



MEDIA ACCESS GUIDE

Help Seniors Live Better, Longer:
Prevent Brain Injury

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION



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WORKING EFFECTIVELY WITH THE MEDIA

Basic Media Relations: Building Publicity for Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury

One of the most effective ways to raise awareness about the *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* initiative is to work with the news media. Media representatives are vital partners in raising awareness and knowledge of an issue. In many cases, they are the single most effective mode for delivering key messages to targeted populations.

Gaining media access is a daunting task with so many organizations vying for publicity from media outlets. What can you do to increase the visibility of the *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* in your community and land news coverage? You can start by practicing proven media relations strategies. This *Media Access Guide* and its components will provide step-by-step instructions for developing a media initiative and galvanizing the public's interest in fall-related traumatic brain injury (TBI) prevention, recognition, and response among older adults.

What is Media Relations?

The term is widely used and often misinterpreted. It basically means working

with news professionals to seek publicity for your issue, program, or event.

Becoming an expert in media relations means that you know:

- Who to contact;
- How to contact them;
- How to build solid working relationships with news professionals; and
- How to use those connections to earn news coverage for your initiative.

As you learn how to access the media contacts in your community, you will discover how they can be essential in disseminating information about your initiative. As program officer or the point person for your community's *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* initiative, it is your responsibility to let the media know when you have a newsworthy story. Your ability to build productive media relations will be greatly enhanced if you acquire a reputation as a responsive, reliable, and credible source of information among media representatives. (Read more on this topic on pages 5-6)

What are the Benefits of Engaging the Media?

There are multiple benefits of engaging the media as part of the *Help Seniors*

Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury initiative. Media coverage will help you make the most of the initiative's resources. Media reaches more individuals than a single, paid advertisement, and the media can be your most efficient way to get information to the largest audience possible in the least amount of time. Consider the following:

- When a media outlet publishes one story about your community's *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* initiative, you have gained what is known as "earned media." This means that one article costs your organization absolutely nothing but the time it took to organize and distribute the press materials.
- On the other hand, a paid advertisement would have cost your organization several thousands of dollars and may not have reached as many people in your target audience. This earned media or free coverage is obtained by having good media relations strategies and securing the media's interest in your initiative or story angles.

Getting the Media Interested in *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* Messages

It is true press materials are the cornerstones of any media campaign. But press materials alone are not enough to get the media excited about your initia-

tive. Ultimately, you will have to pitch your story angle(s) to the media to obtain coverage. A journalist may find your initiative interesting, but actually getting the journalist to write a story, conduct a public affairs interview, or broadcast a news segment will require relationship building and persistent follow-up. The following suggestions will help you present your story ideas to the media.

- Provide useful, timely, and accurate information that could be used in general news stories or in-depth feature pieces.
- Make yourself a valuable resource by providing statistics (local if possible) to help media representatives better understand TBI in older adults and how your community is addressing the issue.
- Think carefully about your messages. Consider your needs and purposes. Write them down, and then decide upon the most effective method of reaching the public.
- Airtime on news programs can be difficult to get. To make your story compelling, localize issues, such as the benefits of helping older adults to remain safe and independent, and show how the *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* initiative is relevant to your community.
- Provide human-interest story angles. One approach might be to offer an interview with a child of

an older adult who is taking steps to reduce his or her parents' risk for TBI, or arrange an opportunity for the media to observe a class of older adults taking Tai Chi.

Understanding the Diverse Roles of Media Professionals

Once you have finalized your key messages, you need to determine what media sources to target. Some organizations send press releases to every broadcaster and newspaper in the community. However, you will be more productive if you conduct a thorough assessment of the media in your community and specifically pursue the outlets and news professionals with the capacity to reach your target audience.

Over time you will begin to understand that your media contacts will vary from story to story. It will require some re-

search to determine the appropriate person to contact at different media outlets because the process varies per medium. In the print media you might work with general assignment reporters, reporters assigned to "beats" (or topics of interest, such as lifestyle or health, etc.), or section editors. For radio, you may target the news director or the general manager, depending on the size of the station's staff. In television, you could work with the public service director, health segment reporter or producer, field reporter, news anchor, or general manager. Also, you can pitch multiple story angles to different editors, reporters, and producers based on their beats.

To help you get started, the following page is a tip sheet that includes general position titles and responsibilities for print and broadcast media that can help you make the right contact.

Who's Who in the Media

Position	Responsibilities
Assignment Editor:	Coordinates the day-to-day assignment of stories and manages random calls to the newsroom.
Calendar Editor:	Organizes community event listings and announcements. Calendar listings are good sources of free publicity for events that are open to the public. Typically calendar editors are contacts within magazine and newspaper outlets, but they also can be found within radio and TV stations.
City Desk Editor:	Handles news assignments for urban areas.
Editor:	Assigns stories at newspapers and magazines. Most assign editors to specific sections, such as education, health, entertainment, lifestyle and so on.
Freelance Writer or Photographer:	Writes and produces news stories or takes photographs for a variety of media outlets without being employed by a single organization. Many editors and TV producers have a regular group of freelancers that they work with often.
General Manager:	Manages and directs the operations of the entire TV or radio station, ranging from advertising to news and program production.
Managing Editor:	Manages the section editors and operations of the whole newspaper.
Producer:	Researches, writes, and edits news stories and oversees camera crew for broadcast stories. In network news, this person works closely with reporters, and in some cases does much of the work to create a story. (At local stations, news reporters are responsible for this process themselves.) Producers also decide which stories appear on the news and in what order.
Promotions Director:	Develops media sponsorships and partnerships to promote the stations charitable commitment and positive image.
Public or Community Affairs Director:	Oversees the airing of PSAs and general community relations, such as arranging newsroom tours. In some cases, this person also handles media sponsorships.
Reporter:	Conducts interviews and writes stories for newspapers and magazines. Broadcast reporters deliver stories on the air.

Making the Right Connections

Because there are so many media sources - daily and weekly newspapers, radio stations aimed at specific age groups, and TV stations broadcasting in different languages - selecting specific media outlets to target can be overwhelming. To garner good media coverage for your *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* initiative, you must first identify and make contact with the right news professionals and then provide them with compelling story angles.

To identify the right media contacts, begin by identifying and prioritizing your best media prospects. Focus on outlets that appeal to the populations you are trying to reach, such as adults with parents 75 and older, adults 75 and older, or caregivers of older adults.

Once you have identified the best media prospects, build a detailed me-

dia contact list or database. An up-to-date contact list is an invaluable tool, because media professionals often change beats and positions. Keep notes next to the contact's name to help identify specific issues that person likes to cover or indicate whether this person has an interest in topics pertaining to health, aging, and caring for aging adults/parents.

It is best to update your contact list at least twice a year to ensure that it remains current. You can do this by checking your local White or Yellow Pages telephone directories, or the Chamber of Commerce in your community may provide a free listing of major news outlets in the area. Also, professional news services can provide software to help develop and maintain media lists. Your local library may have copies of these resources. Check with your reference librarian for assistance. Once you have a current database and

Your contact list should include:

Contact's name	_____
Media affiliation	_____
Job title	_____
Telephone	_____
Fax number	_____
E-mail address	_____
Mailing address	_____
Beat/topic of interest	_____
Articles or citations that resulted from contact	_____
Date of last contact	_____

know whom you want to target, you are ready to approach the media. The following action steps will help you make the right contacts and land your ultimate story.

- 1. Call the Reporter:** Introduce yourself, and state why you are 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 answer any questions about your story. You may even need to revise your pitch.
- 3. Plan a Good Strategy:** Do not use the same news hook for every media outlet. Tailor your pitch to that specific media outlet or reporter. Provide new and fresh ideas about *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury*. Up-to-date news hooks are essential for maintaining long-term media interest.
- 4. Be Ready to Respond:** When local or national stories break on TBI or fall-related injuries and deaths consider writing a letter to the editor or an Op-Ed piece to highlight the issue.
- 5. Keep Your Word:** Building trust with the media is paramount. Do what you said you would

do within the agreed upon time frame. Also, remind your contacts that you are available as a source for future stories.

