SHOP COOK EAT Healthy on a Budget: Examining Reach and Efficacy of Maine SNAP-Ed Social Marketing Campaign

Altarum: Julia Fantacoe, MPP, PMP, Brenda Wofford, MS, RD; Brent Walker, MS, RD; Kerri Vasold, PhD
State of Maine DHHS—Office for Family Independence: Patricia Dushuttle, MA

**Results**

**Contact:**
Julia Fantacoe, MPP, PMP
Altarum, Project Manager, Community Health
julia.fantacone@altarum.org
202-776-5145

**Conclusions**

- While there is good recognition of Maine SNAP-Ed among the focus audience, there is an opportunity to expand promotion of the campaign to increase awareness.
- Maine SNAP-Ed may benefit from examining whether their campaign and programming can be enhanced by addressing top barriers to healthy eating among the focus audience.

**Objective**

The population-level evaluation examined reach and efficacy of Maine SNAP-Ed social marketing campaign messages and healthy behaviors among Maine residents.

**Methods**

- Most respondents identified as White, non-Hispanic, female, and between ages 18 to 54 years.
- Results were weighted to reflect characteristics of Maine SNAP recipients.
- Descriptive statistics, mean comparisons, and logistic regression models were used to examine differences in outcomes between groups.

**Program Description**

Maine SNAP-Ed’s online social marketing campaign, SHOP COOK EAT Healthy on a Budget, aims to reinforce messages that reduce barriers to healthy behaviors and increase fruit and vegetable consumption among the focus audience.

- Altarum, Maine SNAP-Ed’s external evaluator, conducted an online survey to assess the campaign.
- Recruitment sample obtained from a purchased list: Represented 14 of 16 counties in Maine.
- Included 10,000 adults with annual incomes of less than $45,000.
- Surveys were completed by 384 respondents (3.8% response rate).

**Results**

- More than half of respondents were aware of Maine SNAP-Ed programming.
- One-quarter of respondents recalled seeing campaign messages.
- Message recall was higher among respondents who participated in assistance programs compared with those who did not.

**Objective**

The primary goals of Maine SNAP-Ed’s social marketing campaign, SHOP COOK EAT Healthy on a Budget, are to reinforce messages that reduce barriers to healthy behaviors and increase fruit and vegetable consumption among the focus audience. Altarum conducted a population-level evaluation to assess the campaign. More than half of respondents were aware of Maine SNAP-Ed programming and one-quarter recalled seeing campaign messages. Of those who recalled campaign messages, more than half took action toward healthier behaviors. However, barriers to eating fruit and vegetables are still present. This evaluation indicated there is an opportunity to expand promotion of the campaign to increase awareness of Maine SNAP-Ed and to enhance the campaign to address top barriers to healthy eating.

**SNAP-Ed’s focus audience more frequently reported taking action toward healthy behaviors after seeing campaign messages.**

**Summary**

More than half of respondents who recalled campaign messages took action toward healthier behaviors. The most common actions included:

- Drinking more water: 28%
- Trying a Maine SNAP-Ed recipe: 19%
- Drinking less sugary drinks: 13%
- Using Maine SNAP-Ed tips to save money at the store: 13%

Respondents who more frequently reported taking action after seeing messages included those who:

- Were at-risk for food insecurity (70% vs 23%*)
- Identified as a race other than White (93% vs 38%*)

The top barriers to eating more fruits and vegetables were cost (32%) and spoilage (18%).

*Substantial differences based on comparison of 95% Confidence Intervals.