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# At the Epicenter of a Community-wide Effort to Improve Public Health

Yolanda G. Martinez, EdPhD, PhD, Cheri Rufener

## ABSTRACT

*This paper describes the All Into Health Project implemented between 2010 and 2012 as part of the Communities Putting Prevention to Work initiative to address smoking in Orange County, Florida. The All Into Health Project exemplifies what can be accomplished through a combination of leadership and community organization. This demonstration project may inspire initiatives elsewhere that can lead to Florida becoming a comprehensive tobacco-free state.*

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## BACKGROUND

In 2010 the Florida Department of Health in Orange County received \$6.6 million from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) *Communities Putting Prevention to Work* (CPPW) initiative to engage in one of the most ambitious public health efforts ever attempted by this health department and its partners. CPPW encompassed the work of 44 communities across the nation with a total funding of \$372 million to focus on overweight, obesity, and smoking from a public health perspective. CPPW efforts were considered innovative because of the utilization of policy, systems and environmental changes at the foundation of social norm changes. The initiative can be described as a large-scale experiment on a community's ability to come together to influence change. This paper describes the process and impact of the *All Into Health Project*, the CPPW initiative implemented in Orange County, Florida.

The public health focus of the *All Into Health Project* (2010-2012) was smoking and exposure to second-hand smoke and its consequences on health. More than a decade before the U.S. Surgeon General's Report outlining the dangers of smoking to health and lung cancer were published, Doll and Bradford Hill (1950), had published an article entitled "Smoking and Carcinoma of the Lung" strongly linking smoking with lung cancer. The publication in 1964 of *Smoking and Health: Report of the Advisory Committee to the Surgeon General of the Public Health Service* was followed by increased public health awareness campaigns and ultimately laws banning smoking in some places. Today, there are only a handful of states without comprehensive smoke-free laws. Florida is one such state despite many public efforts to amend the

Florida Clean Indoor Air Act of 1985 (FCIAA). In 2003, the FCIAA was amended to prohibit smoking in most enclosed indoor workplaces; however, places such as stand-alone bars, restaurant and bar patios, music venues, outdoor workplaces, beaches, parks, and recreation areas are not covered by FCIAA.

The *All Into Health Project* used a community engagement model to achieve its objectives. Two key strategies included: (1) development of a leadership team (or advisory board); and (2) development and implementation of a hard hitting marketing effort which included social media and community outreach.

## Leadership Team/Advisory Board

The project benefited from the participation of a former U.S. Surgeon General, senior administrators from the two largest local hospitals, senior representatives from Walt Disney World, a former representative from the local school board, a dean from the second largest university in the U.S., a City of Orlando Commissioner, a representative from the Orlando Magic National Basketball Association team, the Winter Park Health Foundation, the director of the local Healthy Start Coalition, and representatives from American Cancer Society, American Lung Association, and American Heart Association. These individuals represented organizations with very active roles and a long history of working to improve the health of community residents.

At the center of their task were "preemption" and the limit it placed on pursuing a comprehensive smoke-free movement and the push back from businesses that could, potentially, see more smoking restrictions as having a negative economic impact. The availability of the funding provided resources to

conduct a community-wide survey among 1,004 registered voters, revealing an overwhelming support for increased smoke-free efforts. The study findings revealed that 93% of respondents agreed that second-hand smoke is harmful; 91% said local governments should take steps to address health and safety concerns in their own communities and 88% believed laws prohibiting tobacco in public places create a healthier environment (Isaac, 2011). In addition, the project also commissioned a regional impact study which showed that “after controlling for confounding factors, the FCIAA had no negative impact on overall sales in restaurants, hotels, and motels, and amusement tickets in either Florida or Orange County” (Chaloupka & Tauras, 2011, p. 3). The study concluded that extending smoke-free policies to protected “bar workers and patrons from the harmful effects of exposure to tobacco smoke would have no negative, and more likely, a small positive, economic impact (Chaloupka and Tauras, 2011). In addition, through their work with the *All Into Health Project*, advisory board members learned that: (1) the University of Central Florida, the second largest university in the nation, did not have a smoke-free policy, an area that needed to be addressed; (2) Orange County Public Schools, the 10<sup>th</sup> largest school district in the nation, did not have a relevant and enforced smoke-free policy; and (3) local elected officials could use their visibility to educate their constituents regarding the ill effects of smoking and second-hand smoke.

