



A Shock Ad Campaign to Educate People About The Importance of A1c

The Ad Council, the nation's leading producer of public service announcements is launching the first every national public education campaign geared to raise awareness of A1c and what it means.

The unprecedented collaboration will educate Americans with diabetes on the critical importance of knowing their A1C. A1C is a test that measures a patient's blood glucose level over the previous three months that might also help predict serious health complications like heart attack and stroke. People with diabetes must know their A1C level to manage diabetes, and the goal for most people with diabetes is to maintain a consistent A1C score of less than 7 percent. Unfortunately, many people do not know their A1C level. For example, a New York City Department of Health report found that in 2003 eighty-nine percent of patients with diabetes in New York City did not know their A1C level. National figures from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggest that 63 percent of all diabetes patients have A1C levels above 7 percent.

The first national diabetes public service campaign will be launched on September 13 to highlight the importance of A1c levels – an unprecedented effort that uses provocative, edgy messages to highlight the devastating complications of America's growing diabetes epidemic.

The ambitious campaign was created by the Ad Council, the country's leading producer of public service advertisements. Over the years, the Council has produced some of the country's most enduring slogans, such as "Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk" and "A Mind Is A Terrible Thing To Waste." Its diabetes campaign, "Know Your A1c," will cover the media waterfront – television, radio, print, billboards, and Web ads – and its message is that A1c numbers can be warning signals for future complications, specifically heart disease and strokes.

The campaign eschews stuffy medical rhetoric; its goal is to shock. In one TV ad, for example, a fisherman pushes away from the dock and says, "It's a great day for fishing." "Yeah," says the dock hand. "Too bad your boat is going to sink at 11:05." A voiceover then asks, wouldn't it be great if we were warned of life's risks? If you have diabetes, your A1c test does just that.

"We wanted to push awareness as far as we could," said Tom Boyer, executive director of the Diabetes Care Coalition (DCC), which is comprised of advocacy groups and companies to promote better care through this public service campaign. "We found in focus groups that patients responded to dramatic messages" – heart attacks and strokes struck a much stronger chord than eye or kidney damage –

“so we didn’t want to coat it in any way. We wanted them to understand explicitly what they were facing.”

Health professionals have understood the importance of A1c levels for years.

The central theme builds on the failure of life's risks to come with warning signs, but for individuals with diabetes, A1C is a warning sign for out of control diabetes and complications like heart attacks and strokes. Recognizing the high incidence of diabetes among the Hispanic population the campaign will also use an integrated approach featuring Spanish-language messaging to reach the Hispanic community.

The campaign will direct all audiences to visit a new interactive Web site and dial toll-free numbers to obtain information explaining the importance of talking to a healthcare provider about the A1C test and the role it can play in reducing the risk of diabetes complications. For more information about the A1C test or the campaign, call 1-877-TEST-A1C (1-877-837-8212) or visit www.diabetesA1C.org. In Spanish at <http://www.midiabetesa1c.org/>

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