



A Qualitative Study to Understand Stakeholders' Views About the Fruits & Veggies (FNV) Social Marketing Campaign to Promote Fruit and Vegetable Consumption in the United States

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ABSTRACT

Background In 2015, the Partnership for a Healthier America (PHA) piloted a branded social marketing communications initiative called the FNV (Fruits & Veggies) Campaign to promote the sale and consumption of fruits and vegetables among mom and teen target audiences in 2 California and Virginia pilot markets. After the first year, FNV was expanded to multiple markets across the United States through diverse partnerships. Factors, resources, and strategies that contribute to the effectiveness and sustainability of the campaign need to be identified.

Objective The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore diverse stakeholders' views and expectations about the FNV Campaign design, reach, effectiveness, and impact and prospects for expansion, scale-up, and sustainability.

Design Semistructured interviews were conducted between July and October 2016 with stakeholders to elicit their perspectives and expectations of the FNV Campaign.

Participants/setting A purposive sample of diverse stakeholders (n = 22) affiliated with national, state, and local industry and government and nongovernmental organizations.

Analysis Data were recorded, transcribed, input into NVivo 11 software (QSR International, Melbourne, Australia), coded and organized thematically using a conceptual framework that examined campaign design, reach, effectiveness, adoption, implementation, expansion, scaling up, and sustainability.

Results Opportunities, challenges, and expectations of stakeholders were reported for the FNV Campaign related to engaging future partners from different levels of community, government, and industry; conducting and disseminating findings from multifaceted evaluations; ensuring campaign effectiveness; and developing and improving campaign elements for target audiences and partner adoption. Conducting formative research, partner, and audience engagement, implementation, and evaluation are essential to the ensure effectiveness and sustainability of the FNV Campaign.

Conclusions Insights from this study can inform the strategic use of social marketing campaign elements to facilitate the effectiveness and sustainability of the FNV Campaign as it expands and is scaled up across markets nationwide.

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A ROBUST BODY OF EVIDENCE SUPPORTS GOVERNMENT recommendations for populations to consume a diet rich in fruits and vegetables to reduce their risk of noncommunicable chronic diseases (NCDs), including cardiovascular disease, stroke, and cancer.¹ Most Americans do not meet the 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommendation to consume 4.5 cup-equivalents of fruits and vegetables for a 2,000-calorie diet to promote health and prevent NCDs.² With the exception of fruit intake among children, aged 1 to 8 years, fruit and vegetable intake is far below recommended levels for children and adults in the United States, and only 12.2% and 9.3% of American adults reported

meeting recommendations for fruit and vegetable intake, respectively.² Large-scale interventions that include mass media and social marketing campaigns have potential to inform, persuade, and motivate populations to increase fruit and vegetable intake.³ However, these mass media campaigns must effectively disseminate defined and actionable messages to targeted populations repeatedly over time, and they require adequate and sustained funding to influence population behaviors.⁴ Evidence suggests that US public health campaigns have influenced some Americans' cognitive and affective outcomes but have not produced a meaningful increase and sustained intake of fruits and vegetables across the entire population.⁵

RESEARCH

In 2010, First Lady Michelle Obama launched The Partnership for a Healthier America (PHA), a nonprofit organization that aims to address the childhood obesity crisis by encouraging industry actors to promote healthy options through public-private partnerships.⁶ The PHA launched the branded Fruits & Veggies (FNV) social marketing campaign in 2 pilot market locations: Fresno, CA, and Hampton Roads, VA, to promote sales and intake of fruits and vegetables among teen (13-19 years) and millennial mom (20-35 years) target audiences.⁷ The Victor & Spoils creative advertising firm designed the FNV Campaign strategy, which was “inspired by big consumer brands, whose tactics are relentless, compelling, catchy, and drive an emotional connection with their products.”⁸ A centerpiece of the FNV Campaign strategy was the use of pro bono celebrity endorsers, similar to the iconic Got Milk? Milk Mustache Campaign that ended in 2014 after running nationally for 2 decades.⁹ Celebrity endorsements for the FNV brand are combined with multimedia advertising, public relations, sponsorships, and retail marketing to promote fruits and vegetables to targeted populations.⁷

With an estimated \$5 million-dollar investment, the PHA piloted the FNV Campaign in the 2 markets during 2015 to inform the future Campaign design and to leverage partnerships to support expansion to new markets.^{10,11} By 2016, the PHA had announced that the FNV Campaign would expand nationally through community and state organization partnerships, including in Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Wisconsin, and continue efforts in the California and Virginia pilot markets.^{12,13} By 2017, the PHA had engaged over 80 celebrity athletes and entertainers in FNV Campaign marketing promotions in the national markets.⁶ The FNV Campaign is engaged in a nexus of multifaceted fruit and vegetable social marketing strategies and activities involving for-profit, nonprofit, and government stakeholders. Although there was substantial monetary investment in the FNV Campaign during the first 2 years, there is limited evidence from the PHA, and no evidence from independent and comprehensive process evaluations published in the peer-reviewed literature, to suggest that the FNV Campaign has influenced population fruit and vegetable intake or purchase behaviors.

The complexities involved with developing and implementing a social marketing campaign, along with the national promotion of fruits and vegetables, requires soliciting feedback from diverse stakeholders to ensure their involvement. A large body of literature has outlined the relationship between stakeholder participation and enhanced organizational performance^{14,15} in social marketing campaigns¹⁶ and food and nutrition programs.¹⁷ Understanding stakeholders' views about the resources, partnerships, strategies, and activities needed for the FNV Campaign to effectively and sustainably increase fruit and vegetable intake is essential to reduce the burden of diet-related NCDs in the United States. This qualitative study explored diverse stakeholders' views and expectations about the FNV Campaign design, reach, effectiveness, and impact and future prospects for expansion, scale-up, and sustainability.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participant Recruitment and Data Collection Process

This research was conducted to understand diverse stakeholders' perspectives on the FNV Campaign as part of a

RESEARCH SNAPSHOT

Research Question: What are stakeholders' views and expectations about the FNV Campaign design, reach, effectiveness, impact, and future prospects for expansion, scale-up, and sustainability?

