



## Communicating Effectively About Vaccines

### Reason for the project

- ▶ Reducing the transmission of infectious disease has always been an ASTHO priority.
- ▶ Immunizations are our best tool to achieve that goal.
- ▶ Vaccines have become a victim of their own success –
- ▶ Fortunately national rates remain high, but there are local areas that are seeing drops in coverage.
- ▶ Research has documented increased hesitancy.
- ▶ State Health Officials asked for help.

## Research Component

- ▶ ASTHO conducted a marketing research project to better understand
  - Reasons why parents are hesitant about vaccines
  - What types of messages were most effective
  - What source of information is most trusted.

### Findings

- Positive messages were more convincing than negative ones – most effective message, “Vaccination is one of the most important ways I can protect my child from life-threatening illness and it’s the best known protection against a number of infectious diseases.”

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## Toolkit Development

- ▶ ASTHO partnered with Porter Novelli to develop and test new, innovative messages based on data from this study to reach parents about the importance of vaccines.

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# Target Audiences


- ▶ **Primary: Vaccine-hesitant parents**  
Parents with children ages 0-5, who have concerns about the safety of vaccines, but are not adamantly, decided against vaccinating their child
- ▶ **Secondary: Core influencers of vaccine-hesitant parents**
  1. Parents who vaccinated their children
  2. Providers
  3. Pediatricians
    - a. Family practice
    - b. OB/GYNs
  4. Media
  5. Policy makers

### Target Audience Profile: Vaccine Hesitant Parents

Parents are encountering messages in popular media and from friends about risks of vaccination. This is prompting more of them to wonder if fully vaccinating their children is safe. In some communities, vaccination rates are dropping, posing a significant public health threat that needs to be proactively addressed.

**The primary audience is moms with young children, ages 0-5,** who have varying degrees of questions and concerns about vaccination, but do not strongly object to childhood vaccinations. With the right education and information from the right sources, these moms will make the best decision for their children's health—to vaccinate.

- Positive messages about vaccination generally rate much more convincing and believable than negative messages
- Messages that cite data, scientific studies, and figures are not resonating
- Emotional, personal messages and stories are most effective
- First and foremost, moms depend on their pediatricians for information about vaccines and trust their counsel the most
- Only two-thirds of all parents feel their pediatrician spends enough time explaining the risks and benefits of vaccinations. This percentage is even lower among vaccine-hesitant parents. [ASTHO]
- Moms are also influenced by their spouse, media reports, websites, blogs, and friends with experience.



**Most often, these moms can be defined as:**

- Ages 30-45
- College graduates
- Upper income
- Planned pregnancy – read all the books!
- Worried about being a good mom
- Worried about her children's progress relative to development stages
- Engaged in mom groups – PEPS, church, daycare
- Information seekers
- WebMD is the most used and influential website, followed by CDC, AAP, MayoClinic, and blogs by other parents [ASTHO]
- Listens to NPR, watches Oprah, reads parenting magazines, follows the mommyblogs, etc.
- Risk adverse
- Environmentally responsible
- Health-conscious
- Organic-food-buying
- Talks to her family practice doctor – does not always get answers and is probably a bit frustrated

“By far the most common reason parents delay vaccines is because they are concerned that too many vaccines being given at the same time is unsafe.”

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“By far, the most common reason parents support vaccination is to protect their child's health. The next most commonly mentioned reason is to prevent the spread of disease.”

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“Parents generally have a fairly positive view about the role of public health. They tend to agree that protecting and improving public health is an important job of the government.”

