

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Not As Rational As We Think?  
Vermont Researcher to Discuss How Behavior Science Can Improve Public Health  
Campaigns**

March 24, 2015

Perhaps the single biggest assumption that public health campaigns make is that humans are logical creatures. Give them good information and they'll act on it.

But, what if we're not logical?

On March 26<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 a.m., Matt Dugan of Shadow Associates in Behavior Change will present *A Case for Evidence-Based Health Communication* at the Vermont Department of Health. This hour-long presentation will explore how advances in behavior science are benefiting public health campaigns.

“Behavior science is about how we really act—not how we think we act. By using an evidence-based approach and persuasion science, we can achieve much better results in public health campaigns. This is critical in the realm of disease prevention, health maintenance, immunizations, and other important issues,” said Dugan. “It’s fair to say that in the past, lots of public money has been spent on campaigns that have been ineffective or worse.”

Behavior science has seen a surge in popularity recently, popularized by such books as *Predictably Irrational* by Dan Ariely, *Switch* by Chip Heath and Dan Heath, and *Blink* by Malcolm Gladwell. This talk will show examples of campaigns gone awry and explain the process of creating evidence-based communication.

“These are exciting times,” said Dugan. “Researchers have developed some exceptional tools that can truly help improve public health. All we have to do is use them.”

The details of the talk are as follows:

**DATE: Thursday, March 26, 2015**

**TIME: 8:30 – 9:30 AM**

**PLACE: Health Department Conference Room 2B; 108 Cherry Street, Burlington**

**Connect Live Online:** [http://healthvermont.gov/events/grand\\_rounds](http://healthvermont.gov/events/grand_rounds)

**About Shadow ABC:**

Shadow Associates in Behavior Change is a Burlington firm that brings researchers and producers together under one roof with the aim of producing more effective health and environmental strategies and messaging. Relying on peer-reviewed literature and an evidence-based approach, Shadow ABC employs rigorous research standards to both create and evaluate campaigns.

802-863-2076

[www.shadowprod.com/abc](http://www.shadowprod.com/abc)

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Contact: Leah Stewart

Tel: 802-863-2076

Email: [leah@shadowprod.com](mailto:leah@shadowprod.com)

Photo Possibilities:

Picture: Iron Eyes Cody anti-littering campaign.

Caption: This campaign might've encouraged littering.

Picture: Grim Reaper from 1980's "Grim Reaper" AIDS campaign in Australia.

Caption: So scary it likely didn't work.

Picture: PETA "I'd rather go naked" ad.

Caption: Most probably has no effect on fur sales.