Key Findings: In this qualitative research study, 22 diverse stakeholders were interviewed about their views and expectations of the FNV Campaign to effectively and sustainably promote fruit and vegetable consumption. The FNV Campaign was largely viewed by stakeholders as a valuable and impressive initiative. Stakeholders expressed desire for greater transparency and reporting on progress and identified opportunities for future research and to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of the FNV Campaign as it expands to other states.

multicomponent evaluation of the FNV Campaign that was funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Although the FNV Campaign was targeted to millennial moms and teens, this study used semistructured interviews with stakeholders from diverse sectors to assess their perspectives and inform future efforts and partnerships. Target audience members' views on the FNV Campaign were assessed through a separate study, which is beyond the scope of this article. We used 5 steps recommended by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to engage stakeholders to develop a 15-item interview guide to explore stakeholders' views and expectations about the FNV Campaign that would be relevant, credible, and useful.¹⁸ The semistructured format of the interviews allowed for flexibility to further explore certain topics in the interview guide or that were introduced or relevant to respondents. [Figure 1](#) provides the definitions for the constructs of interest for the interviews and analysis, and [Figure 2](#) summarizes the questions used to guide the stakeholder interviews. The interview guide explored stakeholders' views and expectations about the FNV Campaign based on constructs of interest adapted from 2 conceptual frameworks including the Five Phases of Prevention Research and Reach, Effectiveness, Adoption, Implementation, and Maintenance framework.^{19,20}

These conceptual frameworks have similar and overlapping constructs that have been used to assess the potential for, or actual impact, of behavioral interventions on population health. The Five Phases of Prevention Research framework includes the dimensions of efficacy, effectiveness, sustainability, going to scale, and sustaining systemwide.²⁰ We did not examine stakeholders' views about efficacy for this study because of the difficulty in assessing the impact of a large-scale, multicomponent marketing campaign in a controlled setting. Holtrop et al²¹ highlight the value of applying qualitative methods to Reach, Effectiveness, Adoption, Implementation, and Maintenance and other conceptual frameworks. Qualitative methods are well suited to answer questions outside the scope of quantitative methods, to understand why and how something occurred, and to provide diverse assessment methods and data that can complement each other to enhance understanding and dissemination of findings.²¹

FNV Campaign dimension	Definition
Design and reach	Campaign qualities explored included targeting, focus, content, simplicity, actionable, and memorable aspects that support exposure and engagement of target audiences
Adoption	The characteristics of organizations and individuals that support the Campaign and reasons for choosing to (or not to) participate for current and potential partners
Effectiveness and impact	Observed or expected behavioral outcomes (ie, increased levels of sales or consumption of fruits and vegetables) among target populations that can be attributed to the FNV Campaign intervention, and barriers and facilitators related to achieving successful outcomes
Adoption	The characteristics of organizations and individuals that support the Campaign and reasons for choosing to (or not to) participate for current and potential partners
Implementation	Observed or expected FNV Campaign implementation, contextual factors, and resources or factors required to support future implementation
Expansion and scaling up	The expansion of the FNV Campaign modified to use new marketing channels or target other populations, and scaling up of the FNV Campaign to new market locations or nationwide
Sustainability	The ability to raise support and funding to maintain successful implementation, expansion, and scaling up of the FNV Campaign

Figure 1. Dimensions of interest used to guide stakeholder interviews about the Fruits & Veggies (FNV) Campaign.

Our recruitment strategy was developed in consultation with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation program officers and PHA staff to identify stakeholders who were involved in funding, designing, or implementing the FNV Campaign nationally and in the 2 pilot states, or stakeholders who were involved in similar fruit and vegetable promotion programs, to share their insights and expectations to inform future decisions about the FNV Campaign. Stakeholders represented government agencies, private-sector companies or firms, industry trade associations, public-interest or consumer advocacy nongovernmental organizations, and academic researchers. Stakeholders were contacted for recruitment if they had knowledge of or experience with the FNV Campaign, had provided creative or financial support for the FNV Campaign, or were involved in national fruit and vegetable promotion and marketing efforts. Recruitment continued until there were no new referrals for stakeholders to recruit who were of interest for the study as the research team believed that diverse perspectives were represented in the sample and data saturation was approached. We contacted individuals ($n = 41$) by e-mail to describe the purpose of the study and invite them to participate. The email template (Figure 3, available at www.jandonline.org) and informed consent form (Figure 4, available at www.jandonline.org) recruitment materials sent to stakeholders are available online. If recruitment e-mails were returned and failed to deliver ($n = 2$), we sought alternative e-mail addresses and received responses from both stakeholder contacts. We sent nonresponders 2 follow-up e-mail messages or contacted them by telephone. Of the 41 stakeholders contacted, 15 did not respond and 4 declined to participate, citing time limitations or a conflict of interest with an ongoing FNV Campaign evaluations. Twenty-two of the 41 contacted stakeholders agreed to participate in the study.

Semistructured interviews with 22 stakeholders were conducted by 2 female research team members (V.I.K.) who worked in food marketing and public health nutrition as an academic faculty and a doctoral student (T.R.E.). Interviews were conducted by telephone ($n = 18$) or in person ($n = 4$) between July and October 2016. In-person interview locations were chosen by participants; all were conducted in private workplace spaces with only interviewers and participants present. The sample was comprised of stakeholders affiliated with diverse sectors (Table). The majority of participants held graduate degrees at the master's ($n = 6$) or doctoral ($n = 7$) level. The remainder of participants had completed some college ($n = 2$) or had a bachelor's degree ($n = 7$). Three of the participants were also registered dietitian nutritionists. Participants provided written and oral consent prior to beginning the interviews, which were audio recorded. The length of the interviews ranged from 25 to 68 minutes, and the average interview length was 46 minutes. The Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board granted approval to conduct this study in June 2016. Participants were contacted after the interviews to thank them for their participation and for clarification if needed. A drafted summary of the findings with selected quotations written for the FNV Campaign evaluation was e-mailed to the participants with requests for feedback. Several participants responded to the message and expressed their gratitude for receiving the report but no feedback or comments on the drafted findings were received.