- 6. Follow-up:** While you may secure coverage after just one interview with some reporters, you may have to contact others several times before they will do a story. Follow up a few weeks later to inquire whether additional information is needed. Also ask if they'll run the story or will be interested in covering future stories.
- 7. Use Common Sense:** If a reporter has requested information from you, it is acceptable to leave up to three voice mails within one business day. Otherwise, do not leave multiple messages within the same day.
- 8. Send Thank You Notes:** Send the journalist a note expressing appreciation.

Good media relations also involve choosing appropriate methods for contacting media representatives. Some journalists prefer talking on the telephone, while others are comfortable receiving information through fax and e-mail. You will learn how your source prefers to communicate as you build a working relationship.

Checklist: Did You Make the Right Contacts?

- Have you thoroughly outlined ways your *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* initiative can create newsworthy events that highlight the importance of preventing, recognizing, and responding to TBI among older adults?
- Are you ready to offer local or regional news angles and background information for stories on ways to prevent and recognize fall-related TBI among older adults?
- Are you prepared to respond to fast-breaking news stories related to TBI among older adults, particularly TBI sustained from a fall?
- Before you call a reporter, do you check your sources to make sure you are reaching out to the right person?
- Have you practiced your telephone or personal approach to media representatives so that you can be brief and have information that can help reporters make sense of the issue(s)?
- Before you email important materials to reporters, are you sure this person likes to work with email correspondence?
- When you make follow-up calls, do you have some good additional facts or a new story angle to encourage journalists to cover your event?
- If a journalist agrees to do a story, are you truly prepared to answer questions and provide materials and appropriate spokespeople to pull together the story?

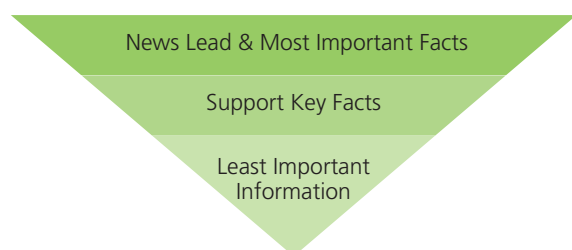


PUBLICITY TOOLS: SAMPLES, TEMPLATES, AND CHECKLISTS

Writing for the Media: Know Your Audience

Now that you have a media strategy, you are ready to develop press materials for your community's *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* initiative. When writing for the media, the key goal is to produce well-written materials with strong messages or story angles. To achieve this, write in newspaper style or use the inverted-pyramid format. What does this mean? Imagine an upside-down pyramid with its base in the air and its point in the sand. The most important information you want to share should go in the base of the pyramid, in the first one or two paragraphs. Additional background and support information, such as the objectives of the initiative should be featured in the body of the document. Materials using this format help media representatives spot vital information quickly and are easy to edit.

The Inverted Pyramid



Is Your Story Newsworthy

In addition to producing well-organized materials, remember that your primary goal is to provide newsworthy information. When writing publicity materials, ask yourself, "Is this story newsworthy?" The media will cover your story or event if it looks like one of the most important or interesting topics scheduled that day. To make your story more interesting than others you should include at least two of the following angles:

- Local interest;
- New information;
- Interesting personalities or VIPs;
- Hot topic;
- Timing/special historical day; and
- Human interest.

Also, be brief, accurate, and to the point. Reporters only pay attention to credible and interesting stories, and your job is to provide them with compelling facts so they can clearly see the "news." One easy way to create a news angle is to tie your story to a new statistic, local celebration, anniversary, or unique community program. Since national newspapers, as well as TV and radio stations, cover national news thoroughly, many local media outlets limit themselves to local news stories. Localizing your press materials will

payoff and increase your opportunity for story placement. Your initiative's news can be localized in several ways, including by state, region, or community. Once you create several local news angles, you can focus on presenting information in a way that compels the media to cover your story.

Organizing Your Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury Press Kit

Press materials are the centerpiece of any media campaign and are similar to first impressions because they create an image of your *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* initiative. You can compile all of your materials in an attractive, large folder or binder. This assembly is referred to as a press kit. These kits are sent to media outlets before an event or can be distributed at press conferences. The compilation of materials also can be distributed electronically or posted on your initiative's website.

The goal of a press kit is to provide the necessary background information a reporter needs to develop stories, but be careful not to go overboard. Press kits should comprise a maximum of 10 documents, including one or two press releases, a fact sheet, biographies of spokespersons or featured speakers, and a media advisory, among other pieces. Here are brief descriptions of the recommended components:

- **Backgrounder/Overview:** A one-page overview that summarizes the mission, objectives, key programs, and partners.
- **Fact Sheet:** A one- or two-page document that includes anecdotal and statistical information that can help reporters develop in-depth articles. Fact sheets should include short paragraphs and also reference ways to find out more information about a topic.
- **Media Advisory:** This document announces an upcoming event and covers the five Ws (who, what, when, where, and why) and tag-along H (how). Media advisories serve as reminders and should be sent about 24 hours before an event.
- **Press Release:** A press release or news release is a one- to two-page document that provides members of the news media useful, accurate, and interesting information about *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury*. The first paragraph should answer all the important questions - who, what, where, when, why, and how. Typically, it is mailed or faxed to assignment editors at newspapers, magazines, radio stations, and TV stations. Press releases can be sent for the purposes of announcing news conferences or identifying resources or spokespeople available to speak about the initiative.

- **Feature or Human Interest Story:** These stories are newsworthy, but are relatively timeless and can run any time. They are longer in format, which allows reporters to more thoroughly explain complex issues or state a point of view.
- **Highlights of Upcoming Events:** This brief listing provides up-to-date information on programs relevant to *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury*. This is usually sent to the calendar editor. Check with the media source on deadlines for submitting calendar items.
- **Biographies of Spokespersons:** Biographies should include only three or four paragraphs on the event's featured speakers or media spokesperson(s).
- **Photographs:** You can include a high-quality, 5 X 7, glossy black and white print, or make a note on the accompanying media advisory stating whether electronic photographs are available. 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 what file format they prefer. Daily publications and large media outlets may send their own photographer or cameraperson to events.
- **Quotable Quotes:** This one-pager contains a list of remarks that spokespersons or influential community leaders have made about the *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* initiative or the importance of preventing, recognizing, and responding to TBI in older adults. Editors can use these quotes in news stories without requesting permission. The quotes also serve as an endorsement of the initiative.
- **Letters of Community Support:** Letters that endorse *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* or stress the importance of helping older adults remain safe and independent can help elevate the status of the initiative.
- **Speeches:** Copies of speeches delivered by *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* spokespersons or well-known supporters may increase the opportunity for news coverage. Additionally, including a sound bite sheet, or a document with key highlights from a speech, may be particularly helpful with the broadcast media.

Preparing Press Releases

A press release is the most efficient and economical way to get your *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* initiative in front of the media. Press releases have an established format, and once you get the hang of writing them, all you have to do is fill in the blanks. The format you will likely use most frequently is the

standard press release that announces news about an upcoming *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* event. Also, a template that you can use to announce your initiative's event is included on pages 14-15.

To help you organize your press release, here are some basic format guidelines:

1. Date Instructions:

"For Immediate Release"

"For Release Before [date]"

"For Release After [date]"

"Embargoed Until [date]"

Use one of the latter three if your press release is of a time sensitive nature. For example, if you are holding an event, you will want to use the "For Release Before [date]" and make sure you include the date for event registration. Also, ensure that you are sensitive to media deadlines, and send your release out well in advance. If you want to distribute the release early but do not want it to be published until a later date, be sure to indicate that at the top of the release with "For Release After [date]" or "Embargoed Until [date]". For example, "Embargoed Until 11 a.m. EST, Wednesday, July 23." Receiving the embargoed press release gives reporters a heads-up on upcoming news that allows them to develop a longer, in-depth news story or feature piece by a certain date.

