



Media Access Guide: A Resource for Community Health Promotion



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Each term that appears in black bold type throughout the text is listed in the Glossary of Media Terms on pages 52–53.

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Contents

Media Access 101	
Connecting with the Media	4
Local Media Assessment	5
Making the Right Contacts	6
Who's Who in the Media	7
Communicating with the Press in Today's World	8
Partnerships: More Bang for No Bucks	
Pursuing Media Partnerships.....	10
Guidelines for Placing Public Service Announcements.....	13
Sample Radio PSAs.....	14
Monitoring Media Coverage	15
Recording Media Impressions	16
Recording Print Media Impressions.....	17
Sample Print Media Impressions Spreadsheet.....	18
Recording Radio Media Impressions.....	19
Sample Radio Media Impressions Spreadsheet.....	20
Recording Television Media Impressions	21
Sample Television Media Impressions Spreadsheet.....	22
Toolkit: Tipsheets, Templates, Timelines	
Preparing a Press Release.....	24
Press Release Template	26
Sample Press Release.....	27
Creating a Media Advisory/Photo Opportunity	29
Sample Media Advisory	30
Assembling a Press Kit	31
Using B-Roll and Photographs.....	33
Pitching a Story	34
Pitch Letter Template	36
Choosing and Training Media Spokespersons	37
Leveraging New Media Technologies	39
Suggested Community Outreach Activities	41
Letter to the Editor Placement Tips.....	43
Letter to the Editor Template.....	45
Opinion-Editorial (Op-Ed).....	46
Op-Ed Template.....	47
Proclamation Template	48
Hosting a Press Conference.....	49
Press Conference Checklist and Timeline.....	50
References	
Glossary of Media Terms	52
Photography/Broadcast Consent & Release Form Template.....	54
Resources for News Distribution and Clipping Services.....	55
References and Bibliography	57

Connecting with the Media

We all want to gain access to the media, but how do we obtain the coverage and platforms needed to promote our message and shape public opinion? Practicing the art of good media relations is the key to success. This guide will teach you current techniques used by media relations practitioners and provide useful templates to perform the essential tasks.

Media Relations is a two-way street.

It means working with mass media to seek publicity as well as responding to the media's interest in your organization. Being skilled in media relations means that you know

- Who to contact in the media.
- How to contact them.
- How to maintain open lines of communication.
- How to successfully deliver your messages to the intended audiences.
- How to translate your media relations effort into media advocacy.

Your goal is to become an authoritative and credible resource for media professionals.

Through media advocacy, you can

- *Change* the way key decision makers and the general public look at community issues or problems
- *Create* a reliable, consistent stream of publicity or media focus for your program's issues and activities
- *Explain* how these problems could and should be solved
- *Motivate* community members and policy makers to get involved

Media Advocacy is the strategic use of any form of media to advance an organization's objectives or goals. Research tells us that "the way the news media present the issue shapes how people think about the issue" (Wallack, et al, 1999). Through media advocacy, your organization frames the issue in a way that demonstrates its importance to the community.

Benefits of Engaging the Media

- Media coverage reaches more individuals than a single, paid advertisement.
- It is the most efficient way to communicate with the largest audience in the least amount of time.
- Free coverage, known as "earned media," can be garnered through news story publications and broadcasts.
- Forming and maintaining solid relationships with the media can help generate good coverage.

Local Media Assessment

Answering the following questions can help you and your staff initiate and grow media relationships in your communities.

- Which is the most watched newscast or the newscast that reaches your target audiences?
- What radio groups broadcast in your communities (Clear Channel, Infinity Group, Greater Media, etc.)? Is there an opportunity to place radio PSAs on multiple stations within that group?
- Are there reporters, anchors, news makers, and decision makers who have personal connections to the issues “your program” is raising, such as persons recently diagnosed with diabetes, heart disease, asthma, etc.? This is an opportunity to develop a relationship with a media representative who could become a very passionate advocate and want to tell or show your story.
- What recent or current nonprofit organizations’ news issues do the media cover on a regular basis? What sets those specific organizations apart and helps them obtain coverage?
- Do you or someone in your program have strong relationships with the general manager, public or community affairs director, or those listed in Who’s Who in the Media on page 7?
- What type of media relationships, partnerships, or sponsorships does your organization have with television, cable, radio, print, and out-of-home sources (theater slides, transit signs, billboards, dioramas [internal billboards] in airports, etc.)?

Media Contacts Evaluation Tips

- Create a database that includes contact name, media affiliation, job title, phone number, fax number, e-mail address, mailing address, beat or topic of interest, date of last contact, and any articles or citations that resulted from contact.
- Write notes next to contact names to help you identify specific issues the media representatives like to cover.
- Compare media contact lists with those of other related organizations to ensure you have a comprehensive list of up-to-date contacts.

Making the Right Contacts

To garner good media coverage for your organization, you must first identify and make contact with the right media professionals and then provide them with compelling story angles.

Reaching the Right People

Identify and contact the news desk or assignment editors at television and radio stations, newspapers, and magazine outlets. Compile names and contact information for professionals who cover the “beats” (topics of interest) that are important to you. Personal contact with appropriate journalists is a very effective tool – journalists want to report on issues and events that impact their communities.

Reaching the right people in the media will greatly increase the likelihood of coverage.

An up-to-date media contact list or database is an invaluable tool for your program because media professionals often change positions and beats. It is best to update your information twice a year to ensure that it remains current. Services such as Cision provide software to develop up-to-date lists. (Please see page 55–56 for Internet addresses of Cision and other services.)

Building Relationships with Your Media Contacts

Here are some action steps to help develop relationships with the media and land your ultimate story.

1. **Call the Reporter:** Introduce yourself, and state why you’re calling. Ask the reporter if he or she is on deadline. If so, find a time to call back.
2. **Have a Good Story:** Practice your pitch before calling. You need to know your topic well and be ready to revise your pitch.
3. **Plan a Good Strategy:** Do not use the same strategy for every story or media outlet. Think about how to create excitement for that particular media source or audience.
4. **Keep Your Word:** Building trust with the media is paramount. Do what you said you would do within the agreed upon timeframe.
5. **Follow-up:** While you may gain coverage after just one interview with some reporters, you may have to contact others multiple times before they will do a story.
6. **Send Thank You Notes:** Send a reporter a handwritten note expressing appreciation for the benefits gained from their coverage.

Who's Who in the Media

Glossary of position titles and responsibilities of media professionals:

Assignment Editor: Coordinates day-to-day assignments of stories. Random calls to the newsroom are directed to this desk.

Calendar Editor: Responsible for events listings and announcements, and is usually a good source of free publicity for activities open to the public.

City Desk Editor: Handles news assignments in urban areas.

Editor: Coordinates and assigns stories for his or her section of a newspaper or magazine. Publications may have specific editors responsible for health, entertainment, arts, sports, business, the environment, and so on.

Freelance Writer, Photographer (stringer): Generally write, produce news, or take pictures for a variety of news outlets without being employed by any single outlet. Many editors and producers have a regular group of freelancers with whom they work frequently.

General Manager: The leading position in a broadcast facility (TV or radio station). This person manages and directs the business of the entire station, from advertising to news and program production.

Managing Editor: Manages editors and operations of the whole newspaper.

Producer: Researches and writes stories, conducts interviews, and oversees the camera crew and writing and editing process for broadcast stories. He or she works closely with reporters and, in some cases, does much of the work to create a story (local news reporters are responsible for this themselves). The producer decides which stories appear on the news and in what order. The executive producer is similar to the managing editor at a newspaper.

Promotions Director: Responsible for pursuing partnerships and sponsorships to promote a station's charitable commitment, create a positive image, increase visibility, and grow the station's advertising revenue.

Public or Community Affairs Director: Responsible for airing public service announcements (PSAs) and free-speech messages, and overseeing general community relations activities (such as arranging newsroom tours). In some cases, this person also handles PSA placement and media sponsorships.

Reporter: Writes stories for print media and researches and delivers stories on television and radio.

Communicating with the Press in Today's World

Media companies have assumed a stance of proactive preparedness within their facilities and information technology systems. Here are some helpful tips to consider before contacting your media representatives via phone, e-mail, or in person.

Phone Contact (in Person or Voice Mail)

1. Give your name, title, organization, contact numbers, and e-mail address and state briefly why you are calling. This applies to both first-time calls and established contacts.
2. Ask them the best time of day during the week to reach them.
3. Ask reporters/media representatives when their deadlines are before pitching a story to them. Note deadlines on your personal Rolodex card or media database. Do not call reporters or media representatives who are on a deadline.
4. Pay attention to national news events being covered in your marketplace. If you know your issue may fall out of priority for a particular business day, e-mail reporters rather than call them. In the subject, or "regarding," line of your e-mail, write the name of the topic and ask for a response after a specific date. This lets the reporter know you are aware of his or her busy schedule and are savvy enough to be sensitive to this.

Develop a reputation for delivering concise, credible, timely information.

Example:

To: John Doe, WA Herald Reporter
From: Cathy Smith, [Identify program name]
Date: June 28
Re: [Insert program name] (Response Requested by June 30)

5. Be concise. Do not leave phone messages in excess of two minutes; your message may be deleted without being heard.
6. If a reporter has requested information from you, it is acceptable to leave up to three voice mails for the reporter within one business day. Otherwise, do not leave multiple messages within the same business day.
7. When national stories break, consider writing a letter to an editor or an Op-Ed piece to highlight your related health issue(s).

