

Appendix E: Checklist for Conducting a News Conference

If properly used, a news conference can be a good way to provide media with information on influenza vaccination events, particularly during NIVW. Consider the following items when planning and implementing your press conference.

Evaluate the Purpose

- What is the “news” for your event? Is a press conference necessary or would a press release be sufficient?
- Is your information and/or speaker compelling enough to draw press attendance?

Plan the Date, Time, and Location

- Have you given the media as much advance time as possible?
- Is your event in a location that is easily accessible to the media?

Invite Key Media to Attend By Sending Out a Media Advisory

- Have you made sure the media advisory gives the date, time, and location of the news conference, the subject to be discussed, the names of the people who will be speaking or otherwise participating, names of contact people from whom they can obtain advance (and follow-up) information, and a list of languages in which materials will be provided?
- Have you placed follow-up calls before the conference to remind reporters about the event?

Prepare the Room

- Have you made sure your news conference site includes staging, chairs, a podium, and microphones and checked to ensure all equipment is working properly?
- Have you rented a mult box from an audio/visual company for broadcast reporters to plug into to obtain clear sound? Be aware that mult boxes may not be needed in areas with more advanced technology.
- Is your department’s name (and logo) clearly visible on the front of your podium, or behind the speaker?
- Do you have a backup plan for possible glitches?

Provide Media Materials

- Have you prepared media kits including news releases, speaker names and bios, fact sheets, or other materials that might help reporters write their stories?

Be Prepared

- Have the main spokespersons rehearsed the key messages developed for the event and are they ready to answer questions?
- Have you made sure your spokespersons know what the most important information is and how to stay focused, even if asked questions that concern other issues?
- Have you developed answers to potentially controversial questions that may be asked, such as concerns about the vaccine’s effectiveness and safety or adequate supply issues?
- Have you discussed in advance which key points will be made by each spokesperson?
- Have you designated a moderator in advance of the news conference to keep the conference on schedule, establish ground rules, and field reporters’ questions?
- Have you set a clear end time for the news conference?
- Have you made a Spanish or other appropriate language spokesperson available at the news conference and have you referenced that in your media materials?

Be Thorough

- Have you made sure all questions are answered during the news conference? If a spokesperson does not know the answer to a question, make sure a member of the team finds the answer after the news conference and makes it available to the reporter as soon as possible. If possible, allow spokespeople to be available one-on-one with reporters following the conference to answer questions.
- Have you designated someone to ask questions during the news conference that reporters may not raise?

Monitor Attendance and Follow Up

- Have you asked reporters to sign-in? This will provide a list of who attended and who did not attend.
- For key media personnel who were not able to attend, have you offered them a phone interview with the spokespersons or sent them a media kit?