2. Headline: Write an attention-grabbing headline. Make it benefits-oriented (explain why it would be of interest to the local community) and descriptive. Avoid hype and promotional language - remember, this is a news story.

3. Contact Information: Include as much information as possible here. Make it easy for the media to contact you. Include your phone number, address, company name, fax number, e-mail address, and website URL. Include the hours you are available at the listed phone number and add an after-hours phone number, if applicable.

4. Content: This is the meat of your press release. Again, be brief, accurate, and to the point. Write a benefits-oriented story that highlights the "news" for the editor or reporter who will be reading the release. The first paragraph should answer all the important questions - who, what, where, when, why, and how. Use the "inverted pyramid format" to answer the following questions:

What is the event or news?

Why is it being held?

Who is involved?

What is the local angle?

Where is the event taking place?

5. Ending Your Press Release: The end of your press release is shown by adding ### or (THE END) to the last page of the release. If the

release is more than one page, type the word “MORE” at the bottom center of the first page.

6. Use Standard Newspaper Style:

Use standard newspaper style when writing your release. Keep paragraphs short with an average of four to five lines or 60 words. Avoid jargon. Instead, use layman’s terms or easy to understand explanations.

7. Include: The *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* boilerplate at the end of all press materials. The boilerplate, which is a short paragraph that provides a brief, standard overview of the initiative, reinforces the brand and identity of *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury*. Use the following approved boilerplate in your materials.

Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury is a national initiative developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to raise awareness in children and other caregivers of older adults about ways to prevent, recognize, and respond to fall-related traumatic brain injury (TBI) in adults 75 and older.

Creating an Internet Ready Press Release

A talented press release writer can capture a media representative’s interest within a few sentences. Web experts advise that you have only 10 seconds

to make your point. Here are some pointers to remember when you are writing your press release to send via the Internet or e-mail:

- Utilize the release as a teaser to entice the reporter to visit your website.
- 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 carbon copy (CC) or blind carbon copy (BCC) several reporters. Their systems’ filters will send the e-mail into their spam and may completely block the e-mail from being transmitted.
- Provide a contact name, telephone 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 points.

(Source: Wilcox 2001)

Press Release Evaluation Tips:

- Keep track of the news angles in your press releases, how many releases you distribute, who you send them to, which releases you sent, what kind of coverage you receive, and names of media outlets that provide coverage.
- Analyze media coverage that results directly from a press release, and record the reporter’s name, the media source, and the angle of the story.

Sample Local/Community Press Release

[Place on your letterhead]

EMBARGOED UNTIL [insert date]

Date

Contact:

Telephone:

E-mail:

Website:

**[Insert Organization Name] Hosts [Insert Event Name]
to Help Prevent and Recognize TBI among Seniors**

Activities are Part of National Effort to Keep Older Adults Safe and Independent

[Insert city/state] - To encourage caregivers of older adults to take steps to prevent traumatic brain injury (TBI) caused by falls, [insert organization name], [announced/will host/organized, etc.] [insert event name].

According to **[insert your spokesperson's name]**, the **(event/activity)** is an opportunity to inform caregivers of older adults in **[insert city/state]** about ways to prevent, recognize, and respond to fall-related TBI. Through this **(event/activity)**, we can raise awareness about the seriousness of TBI among older adults and provide their caregivers with useful information and resources about TBI and fall prevention. Falls are the leading cause of TBI; more than one-third of adults age 65 years and older fall each year in the United States.

The event is part of *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury*, a national initiative by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that encourages caregivers of older adults to take an active role in helping their loved ones stay healthy and independent. This initiative will help caregivers reduce the risks for falling, recognize the symptoms of TBI when falls occur, and take the proper steps when symptoms of TBI are seen. Activities at this event will include [insert one or two lines with more details about your event/activity, if needed].

[Insert a paragraph that highlights key aspects of your event.]

According to CDC, older adults have the highest rates of TBI-related hospitalizations and death. In addition, approximately 85% of deaths caused by falls in 2004 were among people 75 years and older.

In [*insert city/state*], approximately [*insert statewide statistics if available*].

“These data show that TBIs can rob older adults of their independence or cause death. This is a serious public health problem,” said [insert name of organization spokesperson]. With the *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* initiative, we are informing caregivers of older adults how to help their loved ones prevent falls, therefore decreasing their risk for TBI.

We are also teaching them to recognize signs of TBI and what they can do if an older adult shows these signs. Because signs of TBI often mimic signs of aging, many TBIs are never diagnosed. Caregivers who know about TBIs can help older adults in [insert city/state] live safe and independent lives.

For more information on CDC’s *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* initiative, go to www.cdc.gov/BrainInjuryInSeniors

###

About *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* Initiative

Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury is a national initiative developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to raise awareness in children and other caregivers of older adults about ways to prevent, recognize, and respond to fall-related traumatic brain injury (TBI) in adults 75 and older.

EDITOR’S NOTE: TBI is a special health concern for older adults. People age 75 years and older have the highest rates of TBI-related hospitalizations and death. They also recover more slowly and die more often from these injuries than do younger people. TBI can cause a wide range of functional changes that affect thinking, sensation, language, or emotions.

Website links: [*Insert local website address*]

<http://www.cdc.gov/BrainInjuryInSeniors>

Creating a Media Advisory/Photo Opportunity

Similar to a press release, a media advisory is a one-page announcement informing the media of an opportunity to send a photographer or TV cameraperson to an event. A media advisory, which is sometimes called a photo op (opportunity), should be released one day before a planned event to announce that the event is occurring. It should highlight ways the media can capture the major visual elements of a newsworthy event. A media advisory should include the following information:

- Media contact;
- An appealing headline;
- Bullet points that cover the who, what, where, when, and why format;
- A sentence indicating names or titles of individuals available for photographs;
- A short paragraph with key background information or any special instructions for the media; and
- *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* boilerplate.

On the next page, you will find a media advisory template to use as a guide.

Media Advisory Local/Community Template

[Place on your letterhead]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE DATE

Contact:
Telephone:
E-mail:
Website:

Action-oriented Headline Summarizing the Event

Who: Provide the names and titles of person who will attend the event.

What: Briefly describe the event.

Where: Provide the name of the building, suite number, street address, and city.

When: Include the date and time of the event.

Why: Explain the purpose of the event and why this news will be of interest to the local community.

Photo Op: Identify potential photo opportunities and highlight key spokespersons and other persons who will be available for photographs. Indicate when key persons will be available, such as before or after the event.

A short, concluding paragraph should include how the media can obtain more information about the event and the *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* initiative.

About *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* Initiative

Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury is a national initiative developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to raise awareness in children and other caregivers of older adults about ways to prevent, recognize, and respond to fall-related traumatic brain injury (TBI) in adults 75 and older.



COMMUNICATION TOOLS

This section provides samples and templates of a fact sheet, letter to the editor, talking points, and other communication tools to help develop materials for your community's *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* initiative. The documents are designed to illustrate the appropriate format and style of particular communication tools and offer suggestions on how to customize the language for your effort. All press materials should be placed on your letterhead and follow the style guidelines.

Fact Sheet

When you have a wealth of information to give the press, but a press release can only be one or two pages, how should you package the rest of your information? The answer is to create a fact sheet. A fact sheet can be up to two pages and includes the historical, factual, and statistical data a journalist can use to develop in-depth stories or general assignment pieces. Fact sheets should be well written with short sentences and paragraphs and wide margins. You may even want to highlight items using bullets or numbers.

Letter to the Editor (LTE)

An LTE can be a powerful and persuasive tool in elevating the important is-

ues of your initiative. An LTE is written to comment on a past story or to add additional information to a story, such as what an organization is doing about an issue. An LTE is often written to express opinions for or against an issue.