E-mail Communications

1. Many reporters like working through e-mail, but you have to establish this relationship. Ask your media representatives about the best way to communicate. In addition, make sure they are aware of all e-mail addresses/accounts from which you conduct business.
2. In general, a “blast e-mail” on which you blind-copy a journalist is not as effective as e-mailing him or her as a single source. A direct e-mail creates the impression that the journalist is your target customer.
3. Always ask media representatives if you can send them electronic files. They may have different procedures for accepting electronic files (i.e., alternate e-mail addresses) or may not accept them at all.
4. Include your news release within the body of the e-mail and copy your colleagues directly. Members of media will not open your attachment unless they know you.
5. Back up your e-mailed release with a faxed copy to the media outlet.
6. If you need to respond to a sensitive question, consider calling the reporter directly or asking one of your media spokespersons to call instead of using e-mail to develop the story.

Visiting the Media Facility

1. Visit a media facility only after you have made an appointment with your contact. Since 9-11, many facilities are more rigid with security measures. Be prepared to follow guidelines and provide a government-issued photo identification and business card.
2. If you are near one of your media outlets and you want to visit, call in advance and ask to see your contact. Do not go unannounced.
3. Have your press kit materials in hand, know the names of your media contacts (first and last names and position titles), and have recordings (in correct formats: BETA, VHS, DVD, etc.) with you.

Partnerships: More Bang for No Bucks

Pursuing Media Partnerships

Effective outreach programs often include a media partnership component. Media representatives want to be part of a healthy, growing community and are often happy to become partners in a worthy endeavor. This partnership may involve one or many media outlets that are competitors. Potential benefits of a media partnership include

- Sponsorship of special or annual events.
- Increased news coverage.
- Links to your program from their Web site.

The most common benefit of a media partnership is in placing public service announcements (PSAs). Media outlets are no longer required by law to provide a certain number of PSAs, but most still do to maintain strong corporate citizenship. If you develop a partnership with a media outlet, there may be some enhanced benefits, such as these:

- Your media partner may customize your standard PSAs.
- Your PSAs may appear in a more desirable time slot.
- Your media partner may give scheduling preference to your PSAs in order to feature its own live talent while promoting your issues.

The Role of Media Outreach

The Ad Council offers the following insight into the role of media outreach. The purposes of media outreach are to

- Build and strengthen relationships with the media in your market.
- Educate the media about the importance of your issue and its impact on the community.
- Persuade community affairs professionals across all forms of media to support your PSAs.
- Develop partnerships that raise the profile of your organization and cause within the community.
- Extend your media exposure throughout the year.
 - Earned media
 - Donated PSA schedules

On pages 11 and 12 you will find suggestions from The Ad Council regarding media outreach and building media partnerships.

Building Media Partnerships

1. Identify and prioritize your best media prospects.
 - Focus on stations with programming that appeals to general-market adults, African Americans, and Hispanics.
 - Leverage your personal media contacts and the contacts of others in your circle.
 - Visit media Web sites to learn more about the community groups and issues they support.
 - Target general managers and community affairs directors.
2. Schedule face-to-face meetings when possible, or contact by phone, mail, or e-mail.
3. Plan the key points you want to make.
 - Goal of the advertising
 - Target audience
 - Local statistics, demographics
 - Connection of the issue to the community (local stories, results, programs, events, partners, anecdotal information)
4. Schedule media outreach.
 - Especially around the launch of new PSAs
 - When new research or positive results are available
 - Throughout the year
 - Prior to local events or key national dates such as
 - National Nutrition Month – March
 - National Women's Health Care Month – May
 - Child Health Day – during first week of October
 - National Health Education Week – in October

For an extensive listing of events, see The National Health Information Center's list of national health observances by year at www.healthfinder.gov/library/nho.

5. Discuss pertinent questions.
 - Does your media company have a specific policy regarding PSAs?
 - Are there upcoming events, programs, or other initiatives we can work on together?
 - Does your company have a Web site, and will you set up a link to our program?

6. Get a commitment.

- Run the PSAs.
- Include content about your program or issue, local success stories, health information, or Web address on medium's Web site.
- Reiterate availability of spokespersons for interviews on community affairs programs or for news and special reports.
- Ask if their health reporter or lead anchor can emcee at a major Summit, Grand Rounds, or Forum; media companies like large events, so it is a good idea to invite general managers of radio or TV stations and publishers of print outlets.
- End with an "ask."

7. Close the loop.

- Send a note of thanks after your meeting and after you see or hear the PSAs.
- Respond quickly to unanswered questions.
- Follow up a few weeks later to inquire whether additional information is needed; ask about the media outlet's plans to support the PSA campaign.
- Reiterate that you are a resource for them.

Source: Donna Feiner, The Ad Council, June 23, 2005

For additional information and resources, please visit The Ad Council Web site at www.adcouncil.org.

Media Partnership Evaluation Tips:

- Before pursuing a partnership, monitor media coverage to help you decide which media outlets would be best to target.
- Keep track of articles or stories that come about as a result of the media partnership. Record the author and how the stories are framed.
- Assign a dollar value to the coverage you have received based on media outlets' advertising rate cards.
- Estimate the number of people exposed (circulation, viewers, or listenership) through radio, print, and television coverage using the media impressions templates on pages 18, 20, and 22.

Guidelines for Placing Public Service Announcements

Public service announcements (PSA) are unpaid announcements that promote government agencies, voluntary organizations, or programs that serve the public interest. PSAs offer an excellent opportunity for additional exposure. Newspapers often provide free space through their community calendars and may give your public service event a free ad. The best PSAs are timeless and can be used for months, even years; however, review your objectives to determine if this is feasible.

These guidelines will help you take advantage of public service time and space:

1. Call the media outlet to find out who handles PSAs: Television – Public or Community Affairs Director; Radio – Promotions or Marketing Director; Print – Marketing Director.
2. Ask the appropriate director how to place PSAs with his or her outlet. The procedure often varies by media, but usually they will want information in writing.
3. Focus on the message you want to promote. For local programming, provide a “call to action.” For example, invite the public to a health screening.
4. Make your request for PSAs at least four weeks ahead of time. Media outlets need adequate lead time to schedule and possibly produce your announcements.
5. Provide the radio or television station broadcast-quality PSAs in varying lengths—usually 30 and 60 seconds. This increases the opportunity for airplay in available time slots.
6. Be prepared to provide B-roll footage, spokesperson(s), and other production elements that may be needed. Television stations may produce the spot if given enough lead time.
7. Radio stations will often produce the PSAs or read the copy live. Be prepared to provide a script written in conversational style. Use the active voice and simple sentences. Do not use clauses between a subject and a verb.
8. Establish a long-term relationship with key media outlets that will invest the production time and broadcast your PSA campaign.

Most broadcast and print media offer PSA space as a matter of policy.

Note: Because PSAs are usually aired during off-peak demand periods when audience levels are down, they should be supplemented with a media buy when possible. Establishing a media partnership may help in obtaining a better time slot.

On the following page are sample radio PSAs you can customize for your local program or event.

Sample Radio PSAs

[Place on your letterhead]

[Limit the 30-second PSA to about 60–65 words]

:30 PSA

RADIO PSA :30 A Healthy Weight: A Healthy Heart

Learn helpful tips for “A Healthy Weight: A Healthy Heart.” The American Heart Association invites you to participate in a free class, brought to you by Steps to a Healthier Dekalb County. For additional information on this class, call 404-234-1234 or visit www.dekalbhealth.net/steps.

-30-

[Limit the 60-second PSA to about 120–125 words]

:60 PSA

RADIO PSA :60 A Healthy Weight: A Healthy Heart

Steps to a Healthier Dekalb County and the American Heart Association invite you to live longer, better, and healthier lives. Participate in “A Healthy Weight: A Healthy Heart” program for eight sessions. Classes start soon, and you can register at 404-234-1234. Steps to a Healthier Dekalb County can help you avoid serious, costly diseases such as diabetes, obesity, and asthma. Walk along DeKalb County Hospital's nature trails, meet with a nutritionist, and discuss a health management plan with a certified nurse practitioner. For additional information on this program, call 404-234-1234 or visit www.dekalbhealth.net/steps.

-60-

Placing PSAs Evaluation Tips:

- Keep track of the topics of PSAs, how many you send out, where you send them, how many are published or broadcast, and the time of day they aired.
- Track numbers of Web hits, inquiries, calls to hot line, etc., to define spikes after PSAs air.
- Estimate the number of people exposed (circulation, viewers, or listenership) through radio, print, and television coverage using the media impressions templates on pages 18, 20, and 22.

Monitoring Media Coverage

Monitoring Yourself

Getting a reporter to run a story on the program is not enough to assure a successful media placement. When you evaluate media coverage, assess the tone of the story, whether the report was factual, and the impact on the local community.

Key Questions to Answer

- Did the event receive enough coverage?
Was the information presented well enough to explain the situation appropriately?
- Did the coverage reach the audiences targeted?
- Was the "spin" of the story appropriate?
Did it fairly represent the program goals and its accomplishments to date?
- Was the information accurate?
- Did the story include contact information for the audience to ask further questions?
- Have you become a source for the journalist who covered the story?
- Did your media work help build community support for your Program?

