conference was taking place at the Endowment headquarters days after the announcement. Quick-thinking communications staff videotaped the youths’ reactions to the proposal — and they became the faces and voices of the campaign. The budget deadline and community storytellers instantly gave the campaign focus and urgency. The governor reconsidered his initial budget recommendation and preserved \$400 million in county health safety net funds. Building on that momentum, historic namesake legislation to provide “Health For All” regardless of immigration status is currently pending in Sacramento.

The story of the #Health4All Campaign resonates for all grantmakers who seek to raise awareness of social injustices related to polarizing issues and to engage people in a meaningful dialogue about potential solutions.



IMPACT

Historic namesake legislation

Shortly after the March 2013 launch of the #Health4All video campaign, the idea of health coverage for all Californians gained traction with legislators. Champions began to step forward. In April 2013, California Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg (D — Sacramento) spoke out in support: “I think that people living in this country working hard and pursuing [citizenship] ought to be able to care for themselves and their loved ones.”

Another major achievement occurred when major news outlets agreed to refrain from using the term “illegal immigrants” in their reporting. Based on the DefineAmerican.com outreach work of journalist, filmmaker and immigration advocate Jose Antonio Vargas, and others, popular news outlets such as ABC’s *Good Morning America*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *The New York Times* and *The Associated Press* pledged to curtail usage of the potentially inflammatory descriptor.

By June 2013, the California advocacy coalition Protect the Health Care Safety Net, a diverse collaboration of county government representatives and traditional health funders, struck a deal with Governor Brown preserving \$400 million annually in county safety net funds ensuring access to care for hundreds of thousands of Californians.

In February 2014, California State Senator Ricardo Lara (D — Huntington Park/Long Beach) unveiled the Health for All Act (SB 1005), which expands access to healthcare coverage to all Californians — regardless of their immigration status. Under the bill, the state would expand Medi-Cal coverage to residents who are 138% below the poverty line, regardless of their immigration status. Undocumented individuals above the qualification level would be able to purchase health insurance through a separate new health exchange.

The bill was approved by the Senate health committee, but has stalled until a way to pay for the expansion is identified. Senator Lara stated “Expanding health care for all Californians is not a question of if, but ... a matter of when.”

“The Endowment is an independent body that has a great standing and stature in the community. And so when they bring information, that helps policymakers, like myself and others, to get positioned to argue for policy changes... That is the value of The Endowment’s work,” says Gil Cedillo, Los Angeles City Councilmember and former California State Assemblymember and State Senator.

HOW IT HAPPENED

A variety of coordinated media strategies including paid advertising, earned media and partnerships, and community organizing built awareness and gave voice to those most affected into the public debate. Prior to this campaign, undocumented Californians were absent from the public conversation: with their inclusion the #Health4All campaign reframed the issue of extending health care to all Californians regardless of their immigration status. The campaign’s message inspired namesake legislation to achieve the campaign’s goals.

Attention-getting, branded creative

The creative concepts for the #Health4All campaign were fresh, attention-getting and served as conversation starters highlighting the real lives and faces of undocumented Californians. Each of the ad concepts also boldly and prominently displayed The California Endowment’s logo. “Putting the Endowment’s name on the campaign was intentional,” says Maricela Rodriguez, a Public Affairs Manager at the foundation. “We believe in our power to create productive dialogue around the issues we care about most.”

Philanthropic coordination

In addition to the grant dollars supplied by the foundation, the Endowment leveraged relationships with other health funders for the campaign. Introductions to immigration policy funders fostered the coordination of resources working in health and immigration reform. Some \$4.2 million in previously committed grants to local organizations were coordinated with the #Health4All efforts. When the governor's proposed budget diversion of county safety net funds was announced, it galvanized the campaign. Local coordinated action including press conferences and rallies timed to coincide with #Health4All advertising, and media outreach generated additional awareness.

The “war room” approach

Foundation leadership, grantees and communications professionals interacted frequently in de facto rapid response teams designed to adjust strategy, coordinate activities and leverage unforeseen opportunities. Notably, the #Health4All campaign included communications from the very beginning and as a driving force in the strategy. The approach included a feedback loop, hearing from those on the ground and pivoting quickly with decision-making on responses in messaging, targeting specific areas and locations as well as grantmaking that takes advantage of opportunities as they arise. The group even prepared a response strategy for potential public backlash – which never materialized.

Paid advertising

To ensure visibility for the campaign among policymakers, thought-leaders, policy influentials and the public, a coordinated paid advertising campaign was implemented. The ads featured undocumented Californians and their contributions to our communities. A combination of television, radio, print, outdoor and digital media was used. Media first built awareness broadly in the major markets of Los Angeles, San Francisco and Sacramento, then in a more targeted and customized, community-specific push, the campaign aligned with local discussions and the run-up to the final state budget deadline. The March through May media buy totaled roughly \$4 million. An additional \$500,000 in outdoor, bus shelters, bus posters and benches

extended the awareness-building efforts in May and June. Local Spanish-language ads in Latino neighborhood stores and laundromats in Los Angeles, Sacramento, Alameda, Fresno, Kern, Monterey, Orange, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Francisco, San Joaquin, Santa Clara and Tulare counties rounded out the effort.

