

# Phase II Lung Health Program Dissemination Report

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**Project:** *Cough- an awareness campaign*

**Lead Organization:** The Canadian Lung Association (CLA)

## **Partner(s):**

**Canadian Respiratory Health Professionals, Provincial Lung Associations, Canadian Thoracic Society**

## **Project Objective(s):**

- Raise awareness of lung disease through the common symptom-chronic cough.
- Create sustainable information on chronic cough.
- Determine if mass media campaigns can successfully heighten awareness of chronic cough.

## **Project Methodology:**

To stand out from traditional disease-based health promotion approaches, the Canadian Lung Association decided focus on a symptom that's common to many lung diseases – a cough that won't go away. The campaign focused on people who have been living with a cough that has lasted three weeks or longer and is not improving. The goal was, to reach people who might have an acute exacerbation of their lung disease, people with poor disease management, as well as, those living with an undiagnosed lung disease.

The 4-week media campaign included a 30-second TV ad featuring a “3 week cough” character who is singing a catchy, humorous tune inside of a giant mouth. The same character was used in online ads. Outreach was also done through social media, posters, and earned media. All ads and outreach directed consumers to a new microsite [3weekcough.ca](http://3weekcough.ca). This microsite featured an interactive self-assessment test. The 5- 10 minute questionnaire works to educate the public on the causes of cough including a cold, acid reflux, COPD, and other causes, and linked visitors to more in-depth information on [www.lung.ca/cough](http://www.lung.ca/cough).

To draw additional attention to the short campaign, it was decided to use humour to reduce fear/anxiety and promote sharing. Fear has been a theme of many smoking cessation campaigns, and people are fearful of a cough as it related to lung cancer. As well, a neutral URL ([3weekcough.ca](http://3weekcough.ca)) was created to avoid fear of confronting serious disease messaging.

The microsite provided information to patients based on the length they had their cough. Site visitors were encouraged call a toll-free helpline to speak with a certified respiratory educator or to see a health-care professional.



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## Key Finding(s):

- Online ads are an effective way to drive Canadian to consumer health information.
- People in the pre-compleitive stage of diagnosis prefer to use an online self assessment tool to learn about their cough.
- Cough is a difficult symptom to market; it is a symptom of many different lung diseases and non-lung related issues.
- Using humour is an effective way to bring attention to consumers about cough.

## Project Outcome:

### Public Awareness

The chronic cough – an awareness campaign proved to be very successful in attracting attention and raising awareness of the causes of cough. The campaign brought over 40,000 unique visits to the microsite ([3weekcough.ca](http://3weekcough.ca) / [touxde3semaines.ca](http://touxde3semaines.ca)) during the 4-week campaign. Using an online quiz, visitors were educated about the possible causes of their cough and information on chronic disease management.

The campaign included education materials, such as FAQs and fact sheets, on the causes, diagnosis and treatment of chronic cough. Fact sheets on chronic cough are available in English, French, traditional Chinese, Arabic, Punjabi.

### Connecting patients to health-care professionals

Another call to action of this campaign was to connect people with a health-care professional through the Lung Association's toll-free helpline. Health-care professionals assisted the individuals in determining the next steps to get through cough properly evaluated and diagnosed.

### Information for Health Care Professionals

To assist physicians to diagnose acute, sub-acute and chronic cough, a helpful guide entitled "Cough: etiology, evaluation and treatment", developed by Drs. Louis-Philippe Boulet and Gilles Côté, was made available through the website [www.respiratoryguidelines.ca](http://www.respiratoryguidelines.ca). Online ads were posted on the websites of the Canadian Medical Association Journal ([cmaj.ca](http://cmaj.ca)) and the College of Family Physicians ([cfp.ca](http://cfp.ca)) to drive physicians to this new tool.

### Area(s) for Further Development/Next Steps:

New consumer health information on chronic cough available on [lung.ca](http://lung.ca) and [3weekcough.ca](http://3weekcough.ca) and on fact sheets, plus the helpful guide for health-care professionals will remain available to those seeking information on cough.



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