Guidelines for creating an LTE:

- Check each news outlet for LTE guidelines for length and submission requirements.
- Limit letters to 200 to 300 words on one page with a hard copy signature from the author. Letters should include the logos of your organization.
- The LTE should be authored or signed by a reputable and leading participant or supporter of the initiative, such as a distinguished health care professional, or influential community partner with whom you work closely.
- Include the author's contact information or the contact information for your initiative on a separate cover page so the media representative can verify the content.

Opinion Editorial

An Op-Ed, which literally means "opposite the editorial" page, should be

written as if it were a stand-alone piece and accompanied by a pitch letter. Check with each newspaper to determine the requirements for Op-Eds. Most have word limits. The Op-Ed should be signed by a well-known community leader, decision maker, or health official. After sending the Op-Ed, follow up within three days to determine whether the piece is being considered for publication. Remember, editors may make minor revisions to the Op-Ed.

Talking Points

Talking points are short phrases or statements that are designed to be used repeatedly in speeches, media interviews, or written correspondence. The purpose of talking points is to ensure that your representatives have coherent, unified messages to use that emphasize the same point or idea. Talking points are created primarily for internal usage and can be used by *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* spokespersons, administrators, or supporters.



Sample Fact Sheet

Fall-related Traumatic Brain Injury Among Older Adults Fact Sheet

A traumatic brain injury (TBI) is caused by a bump or blow to the head that affects how the brain works. TBI is a special health concern for older adults. People age 75 years and older have the highest rates of TBI-related hospitalizations and death. They recover more slowly and die more often from these injuries than do younger people. Falls are the leading cause of TBI.

Symptoms of TBI

- Slight headache that will not go away
- Increased trouble remembering things, paying attention or concentrating, organizing daily tasks, making decisions, or solving problems
- Slow thinking, speaking, acting, or reading
- Getting lost or becoming easily confused
- Feeling tired all of the time, lack of energy
- Change in sleep pattern—sleeping more or less than usual
- Loss of balance, feeling light-headed or dizzy
- Increased sensitivity to sounds, lights, distractions
- Blurred vision or tired eyes
- Loss of sense of taste or smell
- Ringing in ears
- Change in sexual drive
- Mood changes—feeling sad, anxious, listless, easily irritated or angered, or lack of interest

In addition to the symptoms listed above, a person with a moderate or severe TBI may also have:

- Headache that gets worse
- Frequent vomiting or nausea
- Convulsions or seizures
- Unable to wake up from sleep
- One or both pupils enlarged
- Slurred speech
- Weakness or numbness in arms or legs
- Loss of coordination
- Increased confusion, restlessness, or agitation

Long-term Consequences of TBI

- TBI can cause a wide range of changes that affect thinking, sensation, language, or emotions.
 - Thinking (memory and reasoning)
 - Sensation (touch, taste, smell)
 - Language (communication, expression, understanding)
 - Emotion (depression, anxiety, personality changes, aggression, acting out, inappropriate social behavior)
- TBI can also cause epilepsy and increase the risk for conditions such as Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, and other brain disorders that occur more frequently with age.¹

What Caregivers Should Do if They Think Someone Has a TBI

- Take the person to the doctor. Tell the doctor about all prescription and over-the-counter medications the person takes, including aspirin.

Falls Among Older Adults

- More than one-third of the adults 65 years and older in the United States fall each year.^{2, 3}
- Twenty percent to 30% of people in this age group who fall suffer moderate to severe injuries such as bruises, hip fractures, or head traumas. These injuries can make it hard to move around and limit independent living. Also, they can increase the risk of early death.^{4, 5}
- Falls are the most common cause of TBI.⁶ In 2000, TBI occurred in 46% of fatal falls among older adults.⁷
- Among older adults, falls are the leading cause of injury deaths. They are also the

1 National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke: traumatic brain injury: hope through research. Bethesda (MD): National Institutes of Health; 2002 Feb. NIH Publication No. 02-158. Available from www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/tbi/detail_tbi.htm.

2 Hausdorff JM, Rios DA, Edelber HK. Gait variability and fall risk in community-living older adults: a 1-year prospective study. *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation* 2001;82(8):1050–6.

3 Hornbrook MC, Stevens VJ, Wingfield DJ, Hollis JF, Greenlick MR, Ory MG. Preventing falls among community-dwelling older persons: results from a randomized trial. *The Gerontologist* 1994;34(1):16–23.

4 Alexander BH, Rivara FP, Wolf ME. The cost and frequency of hospitalization for fall-related injuries in older adults. *American Journal of Public Health* 1992;82(7):1020–3.

5 Sterling DA, O'Connor JA, Bonadies J. Geriatric falls: injury severity is high and disproportionate to mechanism. *Journal of Trauma-Injury, Infection and Critical Care* 2001;50(1):116–9.

6 Jager TE, Weiss HB, Coben JH, Pepe PE. Traumatic brain injuries evaluated in U.S. emergency departments, 1992–1994. *Academic Emergency Medicine* 2000;7(2):134–40.

7 Stevens JA, Corso PS, Finkelstein EA, Miller TR. The costs of fatal and nonfatal falls among older adults. *Injury Prevention* 2006;12:290–5.

most common cause of nonfatal injuries and hospital admissions for trauma.⁸

- Approximately 85% of deaths caused by falls in 2004 were among people age 75 years and older.⁹
- People 75 years and older who fall are 4 to 5 times more likely than younger people to be hospitalized in a long-term care facility for a year or longer.¹⁰

Falls Can Be Prevented

There are several steps that can be taken to help older adults keep their independence and reduce their risk of falling. Older adults should be encouraged and helped to take all of the following steps:

- Exercise regularly; exercise programs like Tai Chi that increase strength and improve balance are especially good.
- Ask their doctor or pharmacist to review their medicines—both prescription and over-the-counter—and warn them about side effects and medications that do not work well together.
- Have their eyes checked by an eye doctor at least once a year.
- Improve lighting and reduce hazards in their home that can cause falls.¹¹

Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury is a national initiative developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to raise awareness in children and other caregivers of older adults about ways to prevent, recognize, and respond to fall-related traumatic brain injury (TBI) in adults 75 and older.

For more information about the *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* initiative, go to <http://www.cdc.gov/BrainInjuryInSeniors>.

8 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) [online]. (2005) [cited 2006 Aug 21]. Available from: www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars.

9 Ibid

10 Donald IP, Bulpitt CJ. The prognosis of falls in elderly people living at home. *Age and Ageing* 1999;28:121–5.

11 CDC (2006) *What You Can Do to Prevent Falls*. Atlanta (GA): Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Met Life Foundation.

Letter to the Editor Template

[Place on your letterhead]

Date:

Newspaper name:

Newspaper address:

Newspaper fax number:

E-mail address:

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

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

First Paragraph: State why you are writing. If you want to challenge points made in earlier articles or letters about older adults and TBI or falls, reference the original documents and briefly state your point of view. To add information to an earlier article or letter, again reference the original article, and briefly cite the new data.

Second Paragraph: This paragraph should convey some brief background material. You can add supporting information, such as recent data or statistics on fall-related TBI among older adults. You also can explain how the *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* initiative encourages caregivers of older adults to help prevent, recognize, and respond to TBI among adults age 75 years and older.

Third Paragraph: Your opinion should be included in this paragraph. Summarize what you want readers to know about the *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* initiative or TBI in older adults. In conclusion, re-emphasize the main point of your letter and tell readers how they can help prevent, recognize, and respond to fall-related TBI in older adults.

Sincerely,

[Your signature here]

Name (typed) and title(s)

Telephone Number and e-mail address

Opinion-Editorial Template

[Place on your letterhead]

Date:

Contact:

Telephone:

E-mail:

Website:

Title: Suggest a title that emphasizes the main point and attracts attention. The newspaper may rewrite the title.