The data analysis was guided by principles of qualitative research to identify and categorize emergent themes from the interviews based on dimensions of interest for this study.^{22,23} Each interview was transcribed verbatim, and the written transcript was checked with the taped interview and edited for accuracy. Transcripts were imported into NVivo 11 software (QSR International, Melbourne, Australia)²⁴ for

No.	Question(s)
Introduction	
1	What is your relationship to the FNV Campaign?
2	How long have you, your organization, or your business been involved with or aware of the FNV campaign?
Views about the FNV Campaign design, reach, effectiveness and impact	
3	What resources are currently in place to ensure the effectiveness of the FNV Campaign?
4	What aspects of the FNV Campaign are most likely to increase fruit and vegetable <i>sales</i> and <i>intake</i> among teens and their moms in the 2 lead cities?
5	How can celebrity endorsement be used most effectively to promote the FNV brand and to increase fruit and vegetable sales and consumption among the target groups?
6	How can the FNV Campaign compete with alternate media and marketing messages that promote branded food and beverage products marketed by fast food restaurants and food and beverage manufacturers?
7	How would you like to see other organizations, businesses, or community groups that are not involved with the FNV Campaign become involved to increase the purchase and consumption of fruits and vegetables among the target audiences?
8	Since the FNV Campaign was launched in May 2015, what do you expect it to accomplish during the first year (2015 through 2016)?
Views about the FNV Campaign expansion, scaling up, and sustainability	
9	How should the FNV Campaign continue to grow and expand?
10	What new audiences, geographical regions, or types of media platforms should be targeted as it expands?
11	What factors or resources are needed to promote long-term expansion, scaling up, and sustainability of the FNV Campaign in the targeted cities and communities? Examples: increased celebrity involvement, more local activities (ie, sponsorship of local youth teams), and partnerships
12	How can the FNV Campaign maintain its brand identity to be successful and sustainable over the next 10 years (2016–2026)?
13	What is needed to enable the FNV Campaign to impact the long-term diet-related behavioral outcomes (e.g., increase sales and intake) among Americans?
Wrap-up	
14	Can you recommend any resources to help with the FNV Campaign evaluation?
15	Are there any other important issues, questions, or concerns that you want to comment on that we have not covered?

Figure 2. Semistructured interview guide used to explore stakeholders' views and expectations about the Fruits & Veggies (FNV) Campaign. The interview questions were developed using the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's 5-step process for engaging stakeholders.¹⁸

thematic analysis and were independently coded by 2 doctoral students who were trained in qualitative research methods (T.R.E. and M.Z.). Iterative coding was used to identify prevalent themes that were categorized according to relevant concepts of interest from the adapted framework. As the constructs and emergent themes between the 2 frameworks overlapped, stakeholders' perspectives are categorized and summarized by related dimensions of interest in the evaluation framework.

RESULTS

Emergent themes related to stakeholders' perspectives on the elements, progress, and future prospects of the FNV

Campaign are summarized according to the dimensions of interest for the FNV Campaign evaluation framework. Illustrative quotes were selected to portray central or diverse perspectives and are outlined by emergent theme and in [Figure 5](#).

Design

The modern design of the FNV Campaign was commended by many stakeholders. Using the same techniques that large industry companies use to market foods and beverages to promote fruits and vegetables was viewed as a novel and promising strategy by several respondents. Pro bono celebrity endorsement was viewed as an important asset for the

FNV Campaign that would support the success of mass and social media promotions, in-store execution, and sponsored events. Some stakeholders commented that advertising featuring celebrities endorsing fruit and vegetable products was unexpected for consumers who were used to seeing endorsements for less-healthy processed foods and beverages, and others suggested that promoting fruits and vegetables would be aligned with the celebrities' own brands and behaviors, particularly among athletes, and convey authenticity to consumers.

Respondents described the attractive and modern design of the FNV Campaign as a positive attribute. However, several respondents expressed that the FNV brand, logo, and messaging was ineffective to convey meaning to target audiences and influence behavior:

"I think the materials look good, like the banner ads, and the signage, it's clear, 'cause it's all real contemporary looking . . . You know where to go on a website. But if you just saw FNV, I don't think people know what that is yet." (Private sector, Virginia)

Multiple stakeholders suggested that the PHA refine the FNV Campaign communications to clearly articulate the desired messages and behaviors and to encourage consumers to choose specific fruit and vegetable products rather than promoting different types and forms (ie, fresh, dried, frozen, and canned) of fruits and vegetables combined under a general brand (FNV). The lack of emphasis on the health benefits of fruits and vegetables in FNV brand marketing was a source of disagreement among stakeholders. Avoiding health benefits was considered to be a strength of the Campaign to some participants, although others expressed that this was a missed opportunity. Several stakeholders commented that the health benefits of fruit and vegetable consumption should be emphasized in the FNV Campaign. Others indicated that this approach had not worked in prior campaigns and that focusing on branding fruits and vegetables with creative and exciting marketing was appropriate. Additional concerns were raised around the mainly fresh forms of fruits and vegetables featured in the Campaign, which were likely less accessible and affordable for low-income populations compared with other forms of produce (ie, frozen, dried, juiced, and canned) that could help meet recommended intake targets.

Reach

Stakeholders perceived social media to be a promising and cost-effective method to reach large audiences who could further propagate the FNV brand through their own social media channels. In addition to social media, stakeholders expressed that paid mass media could reach large populations while also supporting dissemination through earned media coverage. Retail promotions were frequently highlighted as a valuable tool to reach consumers at the point of choice and built upon prior exposure to the campaign out of the store environment. A few stakeholders who had attended or were familiar with the FNV Live launch event in Norfolk, VA, commented that the event was impressive and highlighted the added benefit of earned media coverage of the event. Mobile markets and other community events were observed to be effective at reaching target audiences, including low-income youth, to promote fruit and vegetable

access and intake. However, multiple stakeholders mentioned that low-income audiences were not widely reached in retail settings, including in the grocery retailer where the FNV Campaign was implemented across Hampton Roads, VA, store locations:

"It's just this one chain of grocery stores that has in store signage, and that's Farm Fresh. So, the low-income grocery stores . . . there's nothing. I know they're trying to be exclusive to Farm Fresh, but a lot of the low-income groups shop at [grocery store chain] and that would have been a really good one to reach that particular demographic." (Private sector, Virginia)