Key Actions to Take

- Secure documentation, usually an affidavit, of actual coverage.
- Adjust your media strategy by evaluating the answers to key questions. For example, you may need to increase efforts to attract specialty media that target certain demographics, such as teens or older Americans.
- Gain more coverage by identifying special in-depth opportunities. Public affairs programs, live radio talk shows, and news health segments can devote more time to the topic.
- Make sure the goals and outcomes of the program are clear in all of your printed materials so reporters understand at a glance the importance and relevancy of your issue.
- Do not hesitate to contact the reporter and ask that the station or newspaper issue a correction if the story is inaccurate.

How to Secure Media Documentation:

Stations may be willing to provide an affidavit if you discuss that request with them in advance. Most often stations will provide a letter of support and give you an approximate number of **PSAs** aired and the airing period. Secure the following documentation of actual coverage:

Print – Clipping of the article or blurb

TV – VHS or DVD copy

Radio – An audiotape or CD-ROM

Recording Media Impressions

Media impressions are standardized measurements representing everyone exposed to your program through radio, newspaper, television, or other media. It is important to track and monitor the media coverage that your program receives. Many organizations can afford to use a media monitoring or clipping service to obtain copies of their media coverage such as print clippings, TV videotapes, or radio audiotapes or CDs. If you are interested in pursuing such an option, refer to the Resources section on pages 55–56.

However, if you do not use a paid monitoring service, you can always track your own coverage and obtain copies directly from media outlets.

It is important to closely monitor the media coverage your program receives on a weekly or monthly basis. Create Excel spreadsheets based on the media impressions templates on pages 18, 20, and 22 as a tool to track and monitor media impressions.

Using these spreadsheets, you will be able to

- Calculate how many media impressions you will garner promoting your program.
- Analyze which media outlets give you the most effective media impressions.

Do not forget to include your name, contact phone, name of program, and state.

Recording Print Media Impressions

In Column A: Record the name of the publication (newspaper or magazine).

In Column B: Record the type of publication (daily, weekly, or monthly).

In Column C: Record the circulation – the number of copies of a publication that are sold or distributed on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis.

A publication's circulation number is usually printed near the editorial staff listing or "How to Reach the Newspaper" section. You can also obtain the number from the publication's advertising department.

In Column D: The number of times the piece ran in the publication. For example, if an ad ran three times within the month or two times within the week, record the number of times it appeared in the publication during the circulation period.

In Column E: According to Nielsen Media Research, 2.4 readers or viewers will come in contact with your information in each publication circulated. This number is prerecorded in Column E.

For example, if the publication is printed 100,000 times and you have an article in the publication, your impressions garnered are 100,000 (the circulation number) x 2.4 readers or viewers, which equals 240,000 impressions.

In Column F: Calculate the total media impressions for each item entered. This number will be the product of Column C (circulation number) multiplied by Column D (number of times the piece ran) multiplied by Column E (average reader number, a predetermined value).

In Column G: Record the type of coverage received. Types of coverage may include

- Articles (1/4, 1/2, 2/3, full page) or article with photo(s).
- Blurbs (a paragraph of information, often announcing an event, time, date, and place).
- Press release (reprint of your press release).
- Promotional ads or PSAs (non-paid and secured by your organization or an organization on your behalf). Include the approximate size of ad (1/4 page, etc.).
- Paid ad.
- Letter to the editor.
- Opinion-editorial, etc.

In Column H: Place yes or no in this column to indicate whether or not a clip is available.

What follows is a Sample Print Media Impressions Spreadsheet.

Sample Print Media Impressions Spreadsheet

A		B		C		D		E		F		G		H	
Media Impressions Report (Print)		Daily, Weekly, Monthly		Insert Your Name		Insert Name of Program		Insert Contact Phone		Insert Name of State		Insert Recording Period		7-1-05 to 8-31-05	
Name of Publication	Examples:	Circulation #s	# of Times Piece Ran	Average Reader #	Total Media Impressions	Type of Coverage	Clip Available								
1	The WA Daily Tribune	700,000	1	2.4	1,680,000	Article	Yes								
2	The AZ Star Monthly	150,000	2	2.4	720,000	1/2 Promotional Ad	Yes								
3	The Salinas Star	50,000	3	2.4	360,000	Press Release on Steps	Yes								
4	The Broom County Press	20,000	5	2.4	240,000	Full Page Ad on Steps	Yes								
5		35,000	2	2.4	168,000	1/2 Page Article	Yes								
6				2.4											
7				2.4											
8				2.4											
9				2.4											
10				2.4											
11				2.4											
12				2.4											
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34				2.4											
35				2.4											
36				2.4											
37				2.4											
38				2.4											
39				2.4											
40				2.4											
41				2.4											
42				Grand Impressions				Grand Impressions		3,168,000					

Recording Radio Media Impressions

In Column A: Enter the Call Letters (e.g., WXYZ-FM) for the stations that are airing your public affairs interviews, PSAs, and announcements about your upcoming events.

In Column B: Enter each station's ownership group such as Clear Channel, Citadel Broadcasting, Greater Media, Infinity Group, etc. Enter the station's format such as easy listening, hard rock, classical, news/talk, etc.

In Column C: Enter the type of coverage received, such as a 10-minute public affairs interview, a 30-second PSA airing, or an announcement about an upcoming event.

In Column D: Enter the approximate (or average) listenership of the radio. You will need to obtain this number from the radio station or ownership group itself, and the number will vary based on the time slot in which your piece aired.

In Column E: Enter the number of times the piece aired, 1, 2, 50, 100, etc. PSAs usually run at least 50 times, and some stations may play the PSA forever as a space filler. Interviews usually run once or twice, and some stations with weekly programs may agree to run a prerecorded interview once a week for a given number of weeks.

In Column F: Calculate the total media impressions for each item entered. This number will be the product of Column D (approximate listenership) multiplied by Column E (number of times the piece aired).

In Column G: Enter whether or not you have an audio cassette, CD, or DVD available of the actual broadcast clip (PSA, interview, etc.) Radio stations are usually willing to make a copy of your coverage for you.

In Column H: Enter your radio contact, so that it will be at your fingertips the next time you try to gain access. You can add the information to your current media list.

What follows is a Sample Radio Media Impressions Spreadsheet.

Sample Radio Media Impressions Spreadsheet

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	Media Impressions Report (Radio)		Insert Your Name	Insert Name of Program	Insert Contact Phone	Insert Name of State	Insert Recording Period	7-1-05 to 8-31-05
2	Call Letters for Station	Station Ownership & Format	Type of Coverage: PSA, Interview, etc.	Approximate Listenership	# of Times Piece Aired	Total Media Impressions	Audio Clip Available	Radio Contact
3	Examples:							
4	WRSR-FM	Clear Channel, Easy Listening	Public Affairs Interview	250,000	2	500,000	Yes	Promotions Director
5	WMAS-FM	Citadel Broadcast, 70s and 80s	PSA	50,000	100	5,000,000	Yes	Marketing Director
6				10,000	1	10,000	Yes	Promotions Director
7								
8								
9								
10								
11								
12								
13								
14								
15								
16								
17								
18								
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27								
28								
29								
30								
31								
32								
33								
34								
35								
36								
37								
38								
39								
40								
41								
42				Grand Impressions		5,510,000		

Recording Television Media Impressions

In Column A: Enter the Call Letters (e.g., WXYZ) of the stations that air your news stories, public affairs interviews, PSAs, or announcements about upcoming events.

In Column B: Enter each TV station's ownership group such as Sinclair, Hearst-Argyle, etc. You can find out who owns a station by visiting its Web site or viewing the TV credits for their newscasts.

In Column C: Enter the type of coverage received, such as a 3-minute health segment interview, a 30-second PSA airing, or an announcement about an upcoming event.

In Column D: Enter the type of programming such as a 5 p.m. newscast, health segment, special report/edition, etc.

In Column E: Enter the approximate (or average) viewership of the television station. You will need to obtain this number from the TV station or its ownership group, and the number does vary based on the time slot your coverage was aired.

In Column F: Enter the time slot the piece aired, such as early morning, midday, early evening, prime time, late night, etc.

In Column G: Enter the number of times the piece aired, 1, 2, 50, 100, etc. TV PSAs usually run at least 50 to 100 times. News stories may be re-aired during the station's evening newscasts at 5:00, 5:30, or 6:00 p.m.

In Column H: Calculate the total media impressions for each item entered. This will be the product of Column E (approximate viewership) multiplied by Column G (number of times the piece aired).

In Column I: Enter whether or not you have a tape (VHS or BETA) or DVD available of the actual broadcast clip (PSA, news story, etc.) TV stations are usually willing to make a copy of your coverage for you.

In Column J: Enter your TV contact, so the next time you are trying to gain access it will be at your fingertips. You may want to add the information to your current media list.

What follows is a Sample Television Media Impressions Spreadsheet.