Opening: The introductory paragraph should engage the reader and clearly state the importance of preventing, recognizing, and responding to traumatic brain injuries (TBI) in older adults. You might 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 fall-related TBI among older adults is an important public health problem. Cite statistics on TBI among older adults that highlight the extent of the problem. Provide local statistics to help readers see why this subject matters to them.

The body of the Op-Ed also should provide background information on the *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* initiative and suggest solutions to the problem.

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

Conclusion: Wrap up your Op-Ed by referencing the facts, current events, or personal stories mentioned in the opening paragraph. Give a clear picture of the situation, including the local perspective, with the solution in place. End the piece by re-emphasizing your main point.

Sample Talking Points

Our local activities are part of a nationwide initiative called *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury*. This is an effort by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to raise awareness about ways to prevent, recognize, and respond to traumatic brain injuries (TBI) among older adults age 75 years and older.

This national initiative is designed to inform caregivers of older adults about ways to help older adults avoid falling, therefore decreasing their risk for TBI. The initiative also teaches caregivers the signs and symptoms of TBI, and what to do if a TBI occurs in an older adult.

What is a TBI? A TBI is caused by a bump or blow to the head that affects how the brain works.

Why are we promoting this initiative? Falls are the leading cause of TBI, and older adults are at high risk for TBI because of falls.

TBI can lead to a range of serious, sometimes fatal, complications. In addition, TBI in older adults is frequently misdiagnosed or missed altogether.

TBI has many symptoms. These symptoms are usually temporary, but may last for days, weeks, or longer.

Some symptoms of TBI include:

- Ongoing low-grade headaches
- Difficulty remembering things, concentrating, or making decisions
- Slow thinking, speaking, acting, or reading
- Getting lost or easily confused
- Feeling tired all the time

A person with a moderate or severe TBI may have these symptoms, but may also have:

- A ongoing headache that gets worse
- Repeated vomiting or nausea
- Convulsions or seizures
- Inability to awaken from sleep
- Dilation of one or both pupils
- Slurred speech
- Weakness or numbness in arms or legs

- Loss of coordination
- Increased confusion, restlessness, or agitation

People 75 years and older who fall are 4 to 5 times more likely than younger people to be hospitalized in a long-term care facility for a year or longer. Approximately 85% of deaths caused by falls in 2004 were among people 75 years and older.

These data tell us that fall-related TBI among older adults is a serious public health problem that can rob older adults of their independence or cause death.

The good news is that there are several steps that caregivers can take to help older adults reduce their risk of falling and getting a TBI.

Caregivers can help older adults take these steps:

- Exercise regularly
- Ask their doctor or pharmacist to review their medicines
- Have their eyes checked by an eye doctor at least once a year
- Improve lighting and remove hazards in the home that can cause falls

The most effective way to prevent older adults from falling is to help them take all four of these steps.

Checklists: Did you Cover the Basic Guidelines for Developing Press Materials?

- Is your material tailored to the media and the medium's target audience you are trying to attract?
- Does the header on your press release include a contact person's name, telephone number, and e-mail address, as well as the URL for your website?
- Does the press kit include all the essential elements, including background information, fact sheets, biographies on spokesperson, and other supporting material?
- Are you targeting a wide range of media representatives, ranging from feature editors, and health reporters to columnists and editorial page editors? Have you created a specific pitch or news angle for each type of media you are targeting?
- Does your letter to the editor pertain to only one issue?
- Have you documented the media representatives and outlets that provide coverage of your events for monitoring purposes?
- Have you translated public health and TBI jargon into layman's terms?



GOING BEFORE THE MEDIA

Selecting Media Spokespersons

Real stories help audiences better understand the issues. Knowing this, you should select spokespersons who can discuss TBI in a precise, professional, and personal manner. Spokespersons are the most effective way to:

- Promote the *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* initiative; and
- Become a credible source for the media.

When recruiting spokespersons, look for local experts on aging, caregiving, TBI, or fall prevention among older adults, as well as children and other caregivers of older adults with personal success stories. Consider selecting a wide range of specialists:

- Gerontologists;
- Administrators of local aging organizations;
- Social workers;
- Public health professionals; and
- Community advocates or influentials.

Typically, spokespersons should be:

- Eloquent and concise;
- Able to memorize key messages without sounding rehearsed;
- Capable of shifting conversation styles from short sound bites to narrative stories. Radio and TV stations may want either style depending on the program format

and whether it is a news story versus a public affairs show;

- Free of negative publicity related to their personal and professional lives;
- Easily accessible for last-minute media interviews;
- Aware that their role is to discuss the *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* initiative and ways to inform caregivers on ways to help older adults prevent fall-related TBI, and not their own interests.

Training Checklist

Before placing your spokespersons before the media, be sure they are well-trained and aware of the following:

- *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* goals, objectives, and messages.
- *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* style guidelines.
- Specific story angles and how they relate to their area of expertise.
- Details surrounding the interview, such as potential questions and format.
- Understand that it is better to say, “I do not know the answer to that...,” or “It is really a good question and should be directed to...,” than to provide inaccurate information.

Managing Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury Messages

A challenge for spokespersons may be the ability to stay on message. Spokespersons should be able to clearly and accurately communicate *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* messages, objectives, and goals. They need to be trained to easily call upon approved messages - in both written and oral communications - when addressing different audiences, including the media. Spokespersons also should be able to weave *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* messages into real-life stories during media interviews.

Here are some guidelines your spokespersons can follow to help promote the *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* brand and foster positive relationships with the media:

- Have three succinct messages crafted explaining the main points you want to make.
- For broadcast interviews, define three main points you want to make and use every opportunity to communicate these points.
- Write some quotes in advance and practice saying them so they sound natural.
- If a reporter begins asking about issues you are not familiar with, simply say you are not an authority on those issues and are only speaking on behalf of *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain*

Injury. Then repeat your central message.

- Use “bridge” phrases to bring the reporter back to your message. For example, “What I would like people to know is...”
- Always assume you are on record with the reporter. Never speak in “confidence” or “off the record.” Do not offer personal opinions.
- Correct any misconceptions the reporter may have. Otherwise, they will assume their information is correct and may use it in news stories.

Tracking how fall-related TBI messages are being communicated will help to determine how well your messages are resonating in media coverage. Use the Spokespersons Evaluation Tips box to evaluate the impact of your spokespersons on the initiative.

Spokespersons Evaluation Tips:

- Compile a file of spokespersons, including their expertise, availability, age, and training provided.
- Keep a log of when and where spokesperson participated in media events and record the type of coverage received based on the spokesperson’s involvement (news professional’s name and media outlet).
- Estimate the number of people exposed through print, radio, TV, and collateral coverage using the media impressions templates on pages (43, 45, 47, and 49).

Pitching Your Story

Pitching a story basically means selling your story idea to a media representative. Using this guide will help you generate ideas relevant to your community to engage the news media. Before pitching your story, analyze your idea to determine if it meets any of the following criteria.

- **Prominence:** Involves well-known people.
- **Impact:** Explains how many people are affected by the news.
- **Surprise:** Underscores the departure from the norm (doesn't happen everyday).
- **Timeliness:** Emphasizes the current news.
- **Something New:** Includes "firsts" events, projects, or initiatives.
- **Trends:** Highlights surveys, changes, or new statistics.
- **Something Useful:** Answers the "How will this affect my life?" question.
- **Experts:** Involves credible doctors or public health specialists.

After fine-tuning your story angle, pitch your idea to media sources most likely to cover your story. To get a clearer idea of what media sources will likely be interested in your story, scrutinize the kinds of stories covered in your area's newspaper and TV newscasts. Understanding how journalists cover the news will help you bolster your story angle. (Read more about *Understanding the Diverse Roles of Media Professionals* on page 3.) To improve your chances at gaining coverage, you

also can offer to arrange interviews with sought-after experts, exclusive photograph opportunities, and other elements that will help to strengthen your story. You can pitch your story by telephone, letter, or e-mail; however, it is best to start with a telephone call.