Several stakeholders speculated that the FNV Campaign was more relevant to reach and engage youth audiences rather than mothers and suggested that the PHA report on any formative research conducted to justify the selection of audience segments and respective marketing strategies tailored to them. Stakeholders also expressed desire for the PHA to measure and share the process evaluation data for the ongoing FNV Campaign implementation, including brand exposure, dosage, and engagement, to understand who the FNV Campaign reached and through what marketing elements. These metrics were valuable for decision makers to inform and expedite adoption of efficient marketing elements with greater reach and engagement that could best support influencing targeted behavioral outcomes:

"Did [the FNV Campaign] really help to saturate these 2 markets? How much uptake did you get? Given this amount of money, how many people were you able to reach, given these channels? Putting all that together and saying: Are there more markets we would like to reach this way?" (Government, national)

Effectiveness

Desire for transparent evaluation and outcome reporting also emerged from stakeholders' perspectives on the effectiveness of the FNV Campaign, although several identified select markers of effectiveness. Those aware of positive sales of fruits and vegetables reported for the Farm Fresh retail locations where the FNV Campaign was implemented highlighted it as a success in an important retail setting. Mobile food trucks and carts were described as useful by stakeholders involved in both pilot markets to increase the availability and intake of fruit and vegetables, particularly with lower-income audiences.

Many respondents expressed that they did not have enough information to comment on effectiveness and described unmet expectations around receiving information from the PHA to understand the FNV Campaign goals and objectives, progress, and target outcomes. Evaluating behavioral outcomes of the FNV Campaign after 1 year of implementation was thought to be unlikely to result in significant changes due to the limited time frame:

"I thought that [evaluating the pilot FNV Campaign after] a year might be too soon even if they were focused on those 2 markets . . . Other than expecting some kind of report or results, I didn't have any expectations other than seeing the results." (Industry trade organization, national)

Influencing attitudinal and prebehavioral outcomes was viewed as more feasible and important for monitoring marketing strategy potential and progress toward behavior change. Several respondents shared that effectiveness for the FNV Campaign meant demonstrating increased fruit and vegetable consumption among the target populations. Improving cultural norms around fruit and vegetable consumption was emphasized as a long-term goal to achieve sustained increases in intake levels and positive impacts on health.

Adoption and Implementation

Stakeholders commented that the FNV Campaign addressed an important and urgent issue, citing the lack of progress made on improving population fruit and vegetable intake and the associated costs from NCDs and obesity due to poor diets; this was viewed as an opportunity for the FNV Campaign to pursue collaborations with groups involved in nutrition or public health work broadly. The PHA's network of partnerships both in and outside the food industry were described as valuable assets that provided financial and technical support for the development, implementation, and evaluation of the FNV Campaign. The celebrity element of the FNV Campaign, particularly First Lady Michelle Obama's involvement, was especially valuable to heighten awareness of the Campaign and attract diverse partners; some suggested that celebrities promote the FNV brand through their social media accounts to improve dissemination and engagement.

Communication and coordination to support FNV Campaign partnerships locally were described as a strength by several FNV Campaign partners and local stakeholders who were involved with the effort. Several respondents described the support their local organizations received from PHA staff as helpful to plan implementation and overcome challenges. However, several stakeholders involved at the local level expressed a desire for enhanced communication and network development between the PHA and existing and interested partners. Respondents that were involved in the 2 pilot markets largely described the Campaign launches and community activities as exciting and engaging for local audiences, but that activation and enthusiasm declined in both markets following the initial launch of the FNV Campaign:

"I think when FNV first launched, I definitely heard and felt like a buzz about FNV . . . and that level of sort of heightened attention really has waned." (Public interest nongovernmental organization, California)

Stakeholders suggested that in the future, the FNV Campaign assess and incorporate community needs to plan partnership development and the intervention prior to launching to improve relevance, local investment, and sustained implementation. Others described ambiguous goals and objectives as barriers to adoption and implementation of the FNV Campaign, citing difficulty in prioritizing resources and activities without specified target outcomes.

To improve adoption of the FNV Campaign, particularly among local and state organizations, respondents emphasized the need for improved flexibility for partners to tailor materials to be relevant for their market setting or target demographic groups. This was particularly evident among those interested in expanding the FNV Campaign to target

low-income audiences; respondents raised concerns about the affordability, access, and acceptability of the types and form of fruits and vegetables mainly featured in the FNV Campaign. Opportunities to improve the local execution of the FNV Campaign included delegating implementation to communities through toolkits that they could tailor to improve relevance and meet local needs and including locally based Campaign coordinators to communicate with stakeholders and better understand progress.

Expansion and Scale-up

Stakeholders identified numerous opportunities to expand the FNV Campaign and emphasized the benefits of integration throughout existing programs and partnerships. Prioritizing target audiences who were low-income emerged across participants' suggestions for FNV Campaign expansion. It was recommended that the FNV Campaign expand implementation in retailers frequented by low-income audiences and promote fruits and vegetables commonly purchased by this demographic. To effectively target low-income consumers, stakeholders recommended that the Campaign include or partner with efforts to improve the access and affordability of fruits and vegetables. Promoting the convenience aspects of some affordable fruit and vegetable options (eg, bananas) was recommended to promote intake among consumers who may not be able to afford more expensive options.

Expanding the FNV Campaign through Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) authorized retail partners was frequently mentioned among stakeholders who identified low-income consumers as priority populations or were aware of the PHA's pursuit of partnerships with state SNAP-Education (SNAP-Ed) programs:

"I think they really need to focus on the SNAP population . . . the place we really need to see considerable growth immediately as far as fruit and vegetable consumption are our low-income SNAP-eligible populations. Our communities where childhood obesity is an incredibly disturbing epidemic." (Government, Virginia)

Respondents also suggested expanding the FNV Campaign to various settings, including restaurants, corner stores, farmers markets, food distributors, food assistance programs, and school food programs. Expansion outside of the food industry was suggested for diverse groups, including health care and fitness industries, television, radio and digital media networks, and childcare and youth organizations.

