

Appendix C: Public Service Announcement Tip Sheet

Public service announcements (PSAs) offer you the opportunity to promote your flu vaccine and NIVW activities and program to the general public for free through radio and television.

Motivating Public Service Directors and Producers

Most radio stations have public service directors who decide which PSAs will air. Public service directors are busy people who receive many PSAs every day. They are most likely to use PSAs that they believe are of **local interest** to their communities, and they often favor issues and causes related to health. Because influenza vaccination is an important issue that affects many families in your community, public service directors will likely find NIVW or flu vaccination PSAs highly appealing.

The following tips will help you get your PSAs placed on radio stations.

Know Who Is in Charge

Radio station public service directors may have various titles, including community affairs director, advertising manager, or general manager. Often, the on-air personalities or the producers decide which PSAs will air. Call the station and ask whom you should contact about placing your PSAs.

Write a Letter of Introduction

Once you have determined whom to contact, send a letter of introduction that includes the following information:

- The importance of seasonal flu vaccination
- Your success stories and how they have made an impact on your community
- Your plans for NIVW or the flu season in general
- A call-to-action—ask the radio station to support your activities by running PSAs.

Remember to **keep it local**. The people in charge of PSA placement want to know how the issue affects their community.

Meet Face to Face

Follow up your letter by scheduling meetings with the public service directors at the radio stations where you want your PSAs to air. These meetings put a face on the issue and provide an opportunity for you to educate public service directors about issues related to influenza vaccination. It generally takes a few weeks for radio stations to put PSAs on the air, so you should schedule your meetings well in advance of your events or NIVW. Then, ask the radio station to run your PSAs before the event.

Say “Thank You”

Follow up your visits and meetings with thank-you notes. Acknowledge radio stations once they use the PSAs. Send thank-you notes, and let them know you are delighted that they were able to help raise awareness about the importance of seasonal flu vaccination.

Use Your Connections

Perhaps you or someone in your program already knows someone in a management position at a radio station. Take advantage of that connection to encourage your contact to use your PSAs.

Approach Radio Stations That Use PSAs

Not all radio stations use PSAs. So listen to the radio stations in your community and approach those stations that already air PSAs. If you live in a large metropolitan area, it might be challenging to get your PSAs placed on the most popular radio stations. On the other hand, there are probably several less popular radio stations that will be willing to air your PSAs.

Seek a Media Partnership

Often the media, including TV and radio stations, newspapers, and magazines, will sponsor community events. When they do, they actively promote the event by giving PSAs premium placement and even producing PSAs. If a media outlet does agree to a sponsorship, they usually ask that the organization co-brand the event. For example, they might ask you to name the event “The Channel 4 National Influenza Vaccination Week Flu Clinic.” There is one downside to a media-sponsored event—competing media will not use your PSAs. This downside could be far outweighed by the benefits of gaining premium PSA placement and visibility with the media outlet with which you form the partnership. Weigh your options and assess whether a media partnership makes sense for your event or organization.

Reaching Diverse Audiences with PSAs

Media serving diverse communities offer an outstanding opportunity for PSA placement, especially if you offer in-language PSAs. This is because there is often a lower demand for paid advertising among these media. Many mainstream advertisers simply overlook media reaching ethnic or specialized audiences, or consider the cost of adaptation to be too high so there is usually a higher-than-average availability for PSA time. In addition, not all PSAs are adapted for ethnic or specialized media, so there is less competition for PSA placement on these outlets than in mainstream media. The key to placement in ethnic and specialized media is to make all communications meet the needs of that outlet’s target audiences.

If you are focusing on Hispanic radio stations, for example, make sure you provide both Spanish and English versions of the PSAs—there has been a growing trend toward Spanish media using both languages. Be sure any correspondence to the media outlet is in Spanish. Although public service directors at Spanish-language radio stations are likely fluent in both English and Spanish, they will appreciate the sincerity of your pitch if it is in Spanish, and the gesture will increase your opportunity for placement.