

Annual Report for 2006

Coalition for Healthcare Communication

Coalition staff and volunteer projects have raised our profile both inside and outside the Beltway and among our industry partners. This 2006 Annual Report highlights several of those activities, and asks for your suggestions and help in setting our priorities for 2007.

2006 Initiatives

1. Support Efforts to Protect Marketing Use of Prescriber Data

The Coalition has joined with IMS, Verispan, PhRMA, and several drug companies in the defense of the use of prescriber data for marketing purposes. The issue came to the fore in July of this year with passage of the Prescription Restraint Law by the state of New Hampshire. Although aimed at detailing, the New Hampshire statute prohibits **all commercial** use of prescriber data, including virtually all use by advertising agencies, CME providers, journal publishers and all others to support marketing and sales. Several other states have proposed similar statutes, including California, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Texas and Vermont.

Even more threatening in light of the November elections, Congressmen Frank Pallone (D-NJ) and Pete Stark (D-CA) introduced a federal version of the ban that likely will be given a high profile next year. Congressman Pallone is likely to become Chairman of the Health Subcommittee of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, and Congressman Stark will be Chairman of the Government Reform Committee.

Since the passage of the New Hampshire statute, the Coalition has coordinated the efforts of outside parties to support the IMS/Verispan lawsuit and follow actions in other states. These outside parties include PhRMA (and its members), AMA, Wolters Kluers, Dendrite, and Washington trade and policy groups (including Washington Legal Foundation, American Enterprise Institute and others).

In late November, the Coalition filed a “friend of the court” brief with the federal court in New Hampshire in support of the challenge by IMS and Verispan of the New Hampshire statute. The trial will begin in late January and is expected to be covered in great detail by the general and trade press. The outcome of that trial will greatly affect the discourse and likely success of subsequent state and federal proposals.

2. Petition to FDA on DTC Advertising

The Coalition's March 31 Petition to the FDA on DTC was covered widely in the trade and general press and has received significant support from Washington policy groups and the pharma industry. Although the FDA has remained publicly non-committal, discussions with senior FDA staff indicate significant support for the major themes of the Coalition's Petition, and suggest significant progress in 2007.

Meanwhile, FDA's DDMAC staff members have reiterated strong support for DTC in public meetings. The FDA has not filed a warning letter against a DTC ad in the measured media for over 18 months. Despite continued public and Congressional criticism of DTC, spending by pharma has been growing steadily this year.

Moreover, the September report of the Institute of Medicine on drug safety incorporated several of the recommendations of the Coalition citizen petition, agreeing that the FDA needed to modernize its approach to consumer communication and create an Advisory Committee on Communication. See the joint statement of the Coalition and the AAAA released the day after the publication of the IOM report posted on the Coalition website, www.cohealthcom.org.

We owe special thanks to the members of our advisory committee, including talent from Omnicom, EURO, IPG, WPP and Publicis that helped make the Citizen Petition possible. See attached copies of the petition, the press release, and a list of the members of the advisory committee.

3. Increased Public Policy Profile

The Coalition has become a major voice of the medical communication industry in general press, the medical trade press, and the policy press in Washington. The national media are beginning routinely to solicit and quote the Coalition position, e.g. the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and National Public Radio. The medical communication press; particularly *MMM*, *PharmaVoice*, *DTC Perspectives & Med Ad News*; solicit Coalition commentary for virtually every issue.

The "inside the beltway" publications; including *Pink Sheet*, *RPM Report*, *FDA Week*, *RxCompliance Report*, *FDA Advertising and Promotion Manual*; now use Coalition leaders as major sources of commentary and routinely include their quotes.

Clearly, the Coalition is now considered a major player among the trade and medical policy media.

Meanwhile, the Coalition Web site has received a record number of visitors, now routinely being visited by over two thousand unique users each month. Moreover, reporters are frequently visiting the site before asking for commentary from Coalition

leaders and are using the “For Further Information” section as a source of additional facts and commentary.