Scaling up the FNV Campaign intervention at the national level or through additional market locations received mixed reviews. Some respondents commented that a national campaign as originally intended would be the most successful for the FNV Campaign, although others expressed reservations about scaling up without knowing the results from the pilot market evaluations and plan for scale-up. Stakeholders suggested that the evaluation results from the pilot markets be used to guide the expansion and scaling up of the FNV Campaign to other target audiences and locations and that evaluations be conducted in new implementation contexts.

Stakeholders recommended examining local market characteristics to prioritize new markets including localities with existing infrastructure supporting health promotion, locations with high fruit and vegetable agricultural production,

areas with high diet-related NCDs and obesity rates, and areas that are cost-effective to implement in. Improving flexibility emerged as an opportunity throughout multiple domains of FNV Campaign expansion and scale-up. National implementation of digital and social media was described as a feasible strategy to implement the FNV Campaign while complementing local efforts with tailored advertisements and retail promotions. Some stakeholders suggested that additional funding and human capital were required for successful expansion and scaling up of the FNV Campaign to support partnership development, local and national implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of the additional efforts.

Sustainability

To ensure that intervention implementation could continue in existing markets and for national markets, identifying partners and sources for funding emerged as a top priority among stakeholders. Some emphasized the importance of utilizing limited resources in the most efficient manner to produce desired outcomes and demonstrate success and return on investment to stakeholders. Stakeholders involved with the Campaign or those considering supporting it often described the value of evaluations and expressed expectations to be updated and informed on evaluation results. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of the FNV Campaign efforts was recommended to identify how and when to modify the intervention to improve relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness in influencing target behaviors. Disseminating evaluation data to stakeholders was recommended, and expected by some, to secure additional and sustained investments in the Campaign:

“I tell you it all comes back to funding. If they can maintain funding then they can continue. They need to show success to maintain funding.” (Industry trade organization, national)

Table 1. Professional affiliations of stakeholders interviewed (n = 22) about their perspectives and expectations around the FNV^a Campaign, July to October 2016^{bc}

Organization types	No. of participants
Government agency	8
Public-interest NGO ^d or consumer advocacy group	6
Private-sector company	4
Trade organization	2
Academia or research	2

^aFNV = Fruits & Veggies.

^bOf the 41 stakeholders contacted to participate by e-mail, 22 agreed to be interviewed by telephone (n = 18) or in person (n = 4).

^cProfessional affiliations of interview participants included organizations involved or interested in funding, developing, or implementing the FNV Campaign nationally or in the Fresno, CA, and Hampton Roads, VA, markets where it was launched in 2015; or involved in similar fruit and vegetable promotion programs.

^dNGO = nongovernmental organization.

Identifying substantial funding, targeted leadership, planning, and execution were recommended to support maintenance of the FNV Campaign implementation and brand identity over the long term. This was particularly important as an estimated \$5 million dollars in funding was initially invested in the FNV Campaign,¹⁰ and there were no reported long-term sources of financial support (as with publicly formed food commodity checkoff programs) for expansion beyond the 2 pilot markets. Stakeholders suggested a diverse field of potential partners and funding sources that could support the FNV Campaign:

“In order to make it sustainable, it’s something that’s all about the funding and the leadership of the program to ensure that it’s around in the next 10 to 15 years. We think about the resources, both financial and human, that are dedicated to launching big brands. We have not replicated that model yet . . . We need the industry, the produce industry, the health care industry, the government to be able to step up and fund it in a way that isn’t just a hobby. This is an intervention that could make a real difference.” (Industry trade organization, national)

Main industry and organizational partnerships stakeholders suggested exploring included health care, entertainment, food assistance programs, and food and beverage industry organizations, particularly within fruit and vegetable industry groups. Stakeholders also recommended adopting a check-off program funding structure, similar to the fluid milk check-off program that funded the Got Milk? and Milk Life Campaign, which could secure a sustainable source of funding for the national FNV Campaign. However, a few stakeholders expressed concern that securing support and investment from the produce industry would be difficult given prior resistance to similar initiatives and the lack of evidence to support the effectiveness of the FNV Campaign. Some stakeholders also raised concerns about maintaining the FNV brand identity if it were engaged with many other brands and sectors, additionally highlighting potential conflicts of interest if partnering with companies and brands that promoted nutrient-poor processed food and beverage products.

DISCUSSION

This study is the first independent evaluation to report on stakeholders’ perspectives about the FNV Campaign. The findings from this study support positive actions taken and identify opportunities that the PHA and partners could pursue to improve the impact and sustainability of the FNV Campaign.

As with many large-scale complex interventions,²⁵ our study indicates that there are diverse goals, expectations, and needs of stakeholders, and there was a consistent desire for greater transparency and reporting back to invested stakeholders who were responsible for funding, implementing, and reporting the FNV Campaign’s progress to their institutions and businesses. Based on the hierarchy of concepts drawn from the 2 frameworks used to guide this research, stakeholders’ perspectives from interviews conducted in 2016 suggested that the FNV Campaign had bypassed or not met expectations for demonstrating effectiveness prior to