The following steps will help prepare you to approach the media:

Preparing a Pitch

- **Start with a Good Story Idea:** Journalists need to immediately spot the news hook of your pitch. Your idea should be timely, affect the journalist's audience, or focus on new information, such as a recent study or novel initiative.
- **Make it Clear:** Provide additional information to connect the journalist with sources who can tell true-life stories, facilitate interviews with local experts, and provide introductions to others who can contribute to the story, such as partners and health officials.
- **Know the Journalist's Audience:** Tailor your pitch to the media outlet's and journalist's audience. For example, if the radio station targets adults 35 and older, and you are pitching a story about a Tai Chi demonstration for older adults where information on TBI and fall prevention will be distributed, your pitch should be geared to children of aging parents, who may listen to the station.

Making a Verbal Pitch

- **Find a good time to call.** As a rule, journalists are more receptive to pitches in the morning, before evening deadlines loom. They are less likely to take unsolicited calls after 3 p.m. when facing deadlines.
- **Make a 15-second pitch.** Persuasively state why the journalist's audience will care about the story. Be sure to

mention any deadlines or dates of events. Offer to send additional information if the journalist seems interested.

- **Follow through.** If the journalist asks to talk at another time, agree on a time to call back. Send any promised information immediately.

The following pages include a sample media pitch script you can use as a guide when pitching stories by telephone.

Sample Media Pitch Script

Topic:	<i>Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury</i> Launch
Call To:	Local News/Producer/Morning Show or News at Noon
Introduction:	<p>Hi, my name is [your name], and I'm with [your organization]. I am working on a community initiative called <i>Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury</i>. This initiative was developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The goal of the initiative is to raise awareness about ways to prevent, recognize, and respond to fall-related traumatic brain injury, or TBI, among adults age 75 years and older.</p> <p>In [insert name of city], <i>Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury</i> is leading the way in helping caregivers of older adults prevent, recognize, and respond to TBI in older adults. We are hosting a [name of event] featuring some of the state's top brain injury and aging experts and well-known leaders in the field [describe leaders or insert name of spokesperson]. <i>Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury</i> stresses ways to prevent TBI in older adults, as well as the importance of recognizing signs of TBI in older adults and what to do if an older adult shows signs of TBI.</p> <p>We sent a press release to your attention on [date] because we believe this is a good topic for your [morning broadcast news show/daily newspaper]. We can arrange interviews with local experts on aging and brain injury. We can also arrange interviews with older adults who have reduced their risk for TBI with the help of their caregivers.</p>

Local Relevance	Helping older adults remain safe and independent is a valid community concern. <i>Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury</i> works directly with caregivers of older adults throughout [name of local city or state] to provide information about TBI. Libraries and other local organizations throughout [city or state] are participating in a many ways, ranging from displaying posters to including information in their newsletters and posting the <i>Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury</i> link on their websites.
Materials	We can e-mail the fact sheet and brochure that encourages caregivers of older adults to help protect their loved ones' safety and independence by reducing their risk for falls, recognizing signs of TBI when a fall occurs, and taking the appropriate steps when signs of TBI are observed.
Background	TBI is a special health concern for older adults. People 75 years and older have the highest rates of TBI-related hospitalizations and death. In addition, they recover more slowly and die more often from these injuries than do younger people. People 75 years and older who fall are 4 to 5 times more likely than younger people to be hospitalized in a long-term care facility for a year or longer. Nearly 85% of deaths caused by falls in 2004 were among people in this age group. [Insert local statistics and source data.]
The Ask	Our local partner at [partner name] is very knowledgeable about the initiative. Can we schedule an interview?
More Information	For more information about <i>Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury</i> , please contact [name and title] at [insert area code and phone number].

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Facts about Concussion and Brain Injury: Where to Get Help. 1999.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) [online]. (2005) [cited 2006 Aug 21]. Available from: www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars.

Donald IP, Bulpitt CJ. The prognosis of falls in elderly people living at home. *Age and Ageing* 1999;28:121–5.

Hausdorff JM, Rios DA, Edelber HK. Gait variability and fall risk in community-living older adults: a 1-year prospective study. *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation* 2001;82(8):1050–6.

Hornbrook MC, Stevens VJ, Wingfield DJ, Hollis JF, Greenlick MR, Ory MG. Preventing falls among community-dwelling older persons: results from a randomized trial. *The Gerontologist* 1994;34(1):16–23.

Langlois JA, Rutland-Brown W, Thomas KE. Traumatic brain injury in the United States: emergency department visits, hospitalizations, and deaths. Atlanta (GA): Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control; 2004.

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke. Traumatic brain injury: hope through research. Bethesda (MD): National Institutes of Health; 2002 Feb. NIH Publication No.: 02–158.

Sterling DA, O'Connor JA, Bonadies J. Geriatric falls: injury severity is high and disproportionate to mechanism. *Journal of Trauma-Injury, Infection and Critical Care* 2001;50(1):116–9.

Writing a Pitch Letter

Be Brief: Limit the letter to one page. Create eye appeal for your letter by writing succinct sentences, short paragraphs, and using bullet points.

Start with the Story Lead: Many effective letters provide the right framework or slant for the story. Put that information in the first paragraph.

Provoke the Reader: One way to accomplish this is to begin the pitch letter with an intriguing question or startling statistic.

Do not Oversell: Remember, you are not writing an advertisement. The letter must spell out why the story should be covered and the resources you can provide to formulate the piece.

Tie the Pitch to a Journalist's Interest: Research the kind of stories the targeted journalist covers and reflect this knowledge in the pitch letter. This will make you appear "involved" in the journalist's activities. Even if the journalist declines your pitch this time, the person may be more amenable the next time.

Attach Support Materials: A company brochure, news release, photo, or even an article published in a non-competing media outlet (for example, you can send a trade magazine story if you are pitching to a newspaper) may be enclosed to provide additional background, if appropriate.

Wrap up with a Promise to Call:

State that you will call to discuss the story idea and any additional information you can provide.

Pitch Letter Evaluation Tips:

- Keep track of the topics of pitch calls and letters, how many you make or send out, who you call or send them to, and how many stories were produced in what media outlets.
- Analyze articles or stories that come about as a result of pitch letters and record the author and the media sources.
- Estimate the number of people exposed through print, radio, TV, and collateral coverage using the media impressions templates on pages 43, 45, 47, and 49.

On the following page is a pitch letter template that provides instructions on drafting your own letters.

Pitch Letter Template

[Place on your letterhead]

Date:

Newspaper name:

Newspaper address:

Newspaper fax number:

E-mail address:

Dear [Insert media contact's name here]:

First Paragraph: Begin your letter with compelling information that will persuade the targeted media representative to cover the *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* story you are pitching. The first paragraph should briefly explain why the media outlet's audience would want to know about traumatic brain injuries (TBI). To quickly capture the journalist's attention, it is a good idea to begin with hard-hitting statistics or a thought-provoking question.

Second Paragraph: The body of your letter should reference *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* central messages or the importance of preventing and recognizing TBI in older adults. Also, you can describe *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* activities and how they will affect the local community.

Third Paragraph: Provide background material, such as ways to prevent falls and the signs and symptoms of TBI for your story. You also can offer resources, such as published reports on TBI and additional support materials, and arrange an interview with your spokesperson. In closing, confirm that you (or a *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* representative) are available for an interview and re-emphasize the importance of covering the story.

Sincerely,

[Your signature here]

Name (typed)

Title(s)

Name of Organization (if author is a partner or supporter of the initiative)

Telephone Number

E-mail Address

About *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury*

Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury is a national initiative developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to raise awareness in children and other caregivers of older adults about ways to prevent, recognize, and respond to fall-related traumatic brain injury (TBI) in adults 75 and older.

