

I really love that comment about behavior change, and why not just reinforce already positive behaviors, or in stages of change, maybe move it to the next level of maintenance. This is a great point of view, and maybe it's what we have in mind when we offer "modeling" examples to TV shows. I must congratulate one show in particular. I don't know if the show "Medium" has made it around the globe, but it's about a female psychic who helps the district attorney's office in Phoenix solve murder mysteries. Recently, the Hispanic District Attorney was diagnosed with diabetes, and he's now shown running for exercise, taking his medications and being a "good guy" about his disease. We asked if they expected him to have some complications, since we could advise on kidney disease and kidney transplants, and they said "No, we're happy with him doing what he's supposed to do to stay well." WOW!!! I must tell you that I applauded them and said we'd never want to talk them out of that one. It's a gift that we rarely find in working with writers and producers since they have such demand for drama.

Srdjan brings up a really great point about harnessing U.S. TV shows in local markets and another colleague comments on placement of advertisements (ads) for HIV and other youth campaigns in the local market. As she noted, there was a hugely successful campaign in her country because TV ads ran during a prized time slot – in breaks for very popular TV programs. I'm guessing it was paid spot, but tell us if it was not. What we've learned in the U.S. market is that any campaign spots fare far better in placement if there is some purchase to go with the ad. Unfortunately, many of the campaign spots that are produced in the U.S. are for unpaid ad campaigns, so they are reliant upon the goodwill of the TV broadcast network, or someone at the local TV station. Regardless, they all fall into the famous "rotation cycle" for public service announcements (unpaid ads) that never seem to land on the prime time slot, but most often find their way to the wee morning hours. Examples of U.S. paid campaigns are the White House anti-drug campaign <http://www.mediacampaign.org/>, the CDC's VERB campaign for physical activity "It's What You Do" <http://www.cdc.gov/youthcampaign/>, the Ad Council's patient safety campaign that just launched <http://www.ahrq.gov/questionsaretheanswer/>, and the Kaiser Family Foundation-BET HIV campaign <http://www.bet.com/Site+Management/Packages/New+Rap-it-up.htm>. But those funds can run very short or dry in a year or two or three. Just ask the CDC.

So let's turn to existing programming again. Are there some ways to capitalize on health topics in TV shows so you can get local campaign messages out? Can it be done with little or no funds? We've been offering Web links that the show can post on their home page for the topic being discussed in the show. If the viewer is interested in the topic and is surfing the Web, they can easily click into more accurate information from the show's home page. Many studies tell us that youth are great multi-media users, and it's not unusual for them to watch TV, surf online, and have the radio going at the same time! One of the shows that has made great use of Web links for their viewers is the Fox show, House. National Cancer Institute (NCI) data shows an average of 33% increased traffic to their Web site at [www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov) after links are posted on the House (FOX) Web page. In fact, FOX.com consistently ranks the 5th or 6th top referrer to the NCI's Web site, [www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov), after they are posted to the House home page. This is probably not

what the scientists at the National Institutes of Health thought would be driving their Web sites, but it's ranked right up there with far more scientific sites and major search engines. I know you'll enjoy hearing from David Foster today, as he shares more about his show and how they work to ensure accuracy for the most remote health issues on TV! And lots of cancer, too, since the links are driving a lot of traffic to the NCI site.

If the health storyline is on a daytime drama, we also ask the network if they could develop a public service announcement using actors from the show and a free phone number for viewers to call for more information. Take a look at the article by Kennedy et al. (see reference list: <http://tinyurl.com/yuetcu>) to see the results that are possible. In 2001, CDC experts consulted on an HIV storyline that included messages about heterosexual transmission of HIV and the tragic situation of children in Africa who become orphans when their parents die of AIDS. The public service ad with the character Tony aired twice after very dramatic episodes. The second time it aired, there were more callers to the CDC's HIV hotline than any other time that year, including several times that it aired on TV and for a highly publicized HIV testing campaign. More than 5,000 viewers called for information.

Discussion questions:

- \* Have you had any luck identifying health topics before a show airs and offering Web links for the health topic? Could you do this in your country?
- \* How are you using PSAs in your country? Paid or unpaid ads? Any luck getting local networks to sponsor the public service announcement by taping a local celebrity who can give out the free number to call for information? How about tying the PSA to a storyline?