Evaluation theme	Illustrative quotes
Design	<p>"[FNV]^a is not forcing a message, it is not prescriptive. It is being really fun, and lighthearted about it. It's like public health 3.0. It's like we are showing that you can make the healthy eating messaging in a way that doesn't feel negative." (Public interest NGO^b, national)</p>
	<p>"I think that they could do more with the brand, the FNV brand and the health benefits but they've intentionally stayed away from that. In terms of competing with the alternate marketing, [fruits and vegetables] have something that most of those other foods don't have and [FNV is] really not playing it up all that much." (Industry trade organization, national)</p>
Reach	<p>"I think it's very effective in reaching the teen market. They're all plugged in on social media. The reach of celebrities is significant . . . they probably reach the young moms too. But I think kids are more impressionable on that and if they see it they'll probably model their behavior based on seeing celebrities eating certain things or endorsing certain products." (Private sector, Virginia)</p>
	<p>"I think initially the media was pretty excited because this was a national deal. Fresno was one of the 2 beta markets and so there was definitely hype about it." (Private sector, California)</p>
	<p>"I guess the turnout for [the FNV event at ODU^c], it was humongous of course, because you see celebrities on the lineup. It was on the news. It was a great turnout." (Government, Virginia)</p>
	<p>"First of all, let me say the campaign was beautiful. It was gorgeous. I can't imagine it wouldn't win awards in the ad community but unfortunately I think it was a little too sophisticated for the folks that it was trying to reach . . . it was just very cryptic." (Private sector, California)</p>
Effectiveness	<p>"My opinion is that the social media aspects of this campaign were very prevalent and quite effective and efficient in their communication, and so I would consider that to be a driver of awareness and attitude, attitudinal changes, but I don't have fact on that. I think the in-store execution could have been a driver, but based on the lack of in-store execution, my suggestion would be that it was not a driver, even though it could have been and should have been." (Private sector, national)</p>
	<p>"Farm Fresh had a steep change in sales performance, which today are definitely attributing to the FNV intervention. That's great. We wanted to learn enough so that we would have the confidence to scale a national, and obviously they did." (Public interest NGO, national)</p>
	<p>"I think people saw a solid campaign around town and maybe read about it in the paper, but I'm not sure they really knew what to do. I don't think it ever tied it back as well as it should have, choose retail . . . buy these products." (Private sector, national)</p>
Adoption and implementation	<p>"The month prior [to launch] was great. There was a lot of training involved in getting us up to speed on what was going on." (Private sector, California)</p>
	<p>"We thought we were partnering with them in a sense . . . I would have hoped that I would have got something that said how are things going . . . that we would have a public awareness that we were affiliated with FNV." (Public interest NGO, Virginia)</p>
	<p>"It's not easy to make an exception to that national rule and execute in store in those [pilot] markets. And so that's the number one driver of not getting good [retail] pickup. And then secondarily, because PHA^d doesn't really have an in-store merchandising team or a sales force like most companies do, their ability to get activation locally was made more difficult." (Private sector, national)</p>

(continued on next page)

Figure 5. Stakeholders' views about the elements, progress, and prospects of the Partnership for a Healthier America's Fruits & Veggies Campaign by theme, July to October 2016. Stakeholders were interviewed in 2016, when the PHA was expanding the Fruits & Veggies Campaign to new markets across the United States, while continuing efforts in the Fresno, CA, and Hampton Roads, VA, markets where it was launched in 2015.

Evaluation theme	Illustrative quotes
	<p><i>"I think my biggest criticism is they should have really done some local partner building. It was done in a silo, and there are a lot of people who could have helped . . . expand it just beyond the dollars they had."</i> (Public interest NGO, Virginia)</p> <p><i>"Before the event, I saw a lot of collateral in the supermarkets, on the baskets, on the shelves, on the end caps, on the ceilings, posters. I didn't see a lot of that in the schools . . . That was it. It seemed to kind of fizzle away."</i> (Government, Virginia)</p>
Expansion and scale-up	<p><i>"Well, from the public health practice, we would like to look at the most vulnerable audiences . . . Who has the poorest access because of income? . . . That's where our interest lies."</i> (Government, national)</p> <p><i>"Keep it out to chart a course to keep it at a higher level, have media partners that scale nationally on the social media front . . . I think the expectation for PHA to manage on a community basis nationally is a little Pollyanna, and I don't think they have the resources to be able to do that."</i> (Industry trade organization, national)</p> <p><i>"I think the most important thing is that the industry needs to be a big supporter of this . . . but that's really going to depend on industry getting comfortable with this sort of marketing of products."</i> (Public interest NGO, national)</p> <p><i>"I think grocery stores, schools should be a more active participant. I think they were but should be a more active participant and . . . an opportunity to provide the marketing exposure, branding for kids."</i> (Government, Virginia)</p>
Sustainability	<p><i>"I think it's more about making sure that you get as many partners on board who are going to contribute funding, and I think over time, to me, the most logical place for this brand to fit is for the [trade organization] to take over in almost being a check-off program where every time that there is, say for every dollar that is purchased on produce, maybe 3 to 5 cents are contributed to this campaign that promotes fruits and vegetables."</i> (Private sector, Virginia)</p> <p><i>"I really think they need to have all those grassroots organizations on board. That's what's going to make it sustainable. Having those affordable pieces or products or deliverables that could be used by those organizations . . ."</i> (Academia, Virginia)</p> <p><i>"Whether it's PHA or someone else, there needs to be someone who protects and guards what the brand stands for that is no different than [well-known consumer brands]. There are brand-positioning statements that sit inside FNV, there are guardrails around target audiences, and things that the brand should or should not stand for. That's what great brands do, they identify a target, identify how they are unique in their positioning toward their target, and they execute flawlessly against that strategy. Those 3 elements are what FNV has today, and maintaining that over the next 10 to 15 years is required if it is to be successful."</i>[well-known consumer brands]. (Private sector, national)</p>
<p>^aFNV = Fruits & Veggies.</p> <p>^bNGO = nongovernmental organization.</p> <p>^cODU = Old Dominion University.</p> <p>^dPHA = Partnership for a Healthier America.</p>	

Figure 5. (continued) Stakeholders' views about the elements, progress, and prospects of the Partnership for a Healthier America's Fruits & Veggies Campaign by theme, July to October 2016. Stakeholders were interviewed in 2016, when the PHA was expanding the Fruits & Veggies Campaign to new markets across the United States, while continuing efforts in the Fresno, CA, and Hampton Roads, VA, markets where it was launched in 2015.

expanding and scaling up from the pilot markets. The FNV Campaign was described by stakeholders as lacking a clear theoretical underpinning, instead relying on underlying assumptions of effectiveness of marketing interventions. A lack of formative and process research was viewed as a barrier to adoption, investment in the Campaign, and ultimately

sustainability of the effort. Clearly describing campaign goals, objectives, activities, and the logical process by which target outcomes should be achieved provides a framework to support adoption, implementation, and evaluation. The development of the Fruits & Veggies—More Matters program serves as an example of formative research conducted to

develop the fruit and vegetable social marketing campaign.²⁶ The research describes the process and rationale behind the Fruits & Veggies—More Matters brand and message development, using input from both stakeholder representatives and consumers.

