

Health Literacy and Communication: Maximizing Your Organization's Efforts for Reaching the Media and the Public

Wisconsin Health Literacy Summit
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National Action Plan for Health Literacy

- Goal 1: Develop and disseminate health and safety information that is accurate, accessible, and actionable.



Great, but...

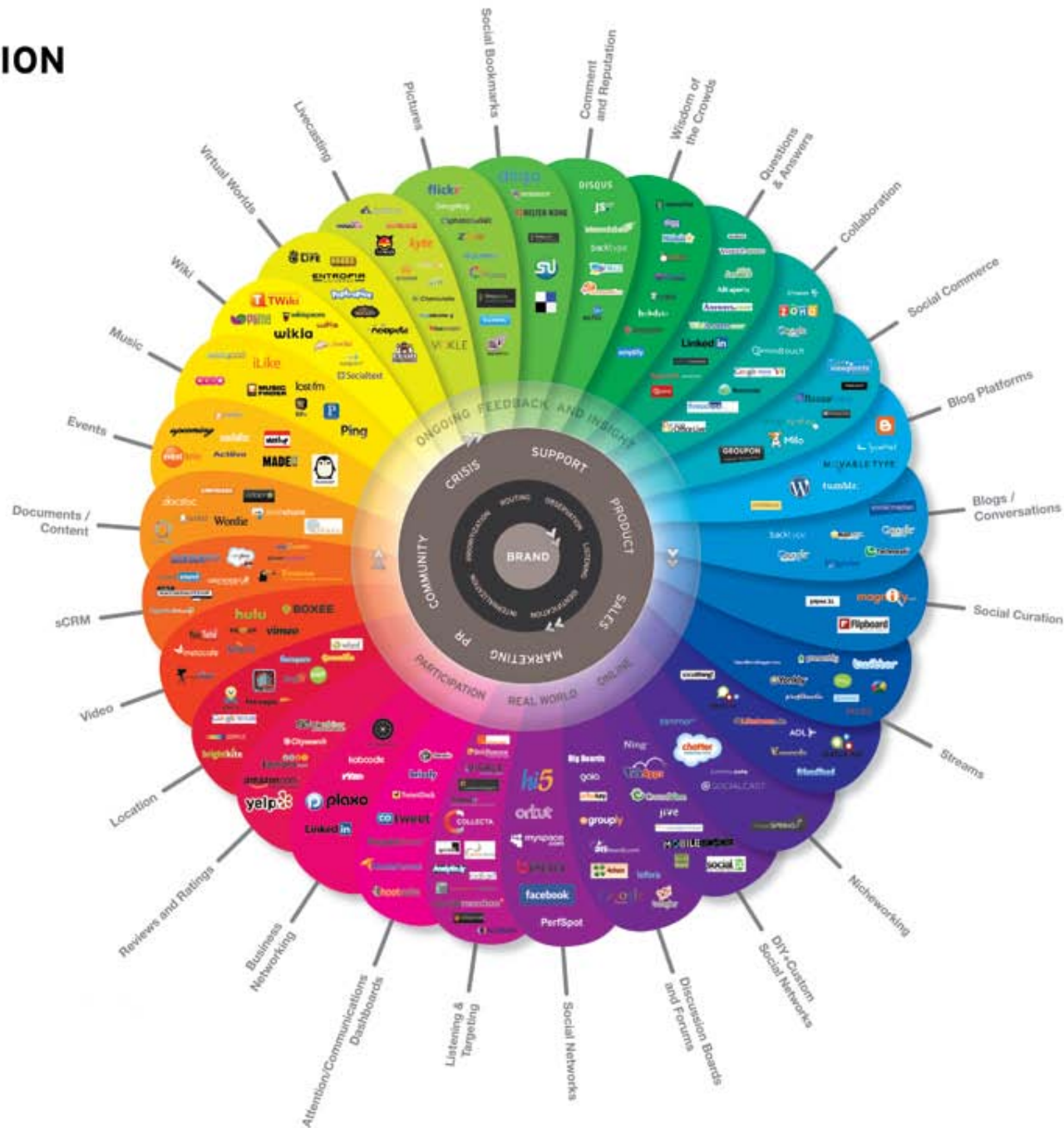
- How do we develop and disseminate this information to the media?