### Marketing

Perhaps one of the most visible components of the *All Into Health Project* was the marketing campaign which consisted of printed materials (posters, billboards, bus shelter posters, buses, computer banners, etc.) as well as TV commercials and radio messages. A website also was developed to provide information about the project and to host the social media channels. The website (including a “mobi” site) and social media site (Facebook) provided a platform for feedback from community residents. Nearly all of the approximately 66 different collateral materials produced over the two years of the project were created and produced by the project’s internal marketing team. Over 2.5 million pieces of educational materials were distributed during the project. Innovative marketing activities were also used including a 3D display created on a truck bed designed to bring to life the *all into clear air* campaign television spot. The use of this element culminated with participation in the Fresh from Florida Parade, in Orlando which celebrates the holidays and two annual college football bowl games, the Champs Sports Bowl

and the Capitol One Bowl. The parade is videotaped and syndicated to over 100 television stations for broadcast during New Year's Day. The parade is broadcast internationally in countries such as the United Kingdom, the Bahamas, and Canada. The internationally televised household viewership was 114,546,650, while 80,000 spectators lined the parade route. Additionally, the mobile health messaging display traveled throughout Orange County and was able to reach over 65,000 people, who were exposed to the display on a daily basis during the month of December.

### Community Impact

The smoke-free policies that were adopted as a result of the *All Into Health Project* impact approximately 32% of the county’s population. Some of the successes of the project include:

- In 2012, University of Central Florida (UCF), the nation’s second largest university campus, became a smoke-free campus impacting over 70,181 individuals including students, faculty and staff.
- In 2012, Valencia College (VC) adopted a smoke-free policy that impacts over 62,118 individuals including students, faculty and staff. Whereas the efforts by VC were not directly guided by the work of the *All Into Health Project*, the project did help to support their marketing efforts and educational campaign.
- Orange County Public Schools (OCPS) adopted a comprehensive tobacco-free policy impacting approximately 197,220 individuals including students, faculty and staff. This action was supported by a statewide legislative action that gave schools the authority to establish and enforce smoke-free policies in their campuses.
- By policy, Florida Department of Health in Orange County became a tobacco-free workplace. This policy impacts over 600 staff and over 55,500 clients who visit the various clinic sites.
- Orange County ordinances were updated to reduce to 25% the level of tobacco advertisement permitted on the windows of gas stations and convenience stores.
- Parks and Recreations facilities in Orange County and 9 municipalities within the county adopted smoke-free resolutions encouraging their patrons to not smoke in their parks. They installed signage with educational messages and a request for their patrons to not smoke in or around playground areas or where children and the elderly gather.

In addition, over 700 local primary care providers, dentists, and pediatricians made a commitment to implement Ask. Advise. Refer. (AAR) in their medical practice. AAR is an initiative designed to promote cessation among smokers.

The community engagement model used to implement the *All Into Health Project* successfully influenced the adoption of public health policies that will have a long term impact on the well-being of Orange County residents for many years to come. The effort not only resulted in policies that impact a large percent of the population, but also helped public health efforts strengthened old partnerships while at the same time creating new ones. For example Cox Media, an integrated broadcasting, publishing, direct marketing and digital media company provided not only some of the marketing support but also made a commitment to the public health message of the *All Into Health Project* by making the decision to not run ads featuring electronic cigarettes on any of their 20 national media markets. Whereas Florida remains one of the states without comprehensive smoke-free laws, the project highlighted important public health issues, such as workplace health and safety, which need to be addressed if Florida seeks to become a comprehensive tobacco-free state.

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