

Substance Use Communications Campaigns

Division of Substance Use Programs October 2026

The Vermont Department of Health, Division of Substance Use Programs (DSU) has developed multiple behavior change campaigns that reach youth, young adults, adults, parents, older adults and people who are pregnant to prevent and address alcohol, cannabis, stimulant and opioid use, misuse and addiction. Messaging, tone and language in these social marketing campaigns are informed by audience research and communications best practices and are intended to help reduce the stigma that may prevent a person from being receptive to messaging and seeking support.

This briefing includes metrics on how campaign messaging that ran in Spring 2026 performed. The campaigns in market during this period were Do Your Part, Check Yourself, One Less and Healthy at Home. The messages focused on reducing alcohol use (for adults and young adults) and safely storing and disposing of prescription medication.

Key Points

- **Campaigns that were in marking this spring focused on reducing alcohol use and safely storing and disposing of prescription medication**
- **Spring campaign ads were seen 13.8 million times, with many ads exceeding benchmarks for engagement by the audience (video views, website visits and social media interaction)**

What are the steps to developing campaign messages?

1. Conduct research to inform audience, message and delivery
2. Develop campaign messaging and creative concepts
3. Test the messaging and concepts with the audience
4. Implement the campaign through paid media placement
5. Evaluate the campaign based on identified media metrics

Working with media and marketing experts, these steps are fundamental in developing campaigns that effectively reach and resonate with audiences. DSU's media placement approach ensures that topic-specific campaigns for identified audiences are placed strategically throughout the year to avoid messaging gaps.

If you need help accessing or understanding this information, contact AHS.VDHDSU@vermont.gov.



HealthVermont.gov
802-863-7200



Messaging in Market This Year

- **VT Helplink** is a statewide resource for people that use substances and their families to connect with support and services. The call center and website provide information and referrals for prevention, intervention, harm reduction, treatment and recovery services in Vermont. VTHelplink.org
- **ParentUp** helps parents and caregivers to have conversations with their children about alcohol and other drugs. This social marketing campaign provides tips for establishing a supportive environment and creating on-going, two-way dialogue to make discussions easier about alcohol, cannabis, other drugs and mental health. ParentUpVT.org
- **Let's Talk Cannabis** is an educational campaign providing science-based information to increase awareness about cannabis and how it affects our bodies, minds and health. The campaign provides information on the health and developmental risks of use among youth or people who are pregnant, prevention tips and how to access help. HealthVermont.gov/LetsTalkCannabis



- **Do Your Part** provides tips on safe storage and disposal of medications to help prevent accidental ingestion by children and pets, and to protect the environment. Messaging promotes safely storing and disposing of unwanted medications through drop-off kiosks and mail-back disposal envelopes, and participation in National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day each April and October. HealthVermont.gov/DoYourPart
 - Spring messaging ran for 2 weeks from April 20 – May 3, 2026 on Facebook, Instagram, Front Porch Forum, programmatic display and local media (various TV stations and Vermont Public).
 - Ads were seen 2 million times.
 - Ads drove 5.9k visits to the campaign website.



- **Over the Dose** is a digital campaign for young adults aged 18-25 at increased risk for overdose. Messaging addresses the increased risks of using substances together, signs of an overdose and risks of fentanyl. OverTheDoseVT.com



- **OutLast** is a digital campaign for teens at an increased risk for alcohol and cannabis use. Messaging emphasizes how substances can interfere with managing stress and anxiety, self-control, being focused and achieving goals. OutLastVT.com



- **Check Yourself** is a digital campaign addressing high-risk behaviors among young adults ages 21-25. Messaging highlights the health risks and social consequences of binge drinking and stimulant use. CheckYourselfVT.com

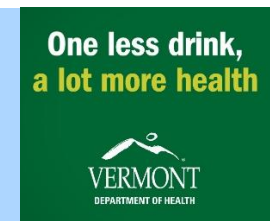


- Spring messaging ran for 5 weeks from February 16 – March 23, 2026 on Instagram and YouTube (the most used online platforms for young adults) with a budget of \$20,000.
- Ads were seen 2.4 million times, exceeding benchmarks by 14%.
- Video ads were watched fully 571k times, exceeding benchmarks by 13%.
- Ads drove 7.9k visits to the campaign website, exceeding benchmarks by 17%.
- [Watch the newest ad, “Vermontis Partius.”](#)

- **KnowOD** is an overdose prevention campaign with messaging intended to reach people at greater risk of overdose, as well as their family and friends. The campaign focuses on harm reduction messaging, carrying naloxone, avoid using alone, risks of fentanyl and xylazine, and calling 911 in an overdose emergency. KnowODVT.com



- **One Less** messages to adults on the health benefits of drinking less alcohol and provides realistic steps to do so. Launched in April of 2025, messaging encourages adults to monitor and reduce their alcohol use by increasing awareness of the short-term and long-term benefits of drinking less alcohol. OneLessVT.com



- Spring messaging ran for 6 weeks from March 30 – May 8, 2026 on Instagram and Facebook with a budget of \$40,000.
- Ads were seen 4.1 million times.
- Video ads were watched fully 520k times.
- Ads drove 49k visits to the campaign website.
- [Watch the newest ads. “One Less to Reduce Risks” & “One Less for Better Health.”](#)

Messaging Collaborations

DSU partners with other Health Department programs to integrate public health messaging.

- **Healthy at Home** is a campaign that provides simple steps to keep homes, and everyone in them, healthy and safe. DSU partners with the Division of Environmental Health to provide guidance on safely storing substances to protect kids and pets from accidental ingestion. HealthVermont.gov/HealthyAtHome
 - Spring messaging ran for 5 weeks from March 30 – May 3, 2026 on Facebook, Instagram and programmatic display with a budget of \$30,000.
 - Ads were seen 5.3 million times.
 - Ads drove 25k visits to the campaign website.
- **One More Conversation** messaging helps Vermonters understand there is no known safe amount of substance use for a healthy pregnancy. DSU partners with the Divisions of Family and Child Health and Health Promotion & Disease Prevention on this resource that supports and encourages health care professionals to continue this conversation with their patients throughout pregnancy and the baby's first year. HealthVermont.gov/1MoreConversation



One More Conversation
Can Make the Difference