Sample Television Media Impressions Spreadsheet

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Media Impressions Report (TV)	Station	Type of Coverage: PSA, Interview Segment, Story, etc.	Insert Your Name	Insert Name of Program	Time Slot Picked	Insert Contact Phone	Insert Name of State	Insert Recording Period: 7-1-05 to 8-31-05	TV Contact
1	Call Letters for Station	PSA, Interview Segment, Story, etc.	Type of Programming: 5 pm newscast, health segment, special edition, etc.	Approximate Viewership	Time Slot Picked	# of Times Piece Aired	Total Media Impressions	Broadcast Clip Available	TV Contact
2	Examples:								
3	WABC-TV	3-minute story	Public Affairs Interview	250,000	early am and late pm	2	500,000	Yes	News Producer
4	WCVB-TV	:30 PSA	PSA	350,000	early am	50	17,500,000	Yes	Promotions Director
5									
6									
7									
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9									
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36									
37									
38									
39									
40									
41									
42						Grand Impressions	18,000,000		

Toolkit: Tipsheets, Templates, Timelines

Preparing a Press Release

A press release goes into greater depth than a media advisory and is written like a news story. The written release is one of the most efficient and economical ways to achieve a wide distribution of facts and data. A press release must have all of the information noted on the template on page 26.

- Use letterhead with your program logo appropriately placed to identify your local program quickly and easily.
- Identify your program's contact person by name, phone number, e-mail address, and Web site address. This makes follow-up by the editor or reporter easier.
- State the release date and time. Most often you will state, "For Immediate Release." If not, be clear about when and what time you want your release to come out, for example, "Embargoed Until 11 a.m., Wednesday, July 23."
- Headline your story. Make it simple and informative so the reporter or editor will know what your story is about.
- Indicate the dateline or where the release originated and that day's date. For space considerations, put the date with the contact information and the city and state in parentheses in the first paragraph.
- Double-space your copy and leave wide margins. By doing this, editorial changes or additions will be easier to make and see.
- Use the "inverted pyramid" format when writing your release. Use the first one or two paragraphs of the press release to reveal the important facts:
 - What is the event or news?
 - Why is it being held and what is the important issue?
 - Who is involved?
 - Where is the event or program being conducted? Provide an exact address with room name or number if applicable.
 - When is the event or program being held?
 - How did it turn out, if in the past?

Information offered with style and accuracy attracts attention faster.

Use the following tips to add details to your release:

- Be sure there are no typographical, spelling, or syntax errors. Do not rely completely on computer software spell-check programs, because a word could be misused even though it is spelled correctly.
- Keep the release short and factual. Keep paragraphs to 60 words or less. Limit the release to no more than two typewritten, double-spaced pages.
- Indicate the end of the release at the bottom of the page with the symbol (###) or write -End-. If it is longer than one page, write “-more-” at the end of the first page.
- Duplicate the release on only one side of the paper.
- Deliver the release to the proper person by the proper time.

Embargoes

Press releases should be sent on the day that the information is to be released to the public. If you want to send the release out early but do not want it to be printed until a certain date, note that at the top with “Embargoed Until (date information is to be released).” Embargoes give the reporter some extra time to develop a story around embargoed information.

Standard Closing Boilerplate Paragraph

The boilerplate paragraph provides a concise overview of your program and enforces your brand and identity when used in promotional materials. The boilerplate language should provide a general description of your program including where to find additional information and your contact information. Include the standard boilerplate paragraph at the end of press releases, media advisories, pitch letters, and letters to the editor.

Press Release Evaluation Tips:

- Keep track of the topics of press releases, how many you send out, whom you send them to, and how many articles or stories result and in which media outlets.
- Analyze articles or stories that come about as a result of press releases and record the author, the media source, and how they are framed.
- Estimate the number of people exposed (circulation, viewers, or listenership) through radio, print, and television coverage using the media impressions templates on pages 18, 20, and 22.

Press Release Template

[Place on your letterhead]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Date:

Contact:

Telephone:

E-mail:

Web site:

Attention-Grabbing Headline

Sub-Headline Highlighting Additional Information (Optional)

Who, What, Where, and When: Begin the press release with an interesting news hook, or “lead,” that provides the media a compelling reason to cover this story. Summarize the main news in this first paragraph. This paragraph should set the tone for the rest of the press release and, as a general rule, should not exceed three sentences.

Why or How: Describe your program or activity and explain why this news is important to the local area. This paragraph could include statistics on the subject and elaborate on how this news will impact the region or state.

Quote(s): Include quotes from your program administrators, health department representatives, or well-known supporters. Quotes should advance the “story” the press release is trying to tell, include a call to action, or spotlight your program’s personal success stories.

Additional Why or How: The body of the press release should further underscore why local residents need to know about this health issue. Summarize potential solutions to the problem and highlight the role that your program plays in addressing the issue.

Contact and Logistical Information: Include your contact information, and list any Web sites or telephone numbers that the media can access for more information. If you are sending the press release to a TV station, suggest good visuals such as celebrity appearances or hands-on activities.

Standard Boilerplate About Your Organization:

[Insert brief description of your program]. For more information about [your program name], please visit [insert your program’s web address] or call [insert phone number].

###

(Three pound [#] signs centered indicate the end of the press release.)

Sample Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 14, 2004

Contact: Mary McFadden
Telephone: (607) 778-3929
E-mail: mmcfadden@co.broome.ny.us
Web site: www.broomesteps.org

MISSION MELTAWAY IS ON ITS "WEIGH" IN BROOME COUNTY

(BINGHAMTON, NY) The Broome County Health Department's initiative is on a "mission" to reduce obesity and diabetes in our community by providing residents with an opportunity to enroll in a free healthy weight education program called Mission Meltaway.

Mission Meltaway, nationally recognized and originally founded by the Broome County Office for Aging, is an eight-week healthy weight management education session with a group approach to weight loss. In one representative Mission Meltaway session, 91 of the 100 participants lost weight after the 4-week "jump start" program. Sixty-five percent increased their physical activity levels, and 100 percent increased their knowledge of good nutrition and exercise.

The eight-week program will incorporate diabetes prevention strategies related to improved nutrition and increased physical activity to initiate and reinforce lifestyle changes. Group-supported meetings will cover a range of topics, including menu planning, nutrition, physical activity, and mental health. There will be opportunities to enroll in BC Walks, participate in the "Give Me 5" fruit and vegetable awareness campaign, listen to a host of expert speakers, and receive incentives, such as pedometers. Partners will be providing free services to participants enrolled in the program. The Broome County YMCA will be offering free eight-week memberships, and all participants will be provided a comparison of "before and after" physical assessments such as blood pressure, body mass index (BMI), hip-to-waist ratio, and weight.

- more -

“Chronic diseases, such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease, that are prompted by obesity are crippling us both medically and financially,” says Mary McFadden, Supervising Public Health Educator for the Broome County Health Department. National costs associated with treating obesity have recently been recorded at approximately \$117 million, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The mental and physical costs associated with overweight and obese individuals affect every part of our society.

“We need to take personal and social responsibility for our own health and that of our community,” says McFadden. “Mission Meltaway is just one of several intervention strategies in the Steps to a HealthierNY initiative related to reducing the burden of obesity.”

Beginning in July, Mission Meltaway programs will be offered in various settings in Broome County, including faith-based centers, senior centers, and worksites. The participating community sites are as follows: Broome County YMCA, Southern Tier Independence Center, Mental Health Association, Broome County Government (employees), Office for Aging Eastern Broome Senior Center, Lourdes Hospital (employees), and Union Center Christian Church, led by the Rural Health Network of South Central New York.

For more information on how county residents can enroll in Mission Meltaway, contact Mary McFadden at (607) 778-3929.

Steps to a HealthierNY is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Steps Program, a national program focusing on the prevention of diabetes, obesity, and asthma and addressing related risk factors – poor nutrition, physical inactivity, and tobacco use and exposure. For more information about Steps to a HealthierNY, please visit www.broomesteps.org or call (607) 778-3929.

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Creating a Media Advisory/Photo Opportunity

Similar to a press release, the media advisory/photo opportunity informs media representatives of an opportunity to send a camera person or photographer to a planned event. A media alert/photo op typically goes out to the media one to two days before a planned event to advise that the event is occurring and to offer the media an opportunity to capture its major visual elements. It also capitalizes on the media's need to cover and to produce visually interesting elements and newsworthy items. A media advisory/photo op includes the following elements:

- One-line headline
- Bullet points that follow the who, what, where, when, and why format
- A final short paragraph with additional background information
- Contact information for additional information
- Standard boilerplate closing paragraph at the end of the advisory

What follows is a sample media advisory to use as a guide.

Media Advisory Evaluation Tips:

- Keep track of the topics, how many you send out, whom you send them to, and who was in attendance.
- Track how many articles or stories are covered and in which media outlets.
- Analyze articles or stories that come about as a result of media advisories and record the author, the media source, and how they are framed.
- Estimate the number of people exposed (circulation, viewers, or listenership) through radio, print, and television coverage using the media impressions templates on pages 18, 20, and 22.

Sample Media Advisory

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 29, 2005

Contact: Mary McFadden
Telephone: (607) 778-3929
E-mail: mmcfadden@co.broome.ny.us
Web site: www.broomesteps.org

Broome County Health Department Honors Johnson City School District for Outstanding Contributions in School Health and Wellness

- Who: Superintendent Larry Rowe
- What: Recognition of commitment to health and wellness
- Where: Johnson City Elementary-Middle School
601 Columbia Drive
Johnson City
- When: Thursday, June 30, 2005, at 10 a.m.
- Why: Under the leadership of Supt. Rowe and a dedicated and active wellness committee, the Johnson City Wildcats have been a role model for school communities throughout Broome County, New York State, and the nation.
- Photo Op: Photo opportunity with Superintendent Rowe after presentation, 10:30 a.m.

