



Health Resources in Action  
*Advancing Public Health and Medical Research*

# What Went Right, What Went Wrong:

## Lessons Learned from Community Water Fluoridation Campaigns

2016 National Oral Health Conference  
Cincinnati, OH  
April 19, 2016



This work is made possible through the  
generous support of the  
DentaQuest Foundation.

Building a grassroots movement...from the outside...



**JUMBO SHRIMP**

Victor 12

# What we did

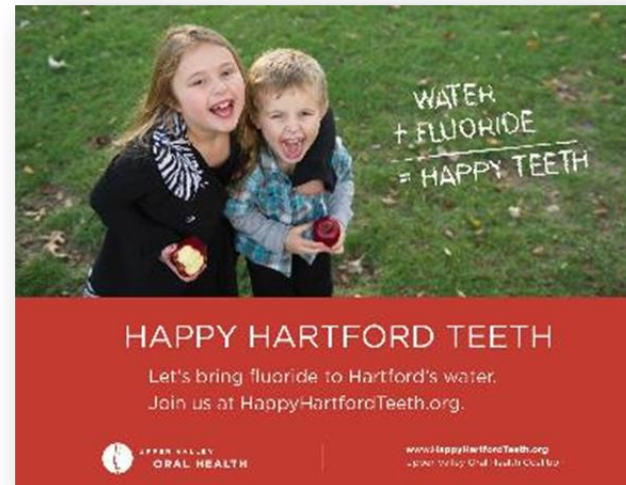
- **Goal:** Implement CWF
- **Strategies:** Community organizing and social marketing
- **Overarching themes:**
  - Informed by data
  - Driven by community values
  - Fly over the radar

# How we did it...

- Coalitions (state and local)
- Community organizers (paid)
- Community Champions
- Values-based messaging
- Campaign & communication strategies
- Policymakers
- Opposition
- Campaign sustainability

# Setting the stage

Hartford, VT



Brockton, MA



**What worked, what didn't work...**



# Working with coalitions



- Deep knowledge of state and community
- Credibility and permanence
- Entrée to Community Champions

## Challenges



- Leadership and volunteers
- Health/oral health priorities



# Identifying a community organizer



- Dedicated person; of the community

## Challenges



- Champions relied on paid staffer
- Hard to sustain during slow times
- Outsider

# Engaging Community Champions



- Provides credibility and gravitas
- Multi-sector representation = greater community and policymaker buy-in

## Challenges



- Limited time to devote as volunteers
- Controversial to some
- Not a priority issue or lack of (political) will

# Developing resonant messaging



## HAPPY HARTFORD TEETH

Let's bring fluoride to Hartford's water.  
Join us at [HappyHartfordTeeth.org](http://HappyHartfordTeeth.org).



UPPER VALLEY  
ORAL HEALTH

[www.HappyHartfordTeeth.org](http://www.HappyHartfordTeeth.org)  
Upper Valley Oral Health Coalition

## One Smile Brockton

Invest in Brockton's Future

With one single step,  
we can create happier, healthier smiles.  
Let's bring fluoride to Brockton.



Join us at  
[OneSmileBrockton.org](http://OneSmileBrockton.org)

Maria's family,  
Brockton residents



# Values-based messaging



- Local, familiar faces on communication materials
- Tap into a sense of community no matter how community is defined

## Challenges



- Messaging matters, but....

# Campaign & communication strategies

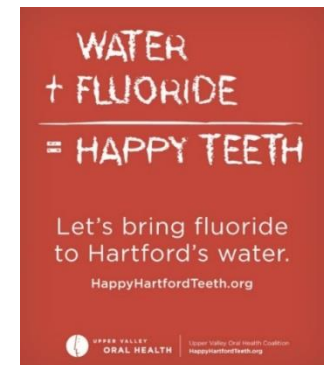


- Grassroots, community events
- Paid media
- Posters, flyers, postcards

## Challenges



- Rural v. Urban locale



# Opposition

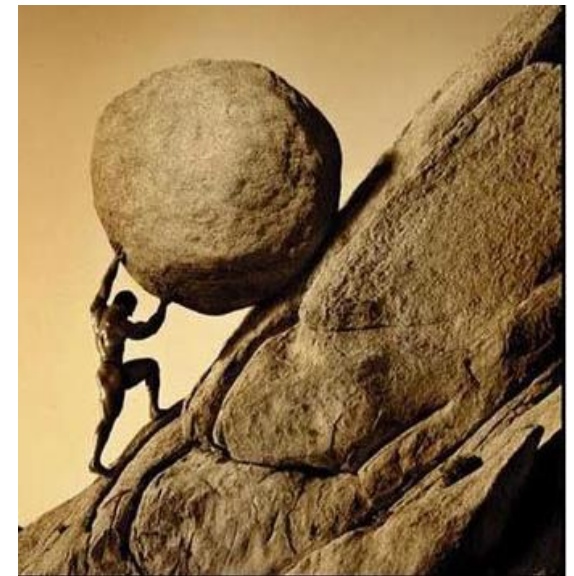


- Virtually no opposition in Brockton, MA

## Challenges



- Opposition every step of the way in Hartford, VT





# LESSONS LEARNED

# Building a grassroots movement from the





# Implementation v. preservation

- Sense of urgency
- Time-limited effort
- The norm

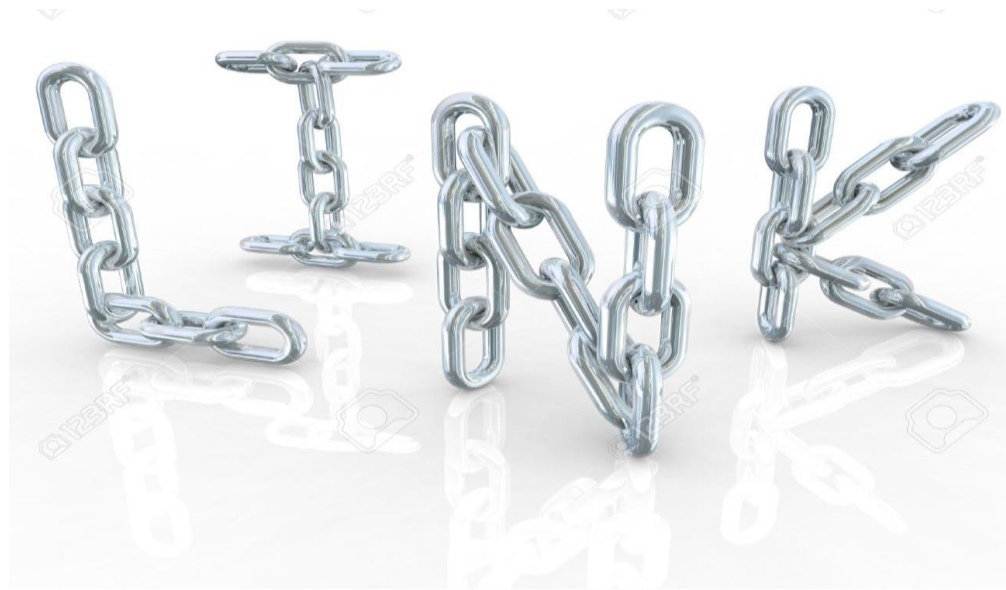


# Grassroots and grass tops



# Community Champions

- Cannot win without them
- Enticing & sustaining them is hard work



# Ownership and accountability



# Coalition sustainability



# Know the politics



# Opposition





# Thank you!

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