Media strategies abound

- Traditional methods: press releases, press events
 - Social networking: Facebook, LinkedIn
 - Microblogging: Twitter
 - Online: web sites, blogs
-
- Try one, not all.

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Understand the scope

- Scan the environment:
 - Know your audience
 - Know your media outlets
 - Know what's on the ground: partners, programs, resources
 - Know what works: lit reviews, other stories
- Understand your capacity:
 - What buy-in do you have? Whose do you need?
 - What media strategies make sense for you, your community, your media?
 - What can you realistically evaluate?

WHERE TO





Look at *your* media landscape

- How do your media outlets cover health?
 - What is done well?
 - Where are the gaps?
 - Develop your own media contact list and update the data regularly.
- See what network of partners you have and who might lead you to, or be able to serve as, a source for local quotes or data.

Analyze HL needs/resources

- Assess the community first
 - What are the needs and challenges?
 - Where might health literacy fit in?
- Who are your allies?
- Who is currently working on health literacy that could partner with you?

Tips to increase your pick up

- Keep it simple.
- Make the story timely and newsworthy.
- Be clear.
- Make it relevant. Why does it, or should it, matter to them and their readers?
- Give them data and some context.

Things to keep in mind

- Up-to-date contact information is key.
- Extra time needed.
- Maintain the health literacy message.
- Technical challenges will arise.
- Data challenges.
- Messaging matters.

A CASE STUDY FROM MISSOURI:

What you need to know before you begin



Our health literacy plan

- Create and send health news releases to statewide Missouri media outlets.
- Partner with Missouri Press Association, Missouri local public health agencies, state Extension offices.
- Research the implementation of the media intervention.
- Work with partners on directions and next steps for the intervention.

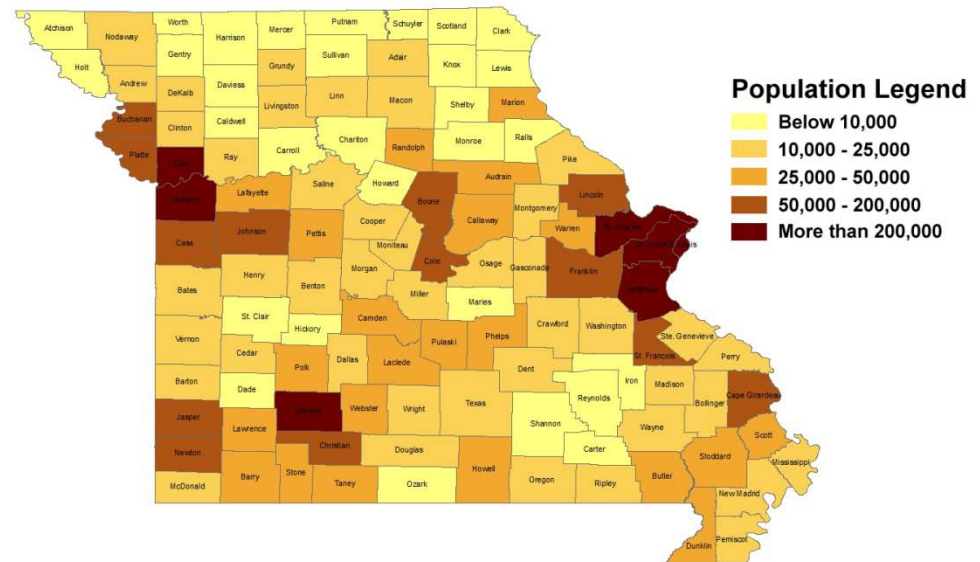
How did we decide on our plan?