Media relations

Complementary to the paid advertising effort, the #Health4All campaign conducted strategic media relations outreach. Op-eds put the issue of healthcare access for undocumented Californians and potential solutions on the table for debate. During the 30 days prior to the budget deal with Governor Brown, 11 editorials appeared in the op-ed pages of major metropolitan daily newspapers – calling policymakers to action.

Another important element of the earned media program was national coverage of the advertising campaign. The campaign was covered in *The New York Times*, *Think Progress*, and *The Associated Press*. The ads reached millions of people nationally through replay on *PBS Newshour* and *TakePart Live*, and won a National Press Club Corporate Social Responsibility Honorable Mention award in 2014.

Pledge campaign

To spur action among a wide range of stakeholders, the campaign employed traditional and new media. Members of the public were encouraged to pledge to support immigration fairness through www.defineamerican.com and www.change.org, and then share the experience through social media. Over 115,000 supporters joined the campaign. A direct mailing to targeted community households resulted in Sacramento legislative offices receiving over 30,000 pieces of mail in response to Governor Brown's proposed budget modifications.

Media partnerships

The #Health4All campaign also brokered partnerships with media organizations to extend the visibility and frequency of exposure to the campaign. An alliance was forged between the California State Outdoor Advertising Association (CSOAA), the California Pan-Ethnic Health Network (CPEHN) and the Latino Coalition for a Healthy California (LCHC) for the use of unused billboard space on 100 boards each month around the state. The partnership was a win-win, with the campaign paying only for the production costs of creating and printing the billboards and CSOAA supporting the role of the undocumented in the economy of California.

When concern about endangering family members whose immigration status may be different than their own became a barrier to enrollment

in the health exchange, the Endowment brokered an unprecedented partnership between Univision and Telemundo to co-host a Town Hall with President Obama. That evening, the President reassured undocumented residents, "None of the information that is provided in order for you to obtain health insurance is in any way transferred to immigration services."

According to Daniel Zingale, Senior Vice President at The California Endowment, "A few years ago, this would have been unimaginable, even having this conversation... but we've seen a total sea change in the way we think about health care for all and immigration. I think in the end, it's inevitable that we're going to come down on the side of inclusion broadly."

LESSONS LEARNED

- ▶ Paid advertising can raise the visibility of different issues and makes it easier to initiate discussions about them.
- ▶ Foundation-branded programs contribute to perceived weight and credibility of an issue, especially outside top metropolitan areas.
- ▶ A fluid, war-room approach to communications campaigns maintains agility and responsiveness in a fast-paced issue environment.
- ▶ Media partnerships can be a high-impact and low-cost tactic that amplifies the message.
- ▶ Use of the authentic voices and images of those affected by policies is compelling and helps drive home the real impact.



10 Elements of Success

Among the Fast Track case studies, we've identified the following 10 insights. The most critical elements of success for each case appear as symbols throughout the series.



1 SOLUTIONS

The majority of these initiatives contained messages not just about the problem, but about a range of potential solutions. The net effect is to give the public hope and give policymakers a call to action. This approach also speaks directly to the nexus of the nature of the Internet and journalism: to both ask questions and answer them.



2 POLICYMAKERS

Identifying policymakers explicitly as a target audience and devoting appropriate resources to outreach is key. Whenever possible, explicitly making it a bi-partisan effort can be very effective.



3 AGILITY

While a communications strategy is important, so is building in flexibility. The ability to respond quickly with resources to a changing landscape is critical to overcoming unforeseen challenges and leveraging unexpected opportunities. Often these initiatives can be a bit messy mid-stream; flexibility and agility makes navigation easier.



4 REPETITION

Continuity of coverage has a multiplier effect on awareness building. Journalistic series and paid-advertising campaigns keep issues top-of-mind during delays in the legislative process.



5 HUMANITY

Engaging community voices can be a powerful way to give an issue a human face. Emphasizing personal impact stories can also support journalistic efforts, assist with multi-media content, engage the constituents of lawmakers and provide testimonials for solutions.



6 PAID ADVERTISING

Having the ability to control the content and timing of messages through paid advertising can create awareness during key milestones. The ability to customize messages geographically or by target audience can also accelerate the speed of social change.



7 FOUNDATION BRANDING

Putting a foundation's name and "brand" on media or communications efforts lends credibility and gravitas to an issue, especially in smaller markets or rural areas. Stakeholders are more likely to take another look at an issue if it has become the priority of a philanthropic institution.



8 MEDIA START-UPS

Establishing digital outlets where in-depth coverage about an issue can be a cost-effective and efficient way of designating a "space" for the issue to live in. At their best, these sites also become media tools for expanded and sustained coverage over time.



9 PARTNER. PARTNER. PARTNER.

Whether it is funder partnerships or media partnerships, collaborative and in-kind efforts result in impact that is greater than the sum of its individual parts.



10 INTEGRATION FROM THE OUTSET

The combination of media, community and policy-maker engagement from the beginning of a strategic communications effort is key to success. The catalytic effect of coordinating and integrating these strategies far outweighs any one as a siloed or solo effort.