You asked:

How can we work more effectively at media education & outreach – and harness the media to change public behavior?
In our view, given the goal of changing public behavior, effective media relations is not the problem. You are already quite successful in getting the media to convey your messages.

The problem is the message... and the messenger.
Despite a general lack of trust in federal agencies, and the CDC enjoys very high ratings. 

41% TRUST

The CDC’s commitment to science, facts and complete and nuanced transparency is an important part of what makes the agency such a highly trusted authority.

But, while this demonstrates responsible government leadership…

it is not the same as persuasive marketing

(This is not to suggest that CDC should become change its mission and values; we believe the solution lies elsewhere, as we will discuss...)
Before we get to a solution… four fundamental problems:

- Science
- Facts
- Transparency
- The Tower of Babel

Science is more likely to confuse people – not convince them.
Facts can backfire.

The Logical Assumption:
When your beliefs are challenged by an opposing viewpoint, you alter your opinions and incorporate the new information into your thinking.

The Backfire Effect

- In 2013, a research team led by Brendan Nyhan used four distinct communication methods – ranging from facts to fear – to try to change the minds of vaccine-resistant parents.
- None of the four methods worked. In fact, in some cases vaccine opposition intensified.

Full transparency is good government…
but often not a great marketing strategy.
Everybody’s talkin at … everyone.

Advocacy Groups
Pharmaceutical Companies
Medical Professionals
Retailers

Behavior change can be achieved by way of a collective effort, around a singular compelling message and strategy.
Our provocative premise

- The CDC, by purpose and mission, is inherently ill-suited to the task of directly persuading consumers to change behavior.
- Transparent, trusted and authoritative, the CDC should continue to be the media’s leading voice on critical public health matters.
  - But, it must be understood that it takes more medical, scientific and public policy leadership to drive behavior change.
  - Even the well-informed citizen is often, well, disappointing…

Our prescription for behavior change appeared in a recent Op-Ed:
Meet the Check-off Program

- A check-off is public-private partnership authorized by the U.S. Congress that enables stakeholders to pool their dollars and cooperatively market products on an unbranded, "commodity" basis.
  - They are used where the interests of business and government/public policy intersect.
  - Their purpose is to stimulate demand.
  - Check-offs speak to consumers, as well as intermediaries – in this case doctors or health advocacy groups.

- The check-off model has yet to be applied to public health, but we see it as a great solution to the challenge of increasing adult immunization rates as underscored in HHS’s newest plan.

Industry’s role

- Industry funders vote the program in or out, by referendum and at will, including:
  - Funding mechanism
  - Federal agency oversight
  - Governance is largely, though not entirely, by funders
Government’s role

- Government provides oversight – typically approves budgets and overall plans and ensures money is being spent for intended purposes.

- Typically there are annual reports to the government to assess whether program is advancing its statutory goals.

- Government can terminate the program if it concludes program is no longer achieving its goals.

Legacy of Longevity

- Check-off programs have a record of longevity:
  - Cotton since 1966
  - National “Got Milk” since 1994
  - Propane since 1996
  - Eggs since 1979
  - Pork since 1986
Why do check-off programs endure?

• For Government:
  – Because they bring private sector solutions and resources to public issues and goals
  – Because they are accountable
• For Industry:
  – Because they work
    • Efficient drivers of market-place behavior and sales
    • Excellent ROI
  – Because they provide a level of focus & impact that is not otherwise available
  – Because they are fair and equitable

Ensures Equitability

The check-off model eliminates the inequities that often kill private programs:

• Payment is mandatory (unless the funders vote to reduce or eliminate the program)
• No free riders; everyone pays their fair share
Positive indicators for Check-off

- Industry role for marketing leadership is optimized
- Near perfect alignment of government and industry goals
  - Private sector funding of public sector goals
- Congress has a long history of approving such programs
  - First promotion program enacted in 1966 (cotton)
  - There are 20+ authorized programs
- Vaccine promotion offers exceptional public health benefits
  - Saves lives and reduces health care costs.

How to get from here to there

- Everyone agrees that a single strategic marketing platform that encompasses this room full of advocates is smart
  - You’ve been talking about it for years.

- The manufacturing companies looked hard at this idea in 2012, but it did not get over the line.

- What it will take is for all of you to agree on one notion of how to move forward –
  - We think it ought to be this notion.
Got Questions?