- Start with the scope:
 - Funders and partners already knew health literacy was a problem = buy in
 - Strong history with media
 - Strong research center with staff and resources
 - Interest in addressing health literacy statewide

Know your audience

In Missouri:

- 84% of all counties have < 50K in population
- 53% counties under 20K population
- 66% (approx 4 million) live in St. Louis and Kansas City Metro areas



Know your population's health profile

- *Some health indicators from Missouri:*
 - More than 1 in 3 adults are overweight (36%)¹ and almost 1 in 3 adults are obese (29.1%).¹
 - 9.3% of adults currently have diabetes.¹
 - 19.6% of adults currently have high blood pressure.¹
 - Almost 1 in 4, or 23.2% of adults, smoke.¹
 - Lowest cigarette tax in the nation at 17¢.²
 - MO ranks **last** in the U.S. in state funding for public health.³

1. MO DHSS Community Level Profiles, 2007.

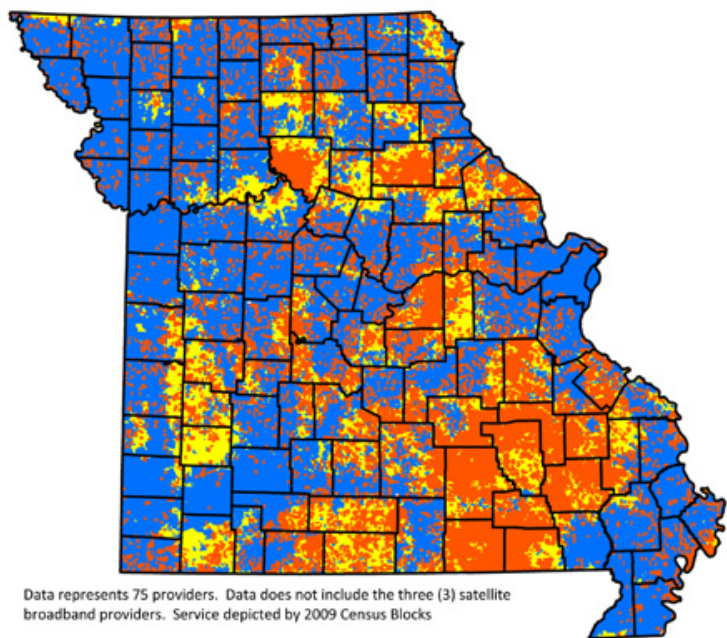
2. National Conference of State Legislatures, 2010.

3. CDC, FY 2009

Know your population's access

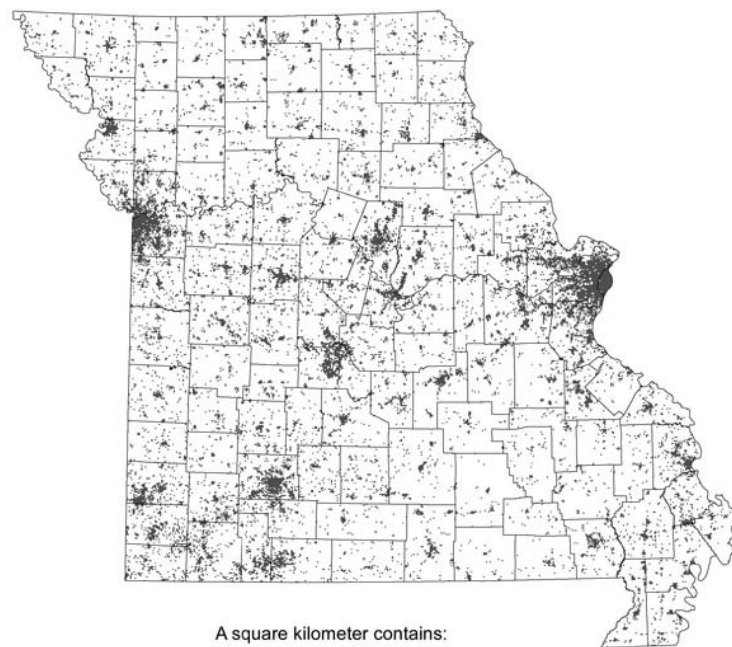
In Missouri:

Home Broadband Availability



- Unserved – No Broadband Providers beyond Satellite**
- Underserved – 1 Broadband Provider beyond Satellite**
- Served – More than 1 Broadband Provider beyond Satellite**

Community Broadband Availability



Community broadband accounts for Internet access in 'anchor areas,' such as schools, churches, and libraries within a community.

Know what access your audience trusts & uses for health information

Examples

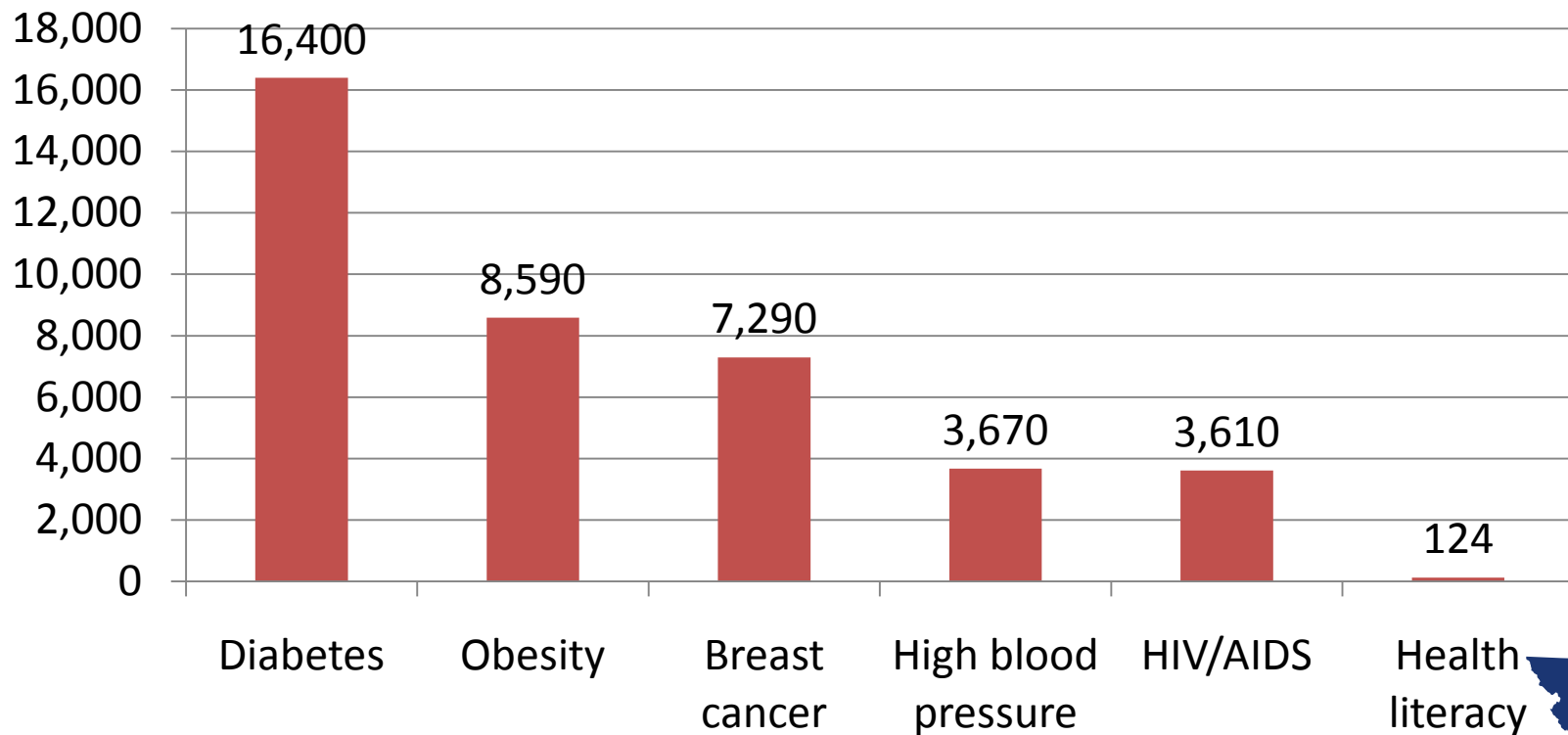
- Facebook
- Twitter
- SMS (text messaging)
- Radio
- TV
- Local newspapers
- Network newspapers
- Blogs



