

# Product Safety Education Campaign Update

November 2004



## ***Overview***

In 2001, the Washington State Legislature passed SHB 1365, RCW 43.70.660. This law directed the Department of Health (DOH) to establish and maintain a product safety education campaign to raise awareness about the dangers associated with recalled children's products such as cribs, playpens, walkers and strollers. The ultimate goal of the campaign is to reduce injuries and deaths to children due to recalled products.

Since September 2001, the Washington State Department of Health's Injury Prevention Program, has worked closely with the U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center, and key stakeholders to implement a statewide child product safety campaign. In December 2001, DOH Injury Prevention Program contracted with Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center to assist with the development, research, implementation, and evaluation of a public awareness and education campaign.

Initial research found a high level of awareness about recalled products in general, a high degree of concern about the dangers associated with recalled children's products, but a low level of knowledge about resources available to learn more or check for a recalled product.

Campaign messages and materials were developed and pre-tested with parent focus groups. These include a full size poster, two-sided fact sheet, flyers and magnets. All materials are in English and Spanish. The campaign launched in June 2002.

The campaign's goal is to raise awareness of recalled children's products and encourage parents, guardians, childcare providers to check for recalled products in their homes and day care facilities. The campaign also directs people to the CPSC toll-free hotline, web site, and email alert service.

Due to limited resources, the campaign has relied on grassroots strategies, earned media coverage, and partnerships to reach its target audiences over the past three years. Dollars were not set aside for a paid media or advertising budget.

## ***Targeted Outreach***

The campaign specifically targeted parents, foster parents, other caregivers, child care providers, consignment and resale stores selling infant and childcare products, and charitable and governmental entities serving infants, children, and families as required by RCW 43.70.660(2):

### Parents, Foster Parents, and Other Caregivers

- Outreach to foster parents through a direct mailing to foster parent organizations and agencies in November 2002; articles in the "Liaison Link" a newsletter for foster parents; and a presentation at the 2003 Foster Care Conference in Wenatchee.

### Child Care Providers

- Direct mailing to 9,600 licensed child care providers in June 2002 contained a cover letter, a poster, fact sheets, and materials to hand out to parents.
- On-going education and outreach through DSHS web site, newsletters, and in-service trainings in partnership with public health and Child Care Resource & Referral Network.

### Consignment and Resale Stores Selling Infant and Childcare Products

- On site visits to thrift stores in collaboration with CPSC investigators in April 2002. The site visits were conducted in over 65 thrift stores and found that every store had at least one recalled item.
- Mailings to 500 thrift and consignment stores in June 2003 to highlight common recalled products, encourage store managers and owners to check for recalled products, and educational materials to post in their stores to alert consumers.
- Thrift store operators were also encouraged to sign up for CPSC's email alert service to receive online alerts as recalls are announced.
- Trainings for thrift and consignment store operators - April 2004, in King and Pierce Counties. Thrift store personnel learned how to screen for recalled products and what to do with hazardous or recalled items.
- Recall Round Up Media Event, April 2002, held in a parking lot of a thrift store in North Seattle and highlighted common recalled items found in thrift stores.
- Recall Round Up Media Event, April 2003, featured State Health Officer Maxine Hayes talking about the dangers of recalled children products and showcasing certain products like portable cribs and baby walkers often re-sold at garage and yard sales.

### Charitable and Governmental Entities Serving Infants, Children, and Families

- Outreach to low income parents through Women, Infants, Children (WIC) offices, HEAD Start and ECAP. Posters and flyers in WIC offices and direct mails to Head Start programs encouraging parents to check for recalled children's products.

### Other Campaign Activities

- In collaboration with BELO (the parent company for KING 5 TV in Seattle, NW Cable News and KREM TV in Spokane) the Department of Health produced and aired a 30-second television Public Service Announcement (PSA) that featured recalled children's products in April 2004.
- Department of Health gained visibility for the child product recall campaign through presentations at the Washington State Joint Conference of Health, International Consumer Product Health and Safety Organization (ICPHSO), national and regional (CPSC) meetings, national and local SAFE KIDS conferences, and through the "Kids in Danger" organization.

### ***Sustainability***

One of the department's goals for the child product recall campaign is to continue the availability of campaign messages and materials once funding is depleted. The following are just three examples to achieve that goal.

- DOH negotiated with CHILD Profile to insert product recall flyers in mailings to parents with children between the ages of birth and six years old in Washington State. Flyers are inserted in three separate mailings to parents at one month, six months and nine months. A fourth flyer aimed at parents with two year olds is being developed for use in 2005.
- Integrate child product flyers into Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies (HM/HB) packets to new mothers and callers to the HM/HB hotline.

- Collaboration with CPSC and placement of the CPSC logo on the campaign materials ensures that CPSC staff will continue to use and distribute the materials statewide.

### ***Results to Date***

- Parental awareness has remained high about the risk of injury to infants and toddlers due to recalled products. In 2002, 51 percent of parents in the survey said they were “very aware” of this risk; in 2003, 49 percent of parents were “very aware” and in 2004, 52 percent were “very aware.” Parents with children under age five were even more aware of the risk of injury due to recalled products, 57 percent choose “very aware” 2004.
- Since the campaign began, both awareness and use of CPSC resources has risen among parents in Washington State. Use of the CPSC toll-free number increased from 13 percent in 2002, to 26 percent in 2003, to 46 percent in 2004. Use of the CPSC web site or email service rose from 12.5 percent in 2002, to 50 percent in 2003 and 61 percent in 2004. Parents with children under age five were even more likely to know about and use the CPSC toll-free number, web site and email service.
- One of the most interesting research findings in 2004, showed that 25 percent of all parents in the survey heard about a product recall then checked for that recalled item in their home or someone else’s home, but parents with children under age five, were significantly more likely to check – 37 percent reported hearing about a recall then checking for the item in their home.
- Over the course of the campaign, parents consistently stated that television and the Internet are the most convenient ways to learn about recalled products. Parents with children under age five are likely to also list email notices, the doctor’s office, and the newspaper as convenient ways to learn about product recalls.

### ***Ongoing activities by the Department of Health***

- Continue collaboration with CPSC at the local, regional, and national level.
- Continue contract with Children’s Hospital and Regional Medical Center for campaign implementation and evaluation.
- Pursue options to run the television PSA statewide in 2005, BELO is looking for outside sponsors to help support a media buy.
- Continue to generate earned media coverage through the monthly media digest and special event events during Recall Round Up in April 2005.
- Conduct statewide telephone survey of parents to track campaign progress and impact, May 2005.
- Continue to reach child care providers through educational in-service opportunities, newsletters and the Child Care Resource and Referral network.
- Continue to reach parents of children age birth to six years through Child Profile mailings.
- Continue to seek opportunities to display and distribute campaign materials via health and safety fairs and special events.

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