To learn more about the Broome County Health Department's Steps to a HealthierNY initiative and how schools can participate in its programs, contact:

Mary McFadden
Telephone: (607) 778-3929
E-mail: mmcfadden@co.broome.ny.us

Steps to a HealthierNY is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Steps Program, a national program focusing on the prevention of diabetes, obesity, and asthma and addressing related risk factors – poor nutrition, physical inactivity, and tobacco use and exposure. For more information about Steps to a HealthierNY, please visit www.broomesteps.org or call (607) 778-3929.

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Assembling a Press Kit

A press kit is a collection of press materials assembled in a large envelope or folder. It can be distributed at press conferences to journalists or provided to producers as background information for broadcast interviews. Press kits designed for a press conference or special event should always include a media advisory (sample on page 30 of this guide). However, media advisories are not needed in general information kits. The kit may include up to 10 pieces, including press releases, fact sheets, biographies, and feature stories. Press kits can also be sent electronically and included in the newsroom section of your Web site.

Recommended Elements:

- Background or Program Overview:** Limit the overview to one page that describes the organization's mission and program or initiative. Include a brief history, accomplishments, and a list of key executives in the organization. When appropriate, include biographies on a separate page.
- Basic Fact Sheet:** Be concise and answer the 5 Ws (Who, What, Where, When, Why) and How. Include easy-to-access information about the health problem(s) that your organization addresses.
- Supplemental Fact Sheets:** These sheets augment the basic information and include one-pagers on the various programs or services you provide. These can be used to highlight specific information about the health issues in a particular community. Pamphlets and brochures can also expand on a particular topic, if needed.
- Media Advisory:** This is sent out to the media three weeks to 24 hours before a planned event and helps reporters learn about your event. See page 30 of this guide for a sample media advisory.
- Press Release:** This is used primarily for press conferences and events where media have been invited or are expected to attend. See page 26 of this guide for a template to use in creating a press release.
- Feature Story:** This type of press release is not time-sensitive, but it is still newsworthy and warrants coverage. A feature story often covers topics of human interest, showcases success stories, or investigates an issue in-depth.

The key is to provide pertinent information without overloading the kit.

- ❑ **Brief Highlights of Upcoming Events:** Provide an up-to-date list of upcoming events relevant to the organization and topic being covered.
- ❑ **Brief Bios of Spokesperson:** Provide a brief 3- to 4-paragraph bio on your featured spokesperson(s).
- ❑ **Photographs:** Make a note on your media advisory that electronic photos are available or include a high-quality 5 X 7 glossy black and white print. Electronic photos are ideal for small weekly, monthly, and newsletter publications. Ask the publication in advance if you can send photos electronically and, if so, in which file format they prefer. Dailies and large publications may send their own photographer.
- ❑ **Quotable Quotes:** Prepare a list of remarks that influential community leaders have made about your program or organization. Editors can use these in their coverage without calling for permission. The quotes also serve as an endorsement.
- ❑ **Letters of Community Support.**
- ❑ **Proclamations:** See page 48 of this guide for a template to follow in creating a proclamation from a governor, mayor, or other elected official.
- ❑ **Speeches:** When one of your key spokespersons will present at a major meeting, conference, or convention, include copies of the speech in the press kit. Additionally, including a sheet with highlights and key quotes from the speech—a “sound bite” sheet—will increase the opportunity for media coverage.

Using B-Roll and Photographs

B-Roll

B-roll is the background video that runs while a news reporter is narrating a story on television news. BETA format is most commonly used for B-roll news footage, but most stations can accept DVD recordings. Use of B-roll helps assure that TV reporters effectively convey key messages. Many television stations do not have stock footage of people performing different types of healthy activities. Providing them with broadcast quality B-roll can help them deliver appropriate messages to their audiences.

B-roll is ideal for television news, because it provides images that match stories.

A television station might use B-roll during a news segment about the importance of exercise and a healthy diet in preventing obesity. The messages the viewer hears will point out the importance of exercise and eating well. At the same time, B-roll of an exercise class, a family biking, a team playing a sporting event, or people shopping for healthy foods can be shown.

Photographs

Print media are always looking for photographs that tell a good story. The pictures must be of impeccable quality for media use. For best results, follow these tips:

- When possible, hire professional photo journalists with trained eyes to cover major events.
- Limit a group photo to four people. If you have lots of people, divide them up. The faces will be visible and the caption line will be shorter.
- When taking a large group photo, make sure to get the names and titles of each person in the photograph. Local newspapers will not print the photograph without the identity of each person.
- Make sure that the background ties into the situation or is simple. A group photo against a crowd does not work.
- Provide photographs electronically. It is best to find out the file type preferred by the media outlet, i.e., PDF file, CD-ROM, diskette, or the old-fashioned 5"x7" glossy.
- Electronic photos are ideal for small weekly and monthly publications. Dailies and larger publications usually send out a photo-journalist.
- Each subject of your photographs should complete the photo release form on page 54.

B-Roll and Photographs Evaluation Tips:

- Keep track of when and how many times B-roll or photographs are used, for what topic, and by what media source.
- Estimate the number of people exposed (circulation, viewers, or listenership) through radio, print, and television coverage using the media impressions templates on pages 18, 20, and 22.

Pitching a Story

Editors and reporters constantly need material, and you have a good, newsworthy story about your program. To bring these two elements together, you need to pitch the story idea to a decision maker with an angle of interest for the media outlet's audience. Offer to supply necessary statistics, quotes, interviews with experts, photos, etc. You may submit the pitch via telephone, letter, or e-mail, but it is best to follow up with a phone call. For information on writing an e-mail pitch, please see page 39 under "Leveraging New Media Technologies." These simple steps can increase your media coverage:

Preparing a Pitch

- Start with a newsworthy idea. Reporters want to hear immediately the news angle of the pitch. The story should be timely, affect the reporter's audience, and be focused on new information such as a recent study or initiative.
- Make it interesting. Reporters like to know how to develop the story. Providing ideas for additional angles or pre-prepared sidebar materials will help with the pitch. These additions may connect the reporter with individuals who can tell true-life stories; facilitate interviews with authors, scientists, and other officials; and refer the reporter to others participating in the story, such as partners, state and local governments, and health agencies.
- Consider the reporter's audience when giving the pitch. For example, if a radio station targets adults and you have a story about a program to reduce the incidence of childhood asthma, the pitch will focus on parents who may listen to that station.

Making a Verbal Pitch

- Be considerate of the time of day. As a general rule, reporters are more receptive to pitches in the morning, before deadlines loom. They are less likely to take unsolicited calls after 3 p.m. when facing deadlines.
- Identify yourself by name and affiliation.
- Ask if the reporter has time to talk. If not, ask when time is available in the near future.
- Make a 15-second pitch. State why the reporter's audience will care about the story. If a deadline or date is involved, be sure to convey this quickly. Add facts about how the topic affects the local community. Be prepared with the facts, offer to send additional information if the reporter engages in a discussion, and keep the door open for additional calls about other issues.
- Follow through if the reporter asks to talk at another time. Send any promised information immediately. Consider using a courier service or overnight mail if the reporter needs the information quickly.

Writing a Pitch Letter

- Be brief. Try to limit the letter to one page. Media receive dozens of these letters a day, and their reading time is at a premium. Create eye appeal for your letter by writing concise sentences and short paragraphs; use bullet points to enhance readability.
- Write the story lead as the start of the letter. Many effective pitch letters often provide the right framework for the story that you hope will be ultimately written or the television segment that will eventually be produced.
- Provoke the reader. One way to accomplish this is to begin a pitch letter with a question or a startling statistic.
- Don't oversell or make your letter sound like a commercial. Remember, you're not trying to run an advertisement.
- Know what the reporter has been covering and tie your idea to it. Investigate what the target media person has been reporting recently and reflect this knowledge in your pitch letter. You will appear involved in the journalist's activities. Even if the reporter declines your pitch this time, he or she may be more amenable to your next effort.
- Send background materials. A brochure, a press release, a photo, or even an article published in a non-competing media outlet (for example, a trade magazine story if pitching a newspaper) may be enclosed with the letter to provide additional background, if appropriate.
- Close the letter by stating you will follow up by telephone. Your call will be to discuss the story idea with the editor or producer.

Spell out why the story or segment will benefit the media outlet's audience.

Source: Henry, *Marketing Public Relations: The Hows That Make It Work*, 2001, pp. 95-96. (Reprinted by permission from the publisher.)

Pitch Letter Evaluation Tips:

- Keep track of the topics, how many you send out, whom you send them to, and how many placements occur as a result.
- Analyze articles or stories that come about as a result of pitch letters and record the author, media source, and how they are framed.
- Estimate the number of people exposed (circulation, viewers, or listenership) through radio, print, and television coverage using the media impressions templates on pages 18, 20, and 22.