Know where you stand

A national comparison of health topic coverage in the media

Google News search for March 2011



Conclusions for Missouri

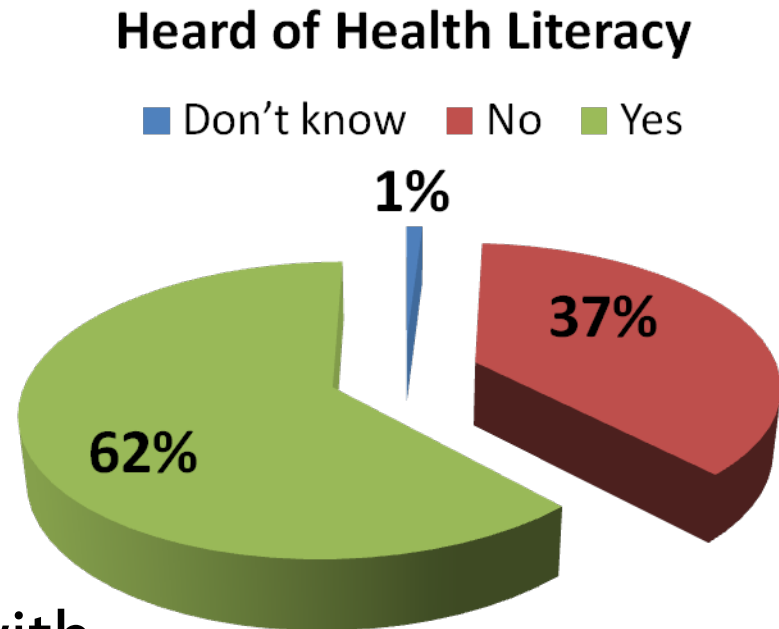
- Our population most trusted the local newspapers.
- These newspapers became our primary target audience.

PUTTING THE PLAN INTO ACTION



Findings from our survey data

- National survey of journalists
 - Sample pulled from Barron's and Editor & Publisher
 - Literature review
 - In-depth interviews with individual newspaper editors and reporters



HLM News Service

- Funded by Health Literacy Missouri
- Provides ready-to-use, tailored health literate stories to all local news and media outlets in the state
- Original graphics
- Localized data and quotes
- Message blocks or action steps