The Web site also has copies of several op-ed pieces by Harry Sweeney and John Kamp in *MMM*, *PharmaVoice*, *RPM Report* and Medscape/WebMD.

4. Support for the AAAA Medical Advertising Agency Committee

The Coalition worked closely with Ron Pantello, then head of the 4As Medical Advertising Committee, to support the first salary survey of medical agencies. That report is now available to agency heads and puts some facts behind many compensation discussions. Without the organizational support of executives from EURO and IPG, plus data from many of you, this major project would not have been possible. Next year, the 4As is looking to add a section to the salary survey that will include salary data from education companies that would provide one of the first clear looks at the cost of those positions.

5. Increased Participation by Industry Leaders

Attendance and participation at Coalition meetings has increased considerably over the past few years. The schedule of meetings has increased from six to eight per year, and the attendance is now straining the capacity of the Board Room at AAAA Headquarters.

2007 Projects

1. Providing Health Safety and Marketing Issue Support to the FDA & PhRMA

The Coalition will increase its policy partnership activities with FDA and PhRMA in 2007. At FDA, the Coalition is working aggressively with senior staff on communication policy issues stemming from health safety concerns and the recent IOM report. The Coalition is working closely on policy issues with PhRMA staff on a wide range of subjects, including public relations, state and federal limits on use of prescribing information, FDA recommendations for changes in legislative authority for use of “user fees” for communication issues, etc. On Capitol Hill the Coalition will support the Advertising Coalition and its members, including AAAA, ANA & PhRMA, on legislation affecting drug marketing, including DTC advertising, CME, and deductibility of marketing expenditures..

2. Public Challenge to Prosecutions of Ad and Drug Education Programs

Political and legal attacks on legitimate educational programs is dampening drug company support and potentially creating a serious knowledge gap, especially on off label uses among our nation's doctors and other health care providers. The Coalition is looking for opportunities to create a public debate about this and to help policy makers and others appreciate the importance of company sponsored medical education.

Two recent lawsuits against Pfizer may give us that opportunity. We are considering filing "friend of the court" briefs to support the First Amendment right of doctors and patients to receive information provided by drug companies. You may have read about the Lipitor case where the plaintiffs allege that journal articles and certified CME are "inherently false and misleading," even when the information is peer reviewed and offered by accredited, independent CME providers. Meanwhile, Senator Grassley is sending accusatory letters to all the major drug companies challenging a range of legitimate educational programs.

3. Establishment of the Coalition Foundation

Jack Angel is doggedly pursuing funding from the industry to enable the Coalition to create a high profile academic center for the study of health communication policy. Operating within the Coalition Foundation, the center will support research, symposia and other academic and policy meetings focused on the value of company-sponsored communication in the delivery of efficient, quality healthcare in the United States. The funds will be used to create an academic center for critical thinking, strategic research, and immediate response to public, government and press inquiries. The public relations value of the center alone should far outweigh its costs.

With your help, Jack has received pledges from a few drug companies, but more help is needed from you to help set up meetings with company officials who both understand the need for this center and are willing to authorize the checks that will make it happen.

How You Can Help

1. Let Us Know What Else Needs to Be Done

Let us know how we are doing and what else needs to be done to build our programs, defend our industry, and support the public health. Send an email (jkamp@wrf.com)

2. Support the Foundation Fundraising

Jack Angel needs your help setting up meetings and asking for the contributions that will make the Foundation and its academic center happen. Call or email him today with ideas, contacts and appointments. (203-661-3314; jeangel44@aol.com)

3. Support Coalition Public Relations

Several of us continue to worry that the Coalition is one of the best-kept secrets in the industry, even among our own company and trade association members. Many of you have helped us on that score by writing op-eds and spreading the word about our activities in your organizations. Now may be the time for us to do for ourselves what we do so well for our clients, use public relations strategic planning and execution for the Coalition itself. Please consider how your organization could help us more effectively communicate with ourselves and with the policy makers that are so important to our mission.

December 22, 2006

John Kamp, Executive Director