Pitch Letter Template

[Place on your letterhead]

Date:

Name of newspaper
Newspaper address
Newspaper fax number
E-mail address

Dear *[Insert media contact's name here]*:

First Paragraph: Begin your letter with information that will persuade the targeted media outlet to cover the story that you are pitching. The first paragraph should briefly explain why this news is important to local readers, listeners, or viewers. To quickly capture the journalist's attention, it is a good idea to begin your letter with hard-hitting statistics or a thought-provoking question.

Second Paragraph: The body of your letter should highlight statistics or key messages that are specific to your program. Also, you can describe your projects and activities and explain how they will affect the local community.

Third Paragraph: Provide background material and cite how your program can help provide solutions to the problem. You also can offer to arrange an interview with your spokesperson or with individuals who have benefitted from your services. In closing, state that you (or a program executive) are available for an interview and re-emphasize the importance of covering this news story.

Sincerely,

[Your signature here]

Name (typed)
Title(s)
Name of organization
Telephone
E-mail Address

Standard Boilerplate About Your Organization:

[Insert brief description of your program]. For more information about [your program name], please visit [insert your program's web address] or call [insert phone number].

Choosing and Training Media Spokespersons

Seek out spokespersons who can describe your issues in a precise, professional, and personal manner. Spokespersons can most effectively

- Deliver your messages.
- Promote your program.
- Become an authoritative source for the media.

Key Considerations

When recruiting your media spokespersons, look for experts in various fields. Identify health care professionals who can speak about your health issue. Also, look at folks in your community who are active participants, such as a teacher implementing a training module with 4th graders. Real stories help journalists better understand issues and highlight their impact on the local community.

Spokesperson Qualifications

Typically, a spokesperson should be

- Eloquent and concise.
- Able to memorize key messages without making them sound rehearsed.
- Able to shift to various conversation styles. For example, television may want sound bites and brevity, whereas print and radio may want more of a narrative story.
- Free of high-profile publicity on sensitive issues related to his or her personal or professional business matters.
- Accessible in case a media interview comes up at the last minute. A reporter may ask you at 4 p.m. for someone to interview early the next morning.
- Aware of his or her role as a representative of your program during the interview. Spokespersons must clearly understand that they are not promoting their own business or company.
- Willing to sign a Photography/Broadcast Consent and Release Form, indicating that they are comfortable with conducting such interviews and are aware the media will use their photo, film them in-studio, or record their voice for promotional purposes. Please see page 54 for the form.

Media Spokespersons Evaluation Tips:

- Compile a file of media spokespersons, including expertise, availability, age, consent and release forms, and training provided.
- Record when and where media spokespersons participate in media events and analyze articles or stories that come about as a result of media spokespersons' participation.
- Record the author, the media source, and how the story is framed.

Spokespersons Training Checklist

- Educate them about your organizational or program goals, objectives, activities, and key messages.
- Discuss the specific story pitch and how it ties into their specialty.
- Review the press kit materials with them and share information about what items reporters will typically receive.
- Review the Photography/Broadcast Consent and Release Form (have it signed).
- Open lines of communications and a means for communicating before and after the media interviews.
- Convey that it is okay (and better) to say, "I do not know the answer to that.... It's really a good question and should be directed to...."
- Provide all the details that you can possibly give him or her pertinent to the appearance:
 - Is the interview live, pre-taped, or a live remote?
 - How long is the interview?
 - Will the interview air multiple times? On what days? During what times?
 - Who is the reporter for the interview? For television, who is the segment producer?
 - Who should they call if they want to add, change, or edit a comment? (Is it you or the media interviewer?)
 - What feedback do you want from the spokesperson, and when would you like the feedback?
 - Provide potential questions the reporter/interviewer may ask the spokesperson.
 - Offer guidelines on appropriate dress for the interview, especially for television.
- If you select a spokesperson who speaks a different language, you will need to plan with the reporter to have a translator present.
- If you select a spokesperson with special needs, such as one who has a physical or mental disability, make sure he or she will be able to access the building comfortably and that the restroom facilities are handicapped-accessible, etc.
- If you select a spokesperson who is a patient in a hospital, assisted living center, or nursing home facility, request permission from the facility to take photographs or video footage within their facilities. Often they do not mind, especially if the name of their facility is included in the piece.
- If you select minors under the age of 18 as spokespersons, recognize that many parents are highly sensitive about protecting the identity of their children. A reporter conducting an interview with a minor should not reveal the last name of the child or, in some cases, the town in which the child resides. Additionally, a parent or guardian will have to co-sign the consent and release form.

Leveraging New Media Technologies

There are a wide range of technologies to support today's public and media relations functions. While the Internet is most commonly used, other technologies are still emerging, such as video press releases and satellite media tours. However, Web sites are the most basic media tools used today.

Developing a User-Friendly Web Site

Developing an effective Web site takes considerable research, planning, and teamwork. Here are some tips from the experts:

- Know your audience. Design your site with stakeholders, target populations, and the press in mind. Ask them what they want.
- Teamwork is a must. Work with other departments, Webmasters, and technical experts from management information systems (MIS) or information technology (IT) to design the Web site jointly.
- Keep it simple. Web site graphics should be crisp, attractive, and simple. Elaborate graphics such as large photos and charts slow the download time for users with limited bandwidth.
- Follow the three-click rule. Do not bury data. Make sure essential data are no more than three clicks away from your front page.
- Use hypertext markup language (HTML) for text. HTML is universally recognized by all Web browsers. It loads quickly and can be read immediately.
- Use fewer colors. An attractive site can be created by using a single, strong accent color with black and shades of a second color. Avoid overusing bright colors in backgrounds.
- Keep it current. An out-of-date site undermines the credibility of the organization. Make sure your own data and data from third parties are updated each day.
- Encourage feedback. Your Web site should give the user multiple ways to reach the organization: phone/fax numbers, e-mail addresses, Web site response form, and a postal address.

Source: Wilcox, *Public Relations: Writing and Media Techniques*, 2005, p.392.
(Reprinted by permission from Allyn and Bacon.)

Tips for Your Web Site Newsroom

When developing your local program's Web site, it is important to have a place that media gatekeepers, consumers, and constituents can visit for general news about your program.

- Make information easy to access, with user-friendly pull down menus.
- Clearly label the section "Newsroom."
- Post press releases in your Newsroom and update regularly.
- Make sure the press release is the same version sent to the press via mail, fax, e-mail, etc.

How to Write an Internet-Ready Press Release

A talented press release writer can capture your interest within a few sentences. Web experts advise that you have only 10 seconds to make your point. When you are writing your press release to send via the Internet,

- ✓ Use the release as a teaser to entice the reporter to visit your local program's Web site.
 - ✓ Introduce the press release in your e-mail "RE:" line with information that identifies what the release is about.
 - ✓ Do not send the release as an attachment; send it to your contact within the body of the e-mail.
 - ✓ Do not blind-carbon-copy (BCC) several reporters. Their systems filters will send the e-mail into their spam folder or block the e-mail completely from being received.
 - ✓ Provide a contact name, phone number, e-mail address, and URL for additional information above the headline or at the bottom of the release.
 - ✓ Use bulleted points to convey your key messages.
 - ✓ Include your contact information in the release.
- (Wilcox, 2001)

Guidelines for Pitching Stories by E-mail

Media relations specialists frequently pitch story ideas by e-mail. Many reporters, producers, editors, and various media gatekeepers prefer this method over letters, faxes, or even phone calls. Caution: you should not pitch your story via e-mail to your media contact unless you have an established relationship with the reporter and know that he or she likes to receive e-mail pitches. When pitching via e-mail,

- ✓ Be direct in what you have to offer your media contact.
- ✓ Be concise with your pitch.
- ✓ Write a possible lead for the story.
- ✓ Write the pitch into the body of the e-mail in case the media contact does not open your attachment.
- ✓ Do not send "blast" e-mails to your media contacts. If you utilize the "BCC" or the "TO" field with several contacts, it will be filtered into spam.
- ✓ Tailor your pitch to contacts who align themselves with certain topics.
- ✓ Establish a good communications chain with your media contacts and know what their preferences are (phone calls, e-mails, faxes, letters, in-person meetings, etc.).
- ✓ Be prepared to tell them whether or not they will have an exclusive to the story. Exclusives are pitched to only one news outlet in your community, and no other media source is given the details of the story.

Leveraging New Media Technologies Evaluation Tips:

- Keep track of the types of technologies you use and which seem to be the most effective for given situations.
- If you have a Web site, be sure to reference the Web site on other materials and keep track of hits.

Suggested Community Outreach Activities

Your local community can customize the following activities for a particular Health Day/Month or special event to inform the public about the importance of your program's focus areas. These activities can be tailored to meet the specific health promotion needs in your community.

Think about the timing of the activity, how the audience will receive it, and whether it will help reach the goals of the outreach effort. Does it take advantage of media exposure already being given to the health topic either locally or nationally? Consider the time and resources needed before beginning any activity. Outreach activities can be done as part of a special event or throughout the year to promote the ongoing work in these areas.

Be creative to maximize exposure and impact of your messages.