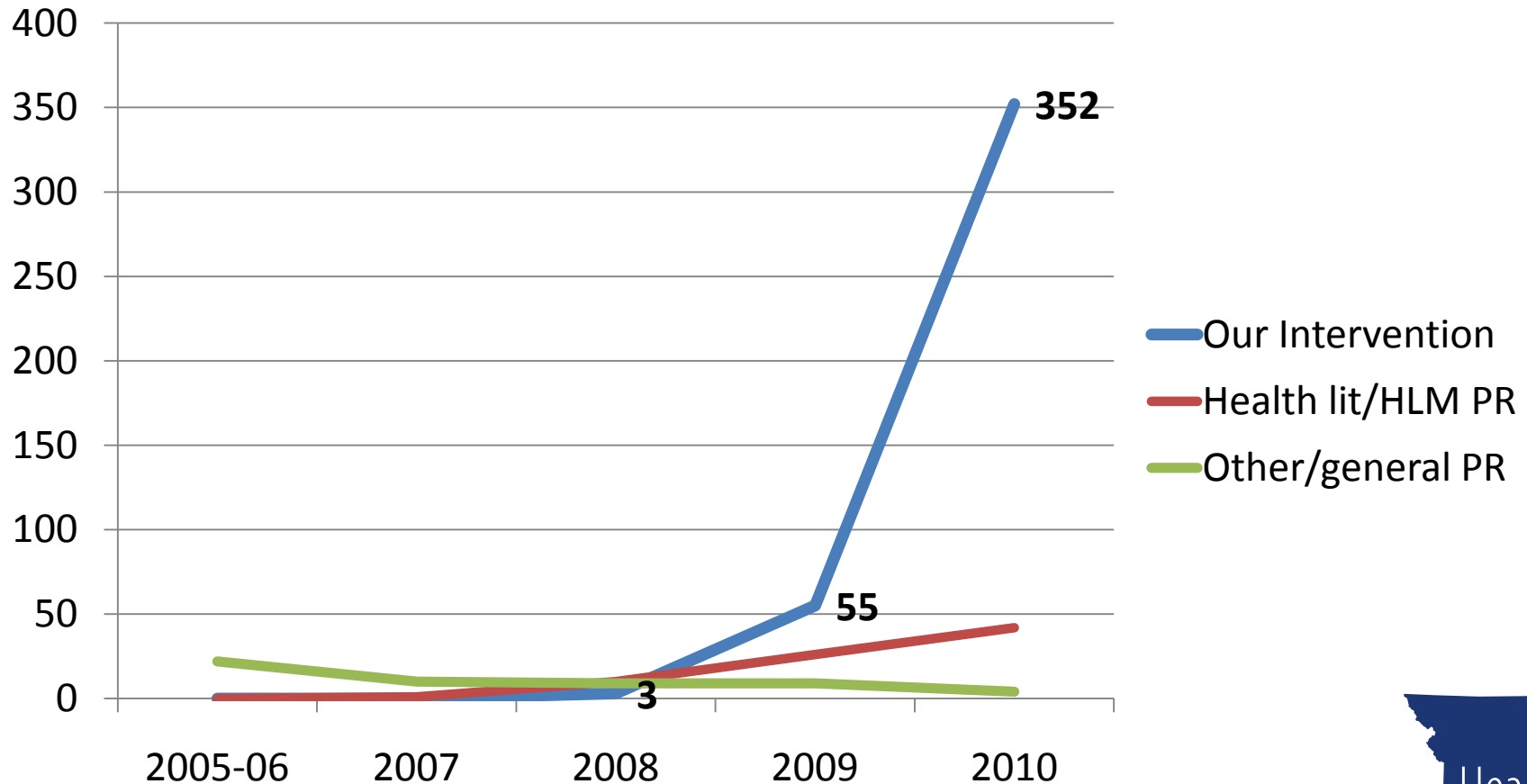
Messaging

- Concrete, evidence-based messages
- Use simple, positive language
- “Social math”
- Emphasize behavior changes as normative
- Use clear, simple graphics
- Memory aids

