

“The Gift of Protection”: A Social Marketing Campaign for Maternal and Infant RSV Immunization

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INTRODUCTION

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is a common respiratory virus that affects the nose, throat, and lungs. While RSV often causes mild symptoms in healthy adults and children, it can lead to severe illness in certain populations—particularly older adults and infants under 6 months of age.¹ In fact, RSV is the leading cause of infant hospitalization in the U.S., with an estimated 58,000–80,000 children under age 5 hospitalized each year.²

Fortunately, immunizations are available to help protect young children. The maternal RSV vaccine (Pfizer’s Abrysvo) is recommended during weeks 32–36 of pregnancy and is typically administered between September and January. For infants whose mothers did not receive the vaccine during pregnancy, nirsevimab, an RSV monoclonal antibody, is recommended for all babies under 8 months of age. This treatment is administered from March to October.³

In fall 2024, the Washington State Department of Health launched a new social marketing campaign aimed at reducing RSV cases among infants statewide.

BACKGROUND

Since 2021, the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) has partnered with C+C, a Seattle-based communications agency, to develop and implement health-focused social marketing campaigns.

In October 2022, DOH launched the “Take Care WA” brand to promote COVID-19 prevention and vaccination.

In December 2024, “Take Care WA” was expanded to include a new RSV-focused campaign called “The Gift of Protection.” The campaign aimed to increase maternal RSV vaccination and nirsevimab uptake to reduce RSV cases and hospitalizations among infants in Washington State.

METHODS

The objective of the campaign was to raise awareness and highlight the importance of RSV protection for newborns. Messaging and creative assets were developed based on online market research with Washington residents, as well as input from subject matter experts and health educators.

The campaign was tailored to individuals 32 to 36 weeks pregnant, as well as parents of infants entering their first RSV season. The call to action—“*Talk to your healthcare provider about RSV immunizations*”—was informed by our market research, which identified healthcare providers as the most trusted source of vaccine information.

The **Gift of Protection** campaign launched in mid-December 2024 and ran through March 2025. Campaign assets were produced in both English and Spanish and distributed through the following channels and materials:

- Static and video ads on Facebook and Instagram
- Display banners
- Paid search advertising
- Digital video pre-roll and OTT
- Radio ads
- Postcard mailings to new parents
- Printable provider materials (posters, FAQ sheets)
- Dedicated English and Spanish webpages:
TakeCareWA.org and CuidateWA.org/vrs



RESULTS & CONCLUSION

In total, the campaign garnered 69.6 million impressions, with 6.8 million video views and nearly 63,000 clicks to the campaign websites. Of these impressions, 11.6% came from the Spanish-language campaign. Facebook and Instagram alone generated 42.6 million impressions, reaching over 1.4 million Washington residents an average of 29 times. The final cost of the campaign amounted to just under \$441,000, including audience research, asset production and media placement.

As of April 15, 2025, a total of 33,311 RSV immunization doses have been administered to children aged 0–19 months during the 2024-2025 RSV season in Washington state. This marks a 112% increase compared to the 15,678 doses administered during the 2023-2024 season.⁴

While we cannot directly attribute the increase in immunizations to the campaign, it is well-established that social marketing can significantly influence public health behaviors. Research shows it effectively raises awareness, educates populations, and encourages preventive health actions. By leveraging digital media and targeted outreach, social marketing can reach large, diverse populations quickly and efficiently, contributing to improved health outcomes on a broad scale.⁵



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