- **I hereby declare:** Ask a mayor, tribal leader, or city council member to issue a proclamation declaring a City Health Day/Month as part of a news event or special event that partners attend and promote. A sample proclamation is included on page 48 of this guide.
- **Create posters:** Hang posters in the lobbies of day care centers, shopping malls, public libraries, and other high-traffic areas. Be sure to include a "call to action" and contact information.
- **Link up:** Network in cyberspace with related organizations, agencies, and businesses to include brief Health Day/Month prevention information on their Web sites with a hyperlink to your URL. Send out a special e-mail about Health Day/Month to everyone in your address book to promote the message. Ask your partners, workgroups, and employees to place a message at the bottom of all outgoing e-mails during the promotional period.
- **Put it in the bag:** Ask local merchants to include your organization's educational materials in their shopping bags or place "take one" displays at the cash register or exit doors. Design eye-appealing flyers to promote healthy eating and active lifestyles. Ask merchants to include your logo and tagline on their next print run of shopping bags or, where appropriate, request floor display space to promote your messages.
- **Speak to the community:** Inform local civic groups, businesses, faith-based institutions, and professional associations about spokespersons who are available to present what your program is doing in the community. Distribute educational materials, and ask attendees to join your mailing list. Seek opportunities in these forums to establish new partnerships to promote your programs.

- **Start a network of faith:** Write brief articles on your program's outreach activities for churches, synagogues, and other faith-based institutions to include in newsletters, bulletins, and announcements. Solicit their support the week leading up to your special event. Provide relevant materials to distribute to the congregations.
- **Leverage athletic events:** Athletic events provide great opportunities to promote health information, whether professional, amateur, college, high school, or community. Identify a sporting event during Health Day/Month where you can conduct your campaign. Ideas for campaign activities include setting up table displays, making public announcements during halftime or time outs, placing messages on the jumbo-tron or scoreboard, and selling healthy fruit and nuts at concession stands.

For an example of community outreach activities, you can visit the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Web site at <http://www.mchb.hrsa.gov/childhealthday/guide.htm#Reach>.

Outreach Activity Evaluation Tips:

- Log the date and frequency of each activity or special event.
- Keep track of the key messages promoted and the context in which they are used.
- Keep a log of specific collateral materials used and the number and distribution channel(s) for each event or activity.
- Estimate the number of people exposed (circulation, viewers, or listenership) through radio, print, and television coverage using the media impressions templates on pages 18, 20, and 22.

Letter to the Editor Placement Tips

A Letter to the Editor (LTE) is a powerful tool in your community's news market. LTEs are written to comment on or add additional information to a story, such as what an organization is doing about the issue. LTEs are also often written to express strong opinions on issues.

Editorial pages provide a public forum for reaching your intended audiences, such as health care professionals, educators, general consumers, partnering agencies, policy advocates, etc. Use this tool to give your issues and program a strong voice. When creating an LTE,

- Limit your letter to 200–300 words on one page with a handwritten signature from the author of the letter. To establish credibility, submit letters bearing the logos of your organization or program.
- The LTE should be written or signed by a credible and leading participant in your program, such as the chair of your workgroup or a distinguished local health care professional, community partner, or educator with whom you work closely.
- Include contact information for your organization under a separate cover so that a media representative may verify or clarify the content.
- Do not include graphs, photos, or illustrations. They will not be considered for publication.
- Send your LTE via U.S. Mail or deliver in person rather than by e-mail.
- The author (person who signs the letter) or your organization should submit no more than three LTEs on the same topic for effective consideration.
- Submission of your LTE is no guarantee that it will be published. The editor of the publication reserves the right to shorten or edit the content of letters that are printed.
- Check the Letters to the Editor page for submission deadlines and other guidelines that are specific to that publication.

- Target your submission to publications that have a major impact at the state level or community level. Consider the circulation numbers for the newspaper and its target demographics.

- Prior to submitting your LTE, consider statewide and nationwide news being covered in the local marketplace. Opinion pieces on chronic illnesses or related issues, such as air pollution, offer opportunities to draw your local editor's attention to your LTE and to include a "call to action" for the community.

- When your LTE has been published, ask the author to write a handwritten note thanking the editor.

Letter-to-the-Editor Evaluation Tips:

- Keep track of the topics of LTEs, how many you send out, whom you send them to, and how many placements occur as a result and in what media outlets.
- Estimate the number of people exposed (circulation, viewers, or listenership) through radio, print, and television coverage using the media impressions templates on pages 18, 20, and 22.

Letter to the Editor Template

[Place on your letterhead with your logo]

Date:

Name of newspaper
Newspaper address
Newspaper fax number
E-mail address

RE: *[Insert headline and author if you are referencing a story in your local newspaper]*

Dear Editor: *[This should be general. You do not have to include the name of the editor.]*

First Paragraph: Begin your letter by stating why you are writing. If you want to challenge points in previous articles or letters, reference the original documents and briefly state your point of view. To add information to a previous article or letter, again reference the original article and briefly cite the new data. (This last approach is best used when promoting something that your program is doing about the issue.)

Second Paragraph: The second paragraph of your letter should convey some brief background material. You can add supporting information such as statistics or results of studies. You also can point out what your program is doing about the issue.

Third Paragraph: Your opinion should be included in the third paragraph, where you also summarize what you want readers to know about the issue. In conclusion, re-emphasize the main point of your letter and tell the readers what steps you want them to take to address the issue.

Sincerely,

[Your signature here]

Name (typed)
Title(s)
Name of organization
Telephone
E-mail Address

Standard Boilerplate About Your Organization:

[Insert brief description of your program]. For more information about [your program name], please visit [insert your program's web address] or call [insert phone number].

Opinion-Editorial (Op-Ed)

An Opinion-Editorial (Op-Ed) should be written as if it were a stand-alone piece and should be accompanied by a pitch letter. Check with each newspaper to determine the requirements for Op-Eds. Most are limited to between 500 and 800 words. Choose an appropriate person to sign the Op-Ed. Community leaders and decision makers, health officials, and physicians are excellent choices. After sending the Op-Ed, follow up within three days to determine whether it is being considered for publication. Editors reserve the right to make minor changes. Refer to "Letter to the Editor Placement Tips" on page 43 for tips that also apply to Op-Ed.

On the next page is a template to follow when drafting an Op-Ed about a health problem such as obesity, diabetes, asthma, or the high incidence of smoking.

Opinion-Editorial Evaluation Tips:

- Keep track of the topics of LTEs, how many you send out, whom you send them to, and how many placements occur as a result, and in what media outlets.
- Estimate the number of people exposed (circulation, viewers, or listenership) through radio, print, and television coverage using the media impressions templates on pages 18, 20, and 22.

Op-Ed Template

[Place on your letterhead with your logo]

Date:

Contact:

Telephone:

E-mail:

Web site:

Title: Give your Op-Ed a title that emphasizes the main point and attracts attention. The title is subject to rewriting by the newspaper.

Opening: The introductory paragraph should engage the reader, clearly state the issue at hand, and begin with a statement of fact, a true-life story from a third-person perspective, or a reference to current events.

Body: This paragraph should explain why the issue is important. Give overall statistics that explain the extent of the problem. Use local statistics to help the readers empathize with the situation. Tell why this subject matters. Use projections to indicate what will happen if nothing is done or if the current situation continues.

The body of the Op-Ed also should suggest a solution to the issue. Illustrate how this solution has worked for other issues or in other areas and demonstrate how it can be implemented and the expected results. Describe local efforts and results if they are available.

Call to Action: Ask readers or decision makers for support in a specific way.

Conclusion: Wrap up your Op-Ed by referencing any personal stories used in the opening paragraphs. Give a clear picture of the situation with the solution in place. Re-emphasize the main point.

Standard Boilerplate About Your Organization:

[Insert brief description of your program]. For more information about [your program name], please visit [insert your program's web address] or call [insert phone number].

Proclamation Template

CITY OF *[Insert Name]*
A Proclamation by
[Insert name], Mayor

WHEREAS, in the year *[XXXX]*, in *[state or city]*, *[insert number or percent of people]* will be diagnosed with diabetes, and *[insert number]* will die from it,

WHEREAS, in the year *[XXXX]*, the percentage of adults with diagnosed diabetes nationwide increased *[XX]%* from *[year]* to *[year]*,

WHEREAS Native Americans, African Americans, and Hispanics are about 2 to 3 times more likely than whites to have diabetes,

WHEREAS the economic cost of diabetes in *[year]* was *[XXXX]*,

WHEREAS heart disease and stroke are responsible for more than *[XX]%* of the deaths of Americans with diabetes,

WHEREAS prevention of diabetes is possible, and prevention of complications is possible among those already affected by the disease,

WHEREAS early detection and timely treatment of diabetic eye disease can reduce severe vision loss by an estimated 50–60%,

WHEREAS treatment to better control blood pressure can reduce heart disease and stroke by 33% to 50% and diabetes-related kidney failure by 33%,

WHEREAS recent study results have shown that a healthy diet and moderate, regular physical activity can reduce a person's risk of developing Type II diabetes by about 60%,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, *[insert name]*, Mayor of the City of *[insert city]*, do hereby proclaim *[month]*, *[year]* as:

Diabetes Awareness Month

and urge all individuals in *[insert city]* to become aware of their own risks for diabetes, talk to their health care providers about diabetes, and, whenever appropriate, get screened for the disease. I further encourage all residents to become involved in the war on diabetes through this City's education and advocacy initiatives.