# Campaign Goal: Increase Confidence in the Safety of Vaccines

**Core Message: Vaccines are part of a healthy life for your child.**

▶ **Key Message 1**

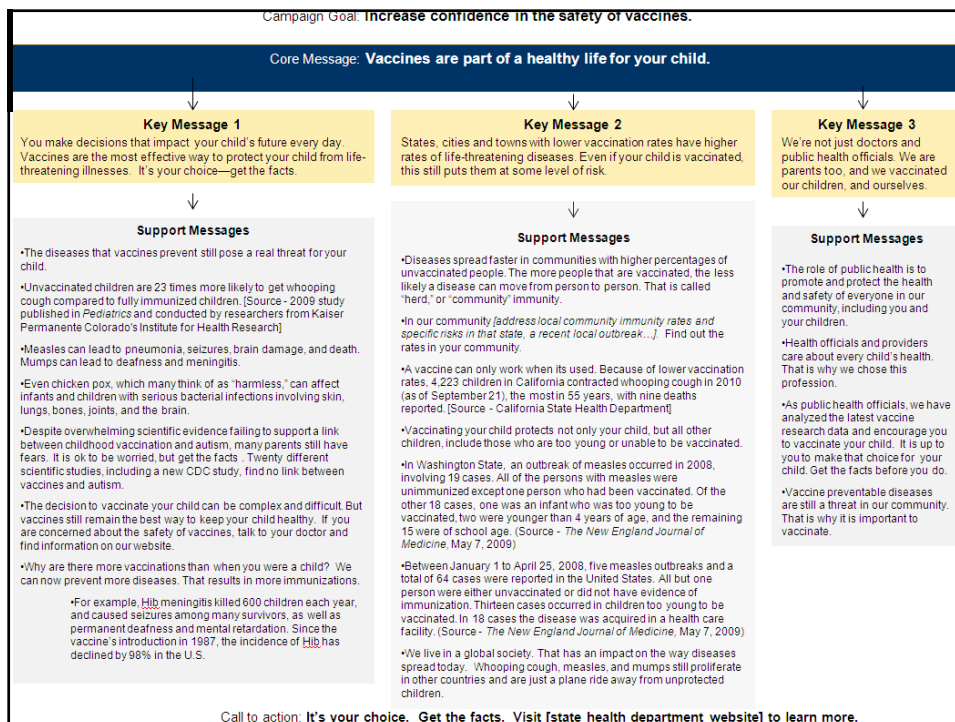
You make decisions that impact your child's future every day. Vaccines are the most effective way to protect your child from life-threatening illnesses. It's your choice—get the facts.

▶ **Key Message 2**

States, cities and towns with lower vaccination rates have higher rates of life-threatening diseases. Even if your child is vaccinated, this still puts them at some level of risk.

**Key Message 3**

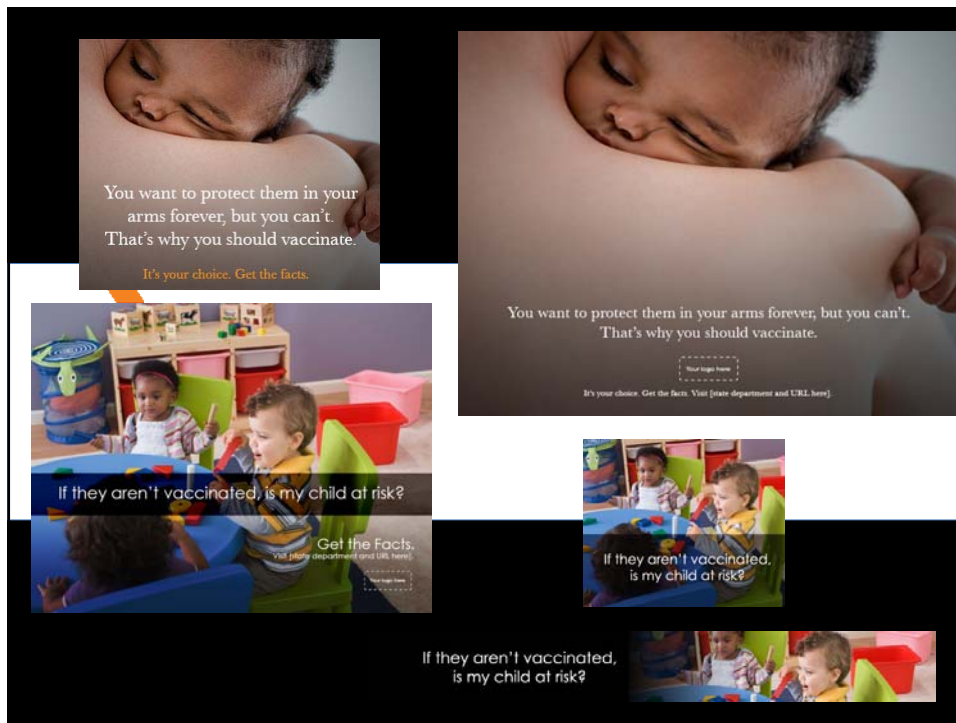
▶ **We're not just doctors and public health officials. We are parents too, and we vaccinated our children, and ourselves.**



# Key Message Testing

- ▶ Porter Novelli conducted focus groups with moms in Atlanta, Seattle, and Washington D.C. in order to get their reactions to our draft message map.
- ▶ **On a scale of 1–10 how did they rate materials?**  
A couple of 8, but preponderance of 9s.
- ▶ **Overall general thoughts/impressions – all cities**  
Fact statements win moms over.  
Don't make any subjective comments  
Don't make any statements directly about what I should do as a mom.  
Don't say anything resembling a patronizing tone.  
“We know...” statements – are seen as too authoritative.





## To find these resources

- ▶ Go to [www.astho.org](http://www.astho.org) to the immunizations page under vaccine safety resources.
- ▶ You will see on the material that it has a space to insert the state health department web page.
- ▶ Please feel free to use the resources – if possible let me know how you use them.

# THANKS!!

» Questions?

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