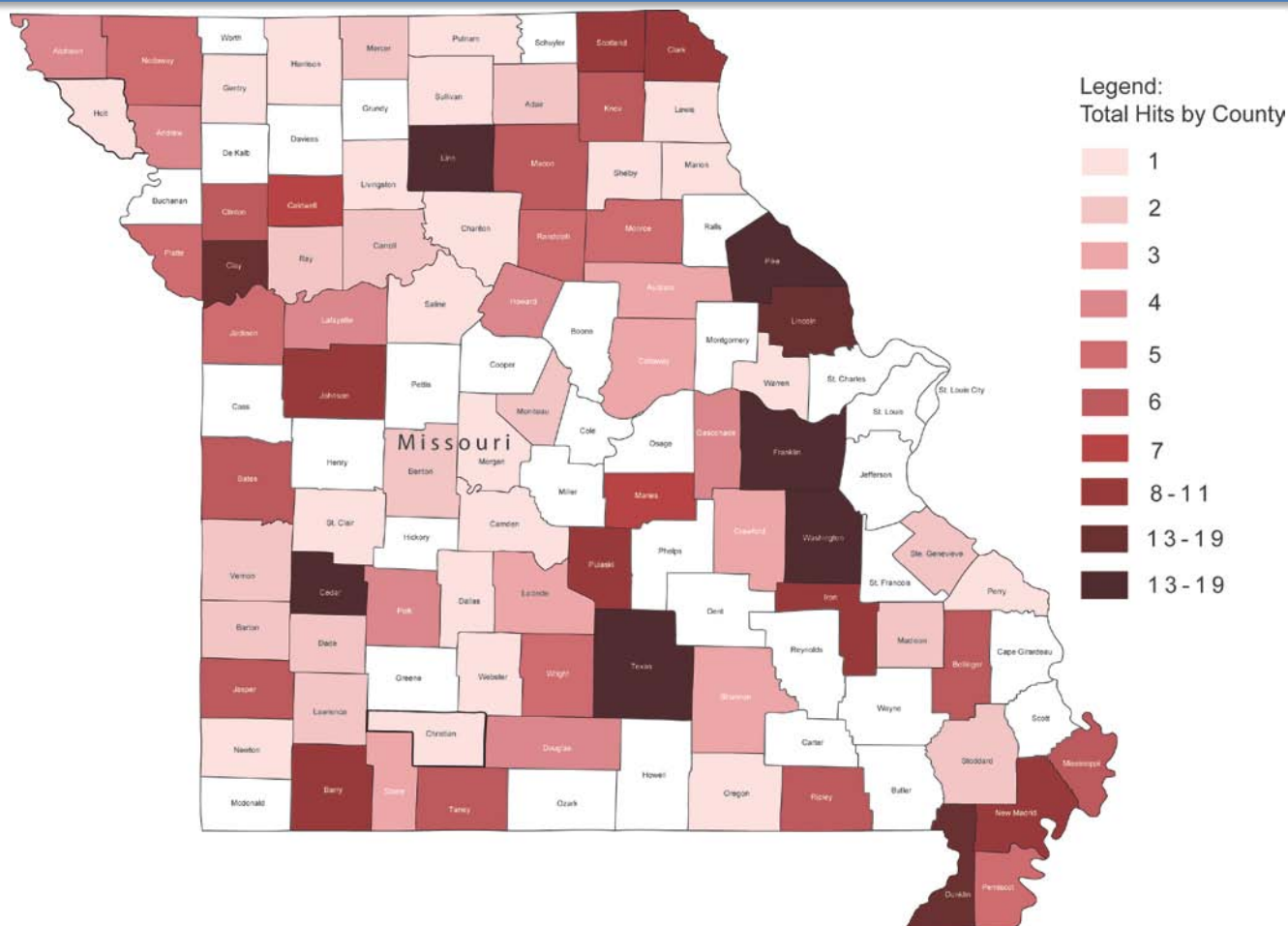
RESULTS TO DATE



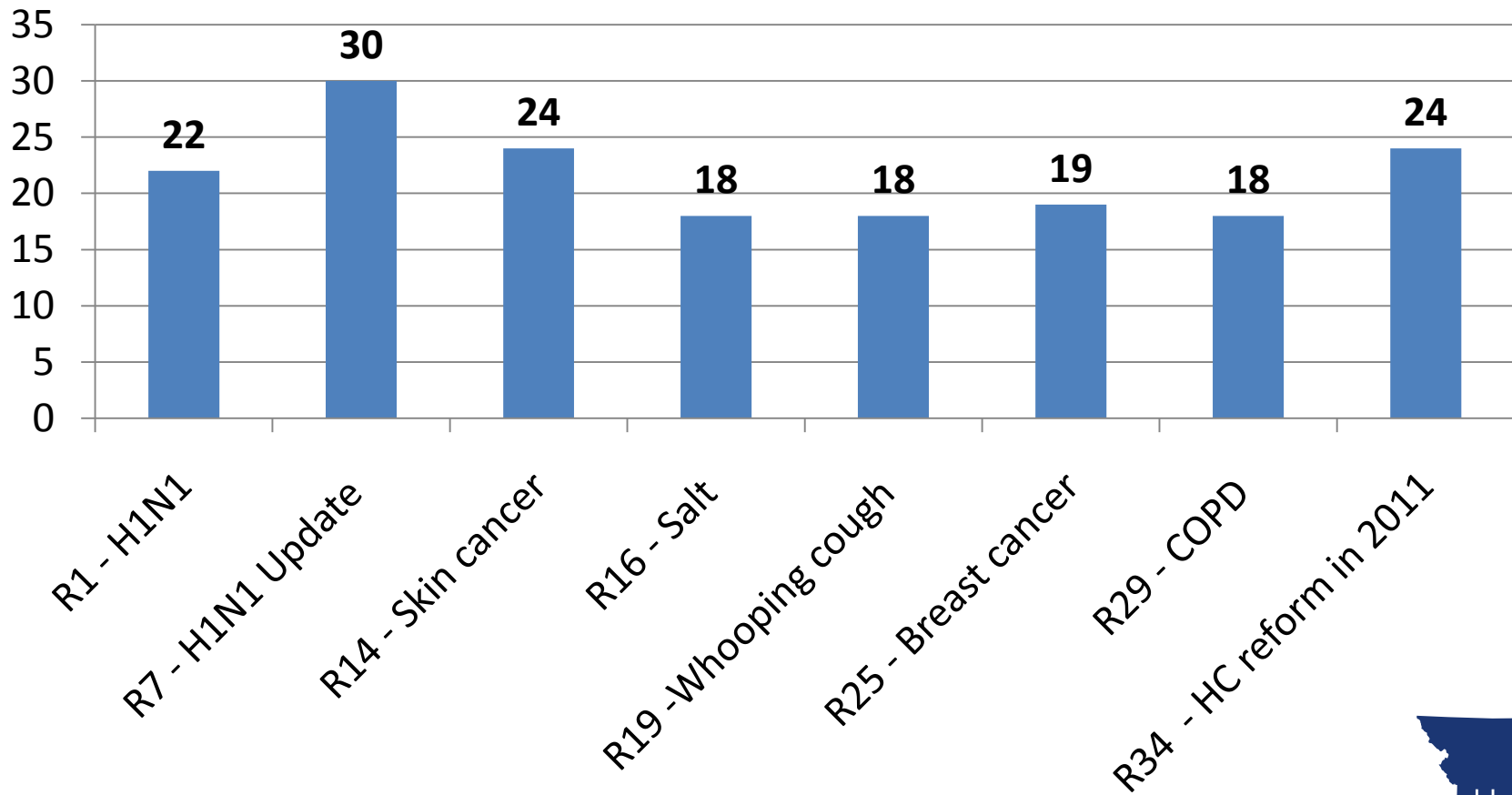
Longitudinal Evaluation of Health Literacy in Local MO News



Newspaper hits by county (as of March 15, 2011)



Top Releases



Intervention to date (Oct. 28, 2009 – Feb. 1, 2011)

- 36 news releases disseminated
- 431 stories picked up
- 111 different newspapers in 79 counties
- Avg. circulation size 3,800+
- Stories have reached more than 1.6 million readers
- 87% of hits were in rural areas
(county population <50K)

Questions? Contact us

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