Signature

Date

Proclamation Evaluation Tips:

- Keep track of the topics of proclamations, when they are used, at which events they are used, and who signed the proclamation.
- Estimate the number of people exposed (circulation, viewers, or listenership) through radio, print, and television coverage using the media impressions templates on pages 18, 20, and 22.

Hosting a Press Conference

A press conference is reserved for releasing very important news, launching a new initiative or program, or making announcements of major importance. Use discretion in calling a press conference, because the news media will expect to hear an announcement of major interest.

The discussion about whether to hold a press conference should cover the following topics:

- Is the announcement newsworthy?
- Is the announcement important enough to attract media representatives who will attend the event and report on it?
- Do you have sufficient lead time to plan for the event?
- Do you have the necessary financial resources to hold a press conference? Consider costs such as room rental for the event, printing and postage for press kits, and photography.
- Do you have the human resources you need to plan and carry out the press conference (e.g., writing and sending the press release, making follow-up calls, managing logistics)?

Press conferences can take place at a variety of locations, from town halls to hotel conference rooms. Keep in mind the space required for camera setups and crews. Remote locations are also possible. Most television stations have trucks for recording remote events. Press breakfasts allow reporters almost a full day to work on stories before evening news or deadlines.

Press Conference Evaluation Tips:

- Keep track of the topics of press conferences, how many you call, whom you invite to attend, who actually attends, and their affiliations.
- Analyze articles or stories that come about as a result of press conferences and record the author, the media source, and how they are framed (the way the news media presents the issue in order to shape how people think about the issue).
- Estimate the number of people exposed (circulation, viewers, or listenership) through radio, print, and television coverage using the media impressions templates on pages 18, 20, and 22.

Press Conference Checklist and Timeline

Press conferences can be planned on short notice to capitalize on breaking news. If you have some time to plan, consider the following guidelines:

One month in advance

- Decide on an objective and key messages for the event.
- Decide on a newsworthy "hook" for the event.
- Line up speakers and establish a date and time for the conference.
- Secure a location for the press conference.
- Develop the conference agenda. Include time for questions and answers at the end of the event.
- Develop any audio-visuals for the conference (charts, ads, exhibits, signs, and so on) and arrange for photography.

Two weeks in advance

- Develop a press kit that contains a press release, background on the issue being covered, speaker biographies, and an agenda. Include a business card for future contact.
- Draft talking points with speakers.
- Develop a list of photographs needed for post-event print coverage.

One week to three days before

- Send a media advisory at least three days before the event.
- Call reporters to ascertain whether they will attend the event; ask for any special needs that must be accommodated. Make badges, if desired, stating attendees' names and professional organizations.
- Deliver press kits to any journalists who requested materials in advance and confirm photographer and shot-list.

At the event

- Have a reporter sign-in sheet to capture attendee information. Obtain their business cards if possible.
- Introduce each speaker.
- After the press conference, be available to answer questions from reporters. The questions may range from requests for additional documents and information to how to arrange interviews with the speakers or others.

After the event

- Contact all attendees the next day to thank them for coming, and ask if they need any additional information. Send press kits to all invited parties who did not attend. If time allows, follow up with these individuals to facilitate future contacts.
- Save any clippings, transcripts, or tapes of stories that were printed or aired for future reference.

Glossary of Media Terms

BETA (Betacam or Super-BETA): BETA is a professional broadcast format of high resolution strength and quality. This format is most frequently preferred and used by hundreds of television stations across the country. The size of the tape is 155mm x 95mm x 25mm. Many cable outlets prefer this format as well.

B-roll: Video footage that can be used in production of a television news story on the issue. B-roll footage is generally provided free of charge to reporters upon request. B-roll could be a tape of an event or random film of related scenes (e.g., pollution sites, smoke and dust, or car exhaust for stories about asthma).

Demographics: Statistics relating to human populations, including size and density, race, ethnicity, growth, distribution, migration, and births, and their effects on social and economic conditions.

Earned Media: Coverage of the story that was received without paying for media placements.

Embargo: The giving or receiving of instruction to not release the information (a press release, media advisory, or any form of newsworthy information) until a specific day and time because of situations related to national news or within your state's media market. The words EMBARGOED UNTIL usually appear at the top of the draft of the press release in capital letters along with the specific day and time to release.

Exclusive: A news item/story released to only one publication or broadcaster giving that specific media outlet the sole right to publish or air the content and details of the story.

Op-Ed: Op-Ed literally means "Opposite the Editorial Page" or "Opinion Editorial." It is an opinion piece written by anyone who is not a regular member of the newspaper editorial board. Members of the community, advocacy groups, policy makers, and others are encouraged and invited to submit well-written opinion pieces which, if accepted, will be published in the newspaper. Op-Eds are subject to slight revisions and must be timely and topical.

Press Kit: A packet of documents (usually placed in a folder) that address an issue. Press kits usually contain a press release, background information, statistics and graphics, fact sheets, photographs, and other materials. Biographies of speakers or other appropriate individuals may also be included in a press kit. It is also known as a media kit.

Public Service Announcement (PSA): A form of advertising for radio, television, billboards, Internet, or other media outlet that is delivered free of charge by the media. PSAs are often run on radio and television at off-peak times, and their placement is not guaranteed. Many media outlets commit to delivering a certain amount of public service advertising each year, so this is a very promising method to explore.

Satellite Media Tour (SMT): A series of pre-booked, live, one-on-one interviews, usually in a short time span on a specific topic, that place a spokesperson on television from one location.

Photography/Broadcast Consent & Release Form

[Place on your letterhead]

Please fill out the form and write clearly. By signing the consent and release, you are releasing permissions for use of photographs owned by you, photographs to be taken, and interviews, to include your voice input via a live or taped segment interview on radio or television, for the purpose of promoting [insert program name].

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

I/we give our consent and release to utilize photos and live or taped interviews, including my or members of my party's voices, for various promotional uses for [insert program name].

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Minors under the age of 18 (requires signature of parent or guardian)

Check here if this applies.

Write name of minor(s) and age(s):

Name: _____ Age : _____

Name: _____ Age: _____

Signature of parent or guardian: _____

Print name of parent or guardian: _____

Date: _____

Internal Use Name of Program: _____ Material/Program publicized or promoted: _____ Copy of materials/tapes/photos on file: _____ YES _____ NO Initial _____
--

Resources for News Distribution and Clipping Services

Cision (formerly Bacon's Information, Inc.)

www.us.cision.com

Cision provides the following services:

- Research the media to target specific news professionals and media outlets.
- Contact the media to disseminate news announcements and key messages.
- Monitor a broad base of media for related news.
 - Comprehensive coverage of print, broadcast, and Internet media.
 - Receive articles multiple times a day or by mail multiple times a week.
 - Opt to receive media coverage within 24 hours of publication.
 - Notification via e-mail when exposure has been generated in the target media.
 - View articles or broadcast segments online in a range of formats, including full text, or actual image.
- Sort and search articles online using a multitude of criteria.
- Evaluate media results through quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

BurrellesLuce

www.burrellesluce.com

BurrellesLuce is a print monitoring service that provides complete coverage of every daily and non-daily newspaper in the United States and comprehensive monitoring of consumer and trade magazines, television, and radio. BurrellesLuce editors review all clips before they are submitted to the client to ensure that they are relevant to the client's needs.

Business Wire

www.businesswire.com

Business Wire is a commercial news wire service that is affiliated with more than 60 key news services. Business Wire specializes in the dissemination of disclosure and publicity press releases, photos, and other content to media outlets, reporters, investors, regulatory agencies, Web systems, and other audiences.

Media Distribution Services

www.mdsconnect.com

Media Distribution Services provides the following services:

- Creation of a media database.
- Press kits.
- Printing and mailing.
- Graphic design.
- Assembly and distribution of products or materials.
- Blast faxes and blast e-mails.

NewsUSA

www.newsusa.com

NewsUSA provides the following services:

- Build media campaigns with story ideas and direct editorial contact.
- Create and distribute media-ready features to a network of media outlets.
- Monitor monthly usage by newspapers and radio stations.
- Provide detailed reports and actual clips via hard-copy and electronic format.
- Nationwide media access.
- Enhance product and brand awareness.

North American Precis Syndicate

www.napsinfo.com

North American Precis Syndicate (NAPS) is a feature distributor that takes information about a company, product, service, or organization and creates and distributes the story to more than 10,000 newspapers, 1,000 TV stations, and 6,500 radio stations throughout the United States. NAPS tracks the story to see how well it did and gives the results to the client.

PR Newswire

www.prnewswire.com

PR Newswire specializes in the electronic delivery of press releases and information directly from companies, institutions, and agencies to the media, financial community, and consumers. PR Newswire's services also include targeting, evaluation, and measurement services.

VMS

www.vmsinfo.com

VMS provides comprehensive, up-to-the-minute summaries of broadcast news coverage and advertising in all 210 designated market areas (DMAs) in the United States for broadcast, Internet, radio, print, and out-of-home media sources. These summaries denote specific interviews, highlight the visuals shown, and provide details regarding segment length and a brief synopsis of the focus of the segment. VMS tapes every day in nearly 100 cities across the United States and Canada and can record in any other city upon request. In partnership with BurrellesLuce, VMS also monitors print advertising from more than 700 consumer magazines, trade magazines, and newspapers, and can pull ads from more than 17,000 publications.

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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