Preparing for the Interview

Now that you have successfully pitched your story, it is time to prepare for the interview. When your spokesperson is scheduled for an interview, follow the proper guidelines for that media outlet, whether print or broadcast. Broadcast interviews require more preparation than print interviews, because they are often recorded live with little or no time for editing. For that reason, much of this section will focus on broadcast interviews.

It is up to you and your *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* initiative staff to make sure the spokesperson(s) is ready for media interviews. The person(s) to be interviewed should be an authoritative and credible source(s) and prepared for the appearance. He or she should practice answering interview questions, especially aggressive, rapid-fire inquiries. Spokespersons also must make *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* messages and anecdotes a part of their thinking process so their answers will sound natural.

Lights, Camera, and Action

The following tips will prepare your spokesperson to go live:

- When your spokesperson arrives at the TV or radio station, ask whether the staff will be using hand signals. If so, find out which ones will be helpful for you and your spokesperson to know.
- For both radio and TV interviews,

check out the type of microphone that will be used. For example, a tiny lapel clip-on presents no problem, but a large old-fashioned microphone that sits on a stand has limited pickup range.

- If the spokesperson must use notes on a radio show, use small index cards. They are easy to handle, quiet, and unobtrusive.
- Provide the spokesperson with a list of sample questions and answers in advance that they can review. (Note: reporters will not usually share their questions in advance.)
- People have a tendency to talk fast once TV cameras are on. Teach the spokesperson to slow down and pause between sentences.
- If you want your spokesperson to mention your website, get an OK from the station in advance.
- In TV interviews, wearing the wrong clothes and colors can undermine the spokesperson's credibility. Have your spokesperson wear medium tones of gray, brown, or blue. Wear off-white or pastel shades for shirts and blouses. Avoid distracting stripes, checks, or sharply contrasted patterns that distract the audience.
- Avoid highly polished gold and silver jewelry or large diamonds and rhinestones. The items reflect studio lights and distort the picture.
- In general interview participants should wear regular makeup of natural tones.

- For women, eye shadow should be used sparingly.

The National Association of Broadcasters offers several suggestions to make a spokesperson's TV appearance more effective. Please provide these tips to your spokespersons prior to an interview.

- Avoid unnecessary movements and gestures. They distract from the interview.
- Look, listen, and speak to the host talking to you - unless there is something you need to say directly to the TV audience. In that case, look directly into the camera.
- If the interview takes place in the studio, resist the temptation to look at yourself on the TV monitor. It distracts the viewer.
- If the spokesperson's throat feels tight, relax it by stretching and yawning or by drinking a warm beverage before going on the air.

Checklist: Are You Ready to Introduce *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* to the Media?

- Have you figured out how your spokespersons can weave *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* messages into media interviews?
- Do you have a list of main points you want your spokespersons to cover in an interview?
- If you are using a local celebrity as a spokesperson, have you made sure the person is free of negative publicity related to their personal and professional lives?
- Is your news angle clearly highlighted in your pitch letter?
- If you want your spokespersons to mention your website in an interview, did you reach an agreement with the station in advance?
- Have you made a list of visual possibilities before pitching a story to a TV station?

Style

SPORTS

METRO

BUSINESS

MONITORING MEDIA COVERAGE

Recording Media Impressions

Media impressions are standardized measurements representing everyone exposed to the *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* initiative through radio, print, television, collateral, or other news media. It is important to track and monitor the media coverage your initiative receives. Many organizations use a media monitoring or clipping service to obtain copies of their media coverage, such as print clippings, TV videotapes, radio audiotapes, or CDs. If you are interested in pursuing such an option, refer to the *Additional Resources* section on pages 51-63. 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 initiative receives on a weekly or monthly basis. Use the Excel spreadsheet templates as a tool to track and monitor media impressions.

Using these spreadsheets, you will be able to:

- Calculate how many media impressions you garner promoting *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury*; and

- Analyze which media outlets give you the most effective media impressions.

Use as many template sheets as you need, and save them to your own database with the recording period dates to keep track of them easily.

Recording Print Media Impressions

In Column A: Record the name of the publication.

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 (newspaper or magazine) 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 each publication circulated. This number is pre-recorded within 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) multiplied by 2.4 readers or viewers, which equals 240,000 impressions.

In Column F: 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). The formula is pre-set and will automatically calculate the total media impressions.

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; and
- Opinion-editorial.

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

Grand Impressions: At the bottom right side of the spreadsheet, the formula is pre-set and will automatically calculate the grand media impressions.

What follows is a Sample Print Media Impressions Spreadsheet.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Media Impressions Report (Print)							
1	Name of Publication	Daily, Weekly, Monthly	Insert Your Name	Insert Organization Name	Insert Your Phone Number	Insert Name of City	Insert Recording Period (3/1/08 to 4/31/08)
2			Circulation #s	# of Times Piece Ran	Average Reader #	Total Media Impressions	Type of Coverage
3	Examples:						Clip Available
4	Boston Globe	Daily	700,000	1	2.4	1,680,000	Article Frt Pg Metro Section
5	The WA Daily Tribune	Weekly	150,000	2	2.4	720,000	1/2 Promotional Ad
6	The AZ Star Monthly	Monthly	50,000	3	2.4	360,000	Press Release
7	The Salinas Star	Weekly	20,000	5	2.4	240,000	Full Page Ad
8	The Broom County Press	Weekly	35,000	2	2.4	168,000	1/2 Page Article
9					2.4	0	
10					2.4	0	
11					2.4	0	
12					2.4	0	
13					2.4	0	
14					2.4	0	
15					2.4	0	
16					2.4	0	
17					2.4	0	
18					2.4	0	
19					2.4	0	
20					2.4	0	
21					2.4	0	
22					2.4	0	
23					2.4	0	
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28					2.4	0	
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32					2.4	0	
33					2.4	0	
34					2.4	0	
35					2.4	0	
36					2.4	0	
37					2.4	0	
38					2.4	0	
39					2.4	0	
40					2.4	0	
41					2.4	0	
42				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 other announcements about upcoming *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* 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, or classical.

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 station. 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 pre-recorded interview once a week for a given number of weeks.

In Column F: 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). The formula is pre-set and will automatically calculate the total media impressions.

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

Grand Impressions: At the bottom right side of the spreadsheet, the formula is pre-set and will automatically calculate the grand media impressions.

What follows is a Sample Radio Media Impressions Spreadsheet.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	Media Impressions Report (Radio)		Insert Your Name	Insert Organization Name	Insert Your Phone Number	Insert Name of City	Insert Recording Period (3/1/08 to 4/31/08)	
2	Station Call Letters	Station Ownership & Format	Type of Coverage: Interview, Advertisement	Approximate Listenership	# of Times Piece Aired	Total Media Impressions	Audio Clip Available	Radio Contact
3	Examples:							
4	WSRS-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								
7								
8								
9								
10								
11								
12								
13								
14								
15								
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17								
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29								
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31								
32								
33								
34								
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36								
37								
38								
39								
40								
41				Grand Impressions		5,500,000		
42								

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 other announcements about upcoming *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* 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 website 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, and so on.

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, or late night.

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, 5:30, or 6 p.m.

In Column H: The total media impressions for each item entered appears. This will be the product of Column E (approximate viewership) multiplied by Column G (number of times the piece aired). The formula is pre-set and will automatically calculate the total media impressions.

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

Grand Impressions: At the bottom right side of the spreadsheet, the formula is pre-set and will automatically calculate the grand media impressions.

What follows is a Sample Television Media Impressions Spreadsheet.