The PHA staff and external evaluators of the FNV Campaign should address uncertainty or ambiguity in goals and outcome achievement. Soliciting feedback throughout all stages of the intervention can enhance stakeholder's ability to provide relevant advice and provide clearer understanding and expectations and ultimately greater buy-in for the FNV Campaign intervention. This is particularly important for the FNV Campaign to balance diverse stakeholders' perspectives and ensure engagement across public health and commercial sectors.^{17,27}

The stakeholders interviewed suggested many strategies to secure continued support and resources, including to develop partnerships beyond food industry organizations and commodity checkoff programs. Although recognizing the potential of these avenues to support program sustainability, McLaughlin et al²⁸ have suggested that there may be limited support for a national generic promotion program among US fruit and vegetable industry stakeholders. Industry stakeholders reported numerous barriers to supporting a national promotional program, including the complexity of the fruit and vegetable industry, uncertainties associated with implementing a national promotion program, and ambiguity in short- and long-term return on investment.²⁸ However, there is some evidence of return on investments in generic promotion programs for specific fruit and vegetable commodities.²⁹ Stakeholders recommendations for iterative and measured expansion and scale-up of the FNV Campaign are aligned with principles of planning, implementing, and evaluating effective public health programs.^{20,30} Stakeholders also highlighted the need to develop implementation toolkits that could facilitate adoption at the local level and provide tangible examples of promotions to generate greater support among fruit and vegetable industry stakeholders.²⁸

Since the interviews were conducted, the FNV Campaign has expanded geographically and through diverse partners, some of which are well aligned with stakeholders' recommendations reported in this study. Stakeholder participants suggested expansion of the FNV Campaign through programs and partners that prioritized low-income audiences and in conjunction with existing local partnerships to improve reach and influence. By 2017, the FNV Campaign expanded and scaled up to new locations across the United States including through SNAP-Education programs in California, Colorado, Georgia, North Carolina, and Wisconsin and food bank partnerships to reach low-income audiences.^{12,31} The Wisconsin FNV Campaign received the 2018 National Centre for Social Marketing Award, which was implemented in collaboration with state organizations and partnerships, including the University of Wisconsin-Extension FoodWise, healthTIDE, and the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, and funded through SNAP-Education.³² In 2019, the PHA announced 2 major retail partnerships to implement the FNV Campaign across more than 160 Giant Food stores throughout Washington, DC, Maryland, and Virginia³³ and throughout all Wisconsin Kwik Trip convenience store locations.³⁴

In line with stakeholders' suggestions in this study, the FNV Campaign materials have been tailored to appeal to audiences in new markets, including local sports teams featured in Wisconsin promotions and use of locally relevant celebrities in Giant Food store promotions.³³ The FNV Campaign is also listed as a customizable intervention in the SNAP-Education Toolkit, an online resource to assist state SNAP-Education agencies in identifying, implementing, and evaluating evidence-based obesity prevention and policy, systems, and environmental change interventions.³⁵ The SNAP-Education Toolkit lists the FNV Campaign as an emerging intervention, which is an intervention that has shown promise but has not yet been fully evaluated in the field.³⁶ Data reported from the Wisconsin FNV Campaign and Hampton Roads, VA, Farm Fresh retail partnership are included in the evidence summary for the FNV Campaign intervention on the SNAP-Education toolkit webpage. However, there were no formative, process, or outcome evaluation data reported from other state locations where the FNV Campaign was implemented available on the online FNV SNAP-Education toolkit resource.³⁵

Because the FNV Campaign is a relatively new approach to addressing the persistent issue of suboptimal fruit and vegetable intake in the United States, greater involvement and input of diverse public health researchers and practitioners in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the effort are warranted. Nutrition and dietetics professionals are involved in a variety of practice settings (eg, food assistance programs, community organizations, retail) that can support design of locally-tailored FNV Campaign activities to engage target audiences and integrate efforts through existing partnerships and activities. The expertise and involvement of registered dietitian nutritionists in developing and evaluating evidence-based community nutrition programs would be particularly useful to build an evidence base for the long-term impacts of the FNV Campaign on fruit and vegetable intake and related health outcomes. Registered dietitian nutritionists and other nutrition professionals can educate and advocate for efforts that enhance the quality and scope of evidence for the FNV Campaign and complementary interventions to promote fruit and vegetable intake throughout local, state, and national settings and partnerships.

Strengths and Limitations

Our findings align with previous research on stakeholders' views on fruit and vegetable promotion campaigns but also offer unique understandings of the novel context and prospects of the FNV Campaign obtained from a unique evaluation framework adapted from Reach, Effectiveness, Adoption, Implementation, and Maintenance framework and 5 phases of prevention research dimensions. This independent evaluation of stakeholder perspectives and expectations is strengthened by the diverse sample of participants engaged across public, nonprofit, and private sectors and contributes important insights to inform next steps for the FNV Campaign.¹⁷

Although this study assessed diverse stakeholders' perspectives on the FNV Campaign and addressed a gap in empirical evaluations of the Campaign, there were several limitations. Our assessment of FNV Campaign stakeholder perspectives was limited to the recruited sample, which

cannot be generalized to the perspectives of all stakeholders. Despite numerous press releases and reporting from the PHA, documentation is still limited of the FNV Campaign intervention, adaptations, outcomes, and plans in the 2 markets where it was launched or markets where to which it has since expanded. Subsequently, it is difficult to assess whether stakeholders' perspectives assessed in this research are generalizable or related to decisions and input to guide future FNV Campaign activities. Some stakeholder perspectives on FNV Campaign activities were limited to initial or one-time events and may no longer be relevant based on current implementation contexts and activities.

Although the FNV Campaign activities have been expanded and scaled up since this study was conducted, many of the findings from this research are still pertinent. Stakeholders' perspectives in the present study are relevant to compare with existing activities, particularly for those that have been implemented continuously or nationally since the launch of the Campaign (ie, social media, use of pro bono celebrity endorsers) or expanded and scaled up beyond the pilot markets (eg, retail execution). Further research is needed to understand and triangulate findings over time and across markets to establish an evidence base and inform campaign refinement. In addition, qualitative research is warranted to understand target audiences' perceptions and interpretations of the FNV Campaign brand and marketing elements.

CONCLUSIONS

The FNV Campaign presents a unique opportunity to promote fruit and vegetable intake to large populations with substantial support and interest from public- and private-sector actors. To support the effectiveness and sustainability of the FNV Campaign, the insights from diverse stakeholders described in this study should be used to inform future efforts. Findings from this study also outline numerous opportunities to improve future research and practice to advance the evidence base and support for the FNV Campaign.

