

CASE STUDY

AmSurg Marketing Strategies Provide Patient Education and Result in Procedure Volume Growth

The benefits of an AmSurg partnership are illustrated in the following case study of our efforts to promote our endoscopy centers during National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month in March 2001.

THE BEGINNING

In February of 2000, Sutton Social Marketing found these surprising facts for the National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month Campaign:

- 90% of Americans surveyed did not name colorectal cancer when asked to name a serious disease that can be fatal.
- 24% of the population could not name one way to prevent colorectal cancer.
- Only 4% of respondents named screening tests as a way to protect themselves against colorectal cancer.
- 90% of the population believed that it was the physician's responsibility to recommend screening.
- 63% of Americans aged 50 and over were not getting screened for colorectal cancer.
- Nearly half of Americans aged 50 and over said that their doctors DID NOT discuss colorectal cancer screening with them.
- Nine out of ten respondents said that if their physician recommended screening, they would get screened.
- The U.S. population did not know that colorectal cancer is the second most common cause of cancer death in both men and women nor that it is preventable and treatable when detected early.

Beginning in March 2000, the Cancer Research Foundation of America joined forces with the National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable and the American Digestive Health Foundation to launch a campaign designating March as National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. Supporting resolutions were passed in the Senate and House of Representatives. Additionally, a Presidential Proclamation was issued by the White House declaring March as National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month.

AmSurg recognized this dual opportunity for our GI centers to provide a public service in the form of patient education and to increase procedure volumes by raising awareness of this very preventable cancer. The AmSurg Business Development team launched a program in March 2001 to publicize this deadly disease and its prevention.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT



We developed marketing materials that included a special brochure with the headline: “ This year...56,300 family members are expected to die of colon cancer. What can you do about it?” We also developed a press kit that included the Research Findings; a sample press release to be customized for each market; a FAQ insert; a Myths and Realities insert; and sample letters to media contacts, referring doctors, and key community employers.

The Business Development team made personal phone calls and sent letters to media contacts at local affiliates of NBC, ABC, CBS, FOX and PBS as well as radio stations with health-related programs in thirty of our endoscopy center markets. We sent press kits to local newspapers and made follow-up calls to offer interviews with our doctors and tours of our endoscopy centers. In several markets, we coordinated special exhibits for local health fairs. We also offered our support to local organizations such as chapters of the American Cancer Society and the Council on Aging in several areas.

A special direct mail piece was utilized in Chattanooga, Topeka and Baltimore. Print ads ran in Milwaukee, Baltimore, West Monroe (LA), and Torrance. Ads and/or articles also ran in newsletters such as the one for Humana in South Florida and the one for *The Ouachita Senior Scene* in Monroe, LA.

RESPONSE FROM THE MEDIA

As a result of these efforts, our endoscopy centers received television coverage on WKRN-ABC in Nashville; KSNT-NBC in Topeka; KSHB-NBC in Kansas City, MO; KGBT-CBS in Harlingen, TX; and KCOS-PBS in El Paso. Tours of the centers and interviews with our physician partners were included. In Salt Lake City, 1160-AM radio ran public service announcements provided by our team and Health Quest Radio in Baltimore did a one-hour live call-in program with two of our partners.

AmSurg endoscopy centers received major print coverage in newspapers such as the *Northwest Arkansas Times*, Fayetteville, AR; *The News Star*, West Monroe, LA; *The Daily Breeze*, Torrance; *Health Quest*, Baltimore; and *The Capital-Journal*, Topeka. The professional magazine, *M.D. News* in South Florida ran a cover story and five pages of content about our Tamarac center. All centers reported receiving numerous phone calls from the publicity. For example, in Torrance they reported approximately thirty-six calls from the first article with twenty-nine procedures booked.

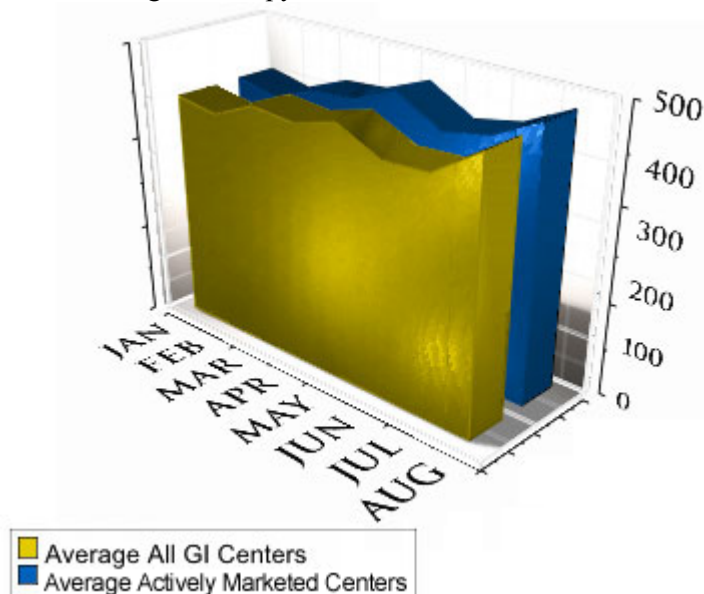
Nashville and Kansas City, MO centers participated with Impact Health, Eckerd and ABC-TV local affiliates in a special program offering self-administered hemowipe kits for only \$1.00 at all Eckerd pharmacies. We set up and monitored a Colon Cancer Hotline that received over one hundred phone calls. Eckerd distributed approximately 7,000 kits in Kansas City and approximately 13,000 kits in the Nashville area.

THE PHYSICIAN'S ROLE

The Business Development team worked diligently to make the most of this opportunity for synergy from the National Colon Cancer Awareness Program headlined by Katie Couric. However, the value to the public, and hence to the media, emanated from the role of local physicians who were available for interviews and willing to answer questions. Viewers, listeners, and readers respond with interest to a healthcare professional in their own market. In each market where media coverage occurred, the ultimate success was dependent upon the availability and cooperation of the physicians. Participating physician partners contributed their time and efforts to make this outreach program a success.

RESULTS

The AmSurg program produced measurable benefits for the participating centers. As seen in this graph, the focused marketing efforts resulted in an increase in procedure volumes for those centers that participated in the program compared to all AmSurg endoscopy centers.



Together, the participating AmSurg endoscopy centers and the AmSurg Business Development team achieved measurable success with the Colon Cancer Awareness Month activities. Planning the campaign and developing centralized resources that were customized for each individual market, AmSurg delivered a program that would have been time- and cost-prohibitive for most independent endoscopy centers. We will continue to track the long-term benefits of this program and update the results that demonstrate the power of the AmSurg partnership.