A		B		C		D		E		F		G		H		I	
Media Impressions Report (TV)		Station Ownership		Type of Coverage: Interview, Advertisement, Segment, Story, PSA		Insert Your Organization Name		Insert Your Organization Name		Insert Your Phone Number		Insert Name of City		Insert Recording Period (3/1/08 to 4/31/08)			
Station Call Letters	Station Ownership	Interview, Advertisement, Segment, Story, PSA	Approximate Viewership	Time Slot Piece Aired	# of Times Piece Aired	Total Media Impressions	Broadcast Clip Available	TV Contact									
1	Examples:																
2	WABC-TV	Sinclair Broadcasting	250,000	early am and late pm	2	500,000	Yes	News Producer									
3	WCVB-TV	Hearst-Argyle	350,000	early am	50	17,500,000	Yes	Promotions Director									
4																	
5																	
6																	
7																	
8																	
9																	
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36																	
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41																	
42			Grand Impressions			18,000,000											

Recording Collateral Media Impressions

In Column A: Enter the collateral type (e.g., posters, fact sheets, brochures) your community partners will utilize to promote *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury*.

In Column B: Enter the total distribution number of each piece (e.g., 500 posters, 500 fact sheets).

In Column C: Enter the name of the event or place where the collateral was distributed (e.g., lead community partner organization).

In Column D: Enter “yes” or “no” to indicate whether the collateral items were paid for by CDC.

In Column E: Enter “yes” or “no” to indicate whether the collateral items were paid for by supporter(s) or partner(s).

In Column F: Enter the name or acronym of the supporter(s) or partner(s) (e.g., HHS/CDC, name of the participating fitness agency, Meals on Wheels).

Grand Impressions: At the bottom of Column B, the formula is pre-set and will automatically calculate the grand collateral impressions recorded in that column.

What follows is a Sample Collateral Media Impressions Spreadsheet.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
	Media Impressions Report (Initiative Collateral)						
	Collateral Type	Total Number Distributed	Insert Your Name Name of Event/Place Distributed	Insert Organization Name Paid by Supporter/Partner	Insert Your Phone Number Supporter/Partner Mentioned	Insert Name of City	Insert Recording Period (3/1/08 to 4/31/08)
1							
2							
3	Examples:						
4	Brochures	500	Agency on Aging	Yes	HHS/CDC		
5	Factsheets	500	AARP	No	HHS/CDC		
6	Posters	500	Launch	Yes	HHS/CDC		
7							
8							
9							
10							
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36							
37							
38							
39	Grand Impressions	1,500					
40							



RESOURCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

Glossary of Media Terms

BETA (Betacam or Super-BETA):

Professional broadcast format of high-resolution strength and quality. This format is most frequently preferred and used by hundreds of TV affiliates 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 the production of a TV news story. You generally provide B-roll footage free of charge upon request. B-roll could be a tape of a past *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* event or film related to *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* topics, such as balance and strengthening exercise for older adults, signs of TBI, ways for caregivers to reduce the risk of TBI in older adults.

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

Embargo: An embargo on newsworthy information means you are being instructed or giving instruction not to publicly release the information until a specific date and time. The words **EMBARGOED UNTIL** should appear at the top of the press release or other media material in capital letters along with the specific date and time to release the information to the public.

Opinion-editorial: An Op-Ed, which means “Opposite the Editorial Page,” is an opinion piece written by anyone who is not a staff member of a newspaper’s editorial board. Members of the community, advocacy groups, policy-makers, and others are encouraged to submit opinion pieces, which, if accepted, are published in the newspaper.

Press kit: A packet of documents (usually placed in a folder) that addresses an issue, program, or event. Press kits, also known as media kits, usually contain about 10 components, including a press release, background information sheet, fact sheet, photographs, and other press materials. Biographies of speakers or other appropriate individuals also may be included.

Public service announcement (PSA): A form of advertising over radio, television, billboards, Internet, or other media outlets 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. PSAs are valuable tools, because many media outlets commit to delivering a certain amount of public service advertising each year.

Additional Resources

NOTE: Public libraries provide free access to a wide range of media relations materials to help you develop and monitor your *Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury* initiative. Whether searching for information on professional news services or TBI among older adults, your local library has the resources and staff to help you find up-to-date reference books, magazines, videos, and online sources.

To help you get started in your research, here is a broad compilation of news services and media distribution companies. Please note that these are only example of a few services your librarian can help you locate additional resources.

The sources listed here are additional resources only and not in any way endorsed by the Department of Health and Human Services, CDC, or NCIPC.

News Distribution and Clipping Services

BurrellesLuce

75 East Northfield Road
Livingston, NJ 07039
Phone: 800-631-1160 or 973-992-6600
Fax: 973-992-7675
www.burrellesluce.com

BurrellesLuce is a print monitoring service that provides:

- Complete coverage of every daily and non-daily newspaper in the United States;
- Comprehensive monitoring of consumer and trade magazines, television, and radio coverage; and
- Editorial services where all clips are reviewed before they are submitted to the client to ensure accuracy and relevance.

Business Wire

44 Montgomery St., 39th floor
San Francisco, CA 94104
Phone: 415-986-4422 or 888-381-WIRE (9473)
Fax: 415-788-5335 or 415-986-4522
www.businesswire.com

Business Wire is a commercial news wire service that:

- Offers affiliation with more than 60 key news services;
- Provides products to media outlets, reporters, investors, regulatory agencies, Web systems, and other audiences; and
- Specializes in the dissemination of press releases, photos, and other content.

Cision, Inc., formerly Bacon's Information

332 South Michigan Avenue, Suite 900

Chicago, IL 60604

Phone: 866-639-5087

www.us.cision.com

Cision, Inc., can do the following:

- Research the media to target specific news professionals and media outlets;
- Contact the media to disseminate news announcements and key messages;
- Provide comprehensive coverage of print, broadcast, and Internet media; and
- Evaluate media results through quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

Media Distribution Services

307 W. 36th Street

New York, NY 10018-6496

Phone: 212-279-4800

Fax: 212-643-0576

Email: services@msdconnect.com

www.mdsconnect.com

Media Distribution Services provides the following services:

- Creation of a media database;
- Press kits;
- Printing, assembly, and mailing;
- Graphic design;
- Distribution of products or materials;
- Blast faxes and emails; and
- Access to the nation's top executives by telephone, mail, and fax.

NewsUSA

2841 Hartland Road, Suite 301

Falls Church, VA 22043

Phone: 703-734-2401 or 800-355-9500

Fax: 703-734-6314

General inquiries: office@newsusa.com

www.newsusa.com

NewsUSA provides the following services:

- Creation of media campaigns with story ideas and direct editorial contact;
- Development and distribution of media-ready features;
- Monitoring services of monthly usage by newspapers and radio stations;
- Detailed reports and actual clips in print and electronic formats;
- Nationwide media access; and
- Enhanced product and brand awareness.

PR Newswire

810 7th Avenue, 32nd Floor

New York, NY 10019

Phone: 201-360-6700 or 800-832-5522

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; and
- Services that include targeting, evaluation, and measurement.

VMS

1500 Broadway

New York, NY 10036

Phone: 800-VMS-2002

Email: sales@vmsinfo.com

www.vmsinfo.com

VMS tapes broadcast news stories and advertising every day in nearly 100 cities across the United States and Canada and can record in any other city upon request. VMS also:

- Monitors print advertising from over 700 consumer magazines, trade magazines, and newspapers, and can pull ads from over 17,000 publications; and
- 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.

Participating Organizations

Administration on Aging
American Occupational Therapy Association
Brain Injury Association of America
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
Children of Aging Parents
Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center
Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care
Easter Seals
Emergency Nurses Association
Employee Assistance Professionals Association
Family Caregiver Alliance/National Center on Caregiving
Health Resources and Services Administration
Home Safety Council
International Parish Nurse Resource Center
National Adult Day Services Association
National Alliance for Caregiving
National Association of Area Agencies on Aging
National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers
National Association of State Head Injury Administrators
National Council on Aging
National Family Caregivers Association
National Institute on Aging
National Safety Council
State and Territorial Injury Prevention Directors Association
Visiting Nurse Associations of America
YMCA of the USA

Help Seniors Live Better, Longer:
Prevent Brain Injury

www.cdc.gov/BrainInjuryInSeniors

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