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STATEMENT OF POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

T. R. Englund, V. I. Kraak, and K. J. Duffey assisted with the planning and study design. V. I. Kraak and T. R. Englund assisted with recruitment and data collection. T. R. Englund and M. Zhou assisted with thematic coding. All authors reviewed and assisted with manuscript revisions.

<p>E-mail subject</p> <p>Invitation to participate in a study about your views and insights related to the Partnership for a Healthier America's Fruit and Vegetable (FNV) Campaign</p>
<p>E-mail body</p> <p>Dear [Stakeholder Name],</p> <p>I would like to invite you to participate in a study to explore your views and insights related to the FNV Campaign that was launched in Norfolk/Hampton Roads, Virginia and Fresno, California in 2015. The principal investigator for this study is [____], assisted by [____], in the [____]. This research is funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.</p> <p>If you are interested in participating in this study, please reply by e-mail to [____], study coordinator, at [____].</p> <p>I would like to schedule a phone interview with you on any of the following dates:</p> <p>Attached is a pdf of the study description and a consent form for your review. If you choose to participate, please send your signed consent form and I will follow up with a brief demographic survey.</p> <p>Thank you. I look forward to hearing from you.</p>
<p>Why is this research being done?</p> <p>The goal of this research is to understand the views and insights from diverse stakeholders who have either worked with the FNV Campaign or have expertise in fruit and vegetable promotion in the United States that can help to improve the campaign. We plan to use this information to inform the FNV Campaign's future expansion and sustainability.</p>
<p>Who can participate in this research?</p> <p>We are seeking diverse stakeholders who have worked with, are involved in, are affected by, or have an interest in the FNV Campaign and fruit and vegetable promotion to improve people's health.</p>
<p>What will you be asked to do?</p> <p>Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and involves minimal risk. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to sign the informed consent form and complete a brief demographic questionnaire. The interview will last about 60 minutes and will explore your views related to the FNV Campaign design, reach, effectiveness, impact, expansion, and sustainability.</p>

Figure 3. E-mail recruitment template used to inform and invite stakeholders (n = 41) to participate in interviews about their perspectives and expectations around the Fruits & Veggies (FNV) Campaign.

[]
Informed Consent for Participants in Research Projects Involving Human Subjects
Title of Project: Exploring Diverse Stakeholders' Views About the FNV Campaign to Inform Future Expansion and Sustainability Principal investigator: [] Coinvestigators: []
I. Purpose of This Research Project The purpose of this study is to understand the views and insights from diverse stakeholders who have worked with the FNV Campaign or in the area of fruit and vegetable promotion that is closely related to the campaign. We plan to use this information to inform the FNV Campaign's future expansion and sustainability. We are seeking diverse stakeholders who have worked with, are involved in, have an interest in, or are affected by the FNV Campaign. The research findings will be used to inform the design, future expansion, and sustainability of the FNV Campaign. The results may be summarized in one or more publications and PhD dissertations.
II. Procedures Should you agree to participate, recruited informants will be asked to: Sign the informed consent form; Complete a brief demographic questionnaire; and Consent to participate in a confidential audio-recorded interview that will be conducted either by phone or in-person by a researcher that will last between 60 and 90 minutes. The one-time interview will cover topics in a 15-item interview guide intended to document your views, opinions, and expectations about the design, reach, effectiveness, impact, expansion, and sustainability of the FNV campaign in the future. The telephone interview or in-person interview will be scheduled on a mutually agreed-upon date, time, and location. The researchers may contact the participant after completing the other interviews and analyzing the results if there are further questions or a need to clarify what has been discussed.
III. Risks There are minimal risks associated with your participation in this project. Your responses to the brief questionnaire will obtain basic information about you including your name, affiliation, contact information, and relationship to the media campaign for which you have knowledge and expertise. We will have time to answer any questions you may have before the interview. Then a researcher will request your verbal consent if you decide to continue with this interview. The study has been reviewed and approved by the [] Institutional Review Board. Your participation in this study is not required, and you may end the interview at any time. You have the right to remain anonymous in the reporting of the results in scholarly publications and conferences.
IV. Benefits and Compensation There are no direct benefits to participate in this study other than to share your knowledge and expertise to promote the public good by informing future national campaigns to promote a healthy diet. No promise or guarantee of benefits has been made to encourage you to participate. No compensation will be provided for participating in this study.
V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality You have the right to remain anonymous for this study, and your information will be kept confidential at all times and will be known only to the research team. Your responses to the brief questionnaire will obtain basic information about you including your name, affiliation, contact information, and relationship to the media campaign for which you have knowledge and expertise. This information will be stored separately from your interview responses and will be coded and kept confidential. Only trained researchers involved in this study will have access to identifiable information about you. At no time will the researchers release identifiable results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without your written consent. It is possible that the [] Institutional Review Board (IRB) may view the study's data for auditing purposes. The IRB is responsible for the oversight of the protection of human subjects involved in research.
<i>(continued on next page)</i>

Figure 4. Informed consent form sent to stakeholders who were invited to participate in interviews about their perspectives and expectations around the Fruits & Veggies Campaign.

<p>VI. Freedom to Withdraw</p> <p>Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and you are free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. You are not obligated to answer all of the questions. If you choose not answer a question, you will not be penalized.</p>
<p>VII. Subject's Consent</p> <p>I have read the consent form and conditions related to this research project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary written consent to participate. If the interview is conducted by phone, I understand that I may give verbal consent rather than written consent to participate.</p>
<p>_____ Date _____</p>
<p>Participant signature</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>Participant's printed name</p>
<p>Should I have any questions about this study, I understand that I may contact the people below:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Should you have any questions or concerns about the study's conduct or your rights as a research subject, or need to report a research-related injury or event, you may contact:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>As required, the IRB for Research Involving Human Subjects at the [institution blinded for review] has approved this research project.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Institutional Review Board Project No. <input type="checkbox"/></p>

Figure 4. (continued) Informed consent form sent to stakeholders who were invited to participate in interviews about their perspectives and expectations around the Fruits & Veggies Campaign.