

MEDIA PRESS KIT

The following document contains some helpful tips and information for contacting local media and organizations to set up an interview or presentation, preparing for the interview and follow up.

STEPS

1. Press Release
2. Pitch Your Story
3. Preparing Your Story
4. Telling Your Story
5. Follow Up



STEP #1: PRESS RELEASE

A good press release is necessary to reach out to media and local groups. Writing a good press release takes some experience, but don't worry. On the OPA Resources website, you'll find prepared press release templates for the following topics:

- Pharmacy Awareness Month <http://bit.ly/16GSR8L>
- The Great American Smoke Out (Smoking Cessation) <http://bit.ly/1amYThH>

You can use these templates and add in your personal contact information where noted in the template. You can also add any other pertinent information. Media outlets love the personal story, so having a patient willing to help tell the story makes a great "hook." The patient should tell how the pharmacist personally made a difference in their health, and it needs to be related to the topic of the release. Get a short quote from the patient to add to the press release. Make sure you get the patient's permission.

TIP → Media and organizers are very busy, so keep the press release short. Don't add excessive information that makes the press release more than one page.

If you want to create a press release from scratch from a topic not listed above, we recommend you review the following resources on the web:

http://associationdatabase.com/aws/OPA/asset_manager/get_file/68478

<http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Press-Release>

http://www.ehow.com/how_2043935_write-press-release.html

Remember, "news-worthy" ideas need to be the focus of press releases, while the time, place and people involved are secondary. Emphasis on these things will often get the press release tossed out of the pile. What is the news? What is the important concept that needs dissemination? That is what will catch a producer's eye, so:

- Develop the headline -- and pull the reader/viewer into the story.
- Document with a fact or two -- referenced if possible -- what is the NEW development?
- Then put the event info in, if necessary.

If you have any questions or want someone to review or provide guidance on a press release you write from scratch, contact your employer's public relations department or your professional organization if you own your own pharmacy practice.

STEP #2: PITCH YOUR STORY

Once you have your press release ready, it's time to send it out to media and local organizations to let them know you have a story to tell.

Become familiar with your local media outlets and organizations. Call and ask who to send your press release to and find out when is the best time to submit. Then "pitch" your story to them:

- Follow up with a call, personal email or both
- Be willing to tailor it to their needs and make it easy for them to cover
- Avoid pharmacy or technical jargon (keep it at a level equal to their audience)
- Provide your phone number and always answer when they call
- Avoid contacting people while "on deadline," which is usually 1-2 hours before their deadline
- Avoid Mondays and Fridays for press releases -- instead, send in the middle of the week
- Below are some tips for each media

Local Organizations

There are always local groups or organizations that would love to have a pharmacist present a topic and take questions. Check out your local newspapers or their websites for groups holding meetings in your area to get an idea of what is around you. You can always contact Parent-Teacher Organizations, Shriners or Kiwanis Clubs, Community Centers, Areas of Aging, YMCA/YWCA, and many others. These can make great outlets for you to give presentations to small or large groups. Once you have the presentation scheduled, you can send a press release to local media outlets to see if they will come cover the event.

TIP → If you don't have much experience talking with the media, starting with presentations to small, local groups is a great way to gain confidence. Also consider joining a local Toast Masters group. Toast Masters is a great way to polish your speaking skills in a supportive learning environment. Learn more and find meeting locations at www.toastmasters.org.

Print

- Below are websites that contain lists of local and regional newspapers and periodicals
 - www.usnpl.com
 - www.dailyearth.com
 - www.newslink.org
 - www.mondotimes.com
- Look to see what is covered in different sections of your local newspaper
 - Contact the section editor for sections most likely to cover your story
 - Contact the columnist who is writing the stories
- Find out when their deadlines are (can be daily, weekly or monthly)
- Think small to increase success. Small newspapers in neighboring cities/counties are always looking for local stories. Start with them.
- Photo opportunities are great for print media
- If you can't get an interview or story, consider sending in a letter to the editor instead
- **Magazines:** For those interested in writing an article to back up your press release, there are tons of local, regional and national magazines that may take your story. For local magazines, browse the magazine rack at the grocery store or bookstore. Guidelines for submitting articles are included in the publishing information found in the magazine.



TIP → Writing articles or letters to the editor is another simple starting point for pharmacists and students who are not yet comfortable speaking to media or large groups.

Television

- Below are websites that contain lists of local and regional stations
 - www.ewslink.org
 - www.stationindex.com
 - www.mondotimes.com
- Do your local television stations have a locally-produced interview or magazine program?
- Send releases to assignment editor and reporter
- Send releases to meet topic selection meetings:
 - Send around midnight for morning programs
 - Send before 8am for mid-day programs
 - Send at 1:30pm for evening and late news
- When pitching your story:
 - Talk visually and think “people”
 - Have a splashy 7-10 second sound bite to grab their attention
 - Keep answers under 20 seconds (they’re busy and only have a few minutes to talk)
 - Pitch live interviews and have your or other experts/patients already lined up



Radio

- Below are websites that contain lists of local and regional newspapers and periodicals
 - www.newslink.org
 - www.npr.org
 - www.mondotimes.com
- Find a local radio call in show that includes guests for your best bet
- Contact the station to find out who is the producer, assignment editor or reporter to send press release to (could be the same person at smaller stations) and get best time to send release
- Offer to call in for phone interview
- Early morning shows offer the best chance to get on the air
- Limit your answers to 15-30 second sound bites for your pitch



What if they don't select your story?

- It may have been a busy news day or breaking news bumped your story... pitch again ASAP!
- If content is not time sensitive, pitch it more than once. Your story may get picked up on a slow news day.
- If they have absolutely no interest, politely ask why, so you can adjust your story. Offer to change the angle or “hook” of your story to better meet their needs or interest.
- Don't give up if your first, second or third pitch doesn't go anywhere! You have to keep at it. As you develop relationships with local groups and media, it will become a little easier.

STEP #3: PREPARING YOUR STORY

Once you have your interview or presentation lined up, you will need to get your story ready.

- Utilize the resources on the OPA Member Resources web page. It has prepared slides, handouts and links for several topics.
- Always know who the audience is and focus your message to them
- For interviews, use the OPA Media Interview Worksheet <http://bit.ly/19xTzXK>
 - Think like a reporter and anticipate questions you may be asked, even the tough ones!
 - Planning what questions you may be asked and preparing your response in 10-12 second sound bites will make for a great interview
- Practicing beforehand will make your presentation and interview go smoothly. Have a friend or coworker act as the interviewer and pepper you with questions about your topic.

TIP → For some resources on improving your writing skills, check out some of the links posted on the University of California, Santa Barbara's Graduate Division website:

www.graddiv.ucsb.edu/profdev/writing-skills.aspx

STEP #4: TELLING YOUR STORY

If you're going to be on television, make sure your appearance and demeanor is camera friendly:

- ✓ Avoid bright colors or patterned clothing. Stick to blues, greys or browns for TV.
- ✓ Avoid large, shiny jewelry.
- ✓ Look at the reporter and not the camera.
- ✓ If standing, stand tall with arms relaxed at your side.
- ✓ Avoid distracting gestures.
- ✓ Have a comfortable but professional demeanor

When answering reporter's questions:

- ✓ Be brief and speak in short sentences (10-20 seconds)
- ✓ Talk at a moderate pace
- ✓ Use simple language, avoid pharmacy jargon
- ✓ Use positive terms
- ✓ Relax, smile and be likeable
- ✓ Stick to your area of expertise
- ✓ Never lie, repeat the question, get angry or speak off the record
- ✓ Address the reporter's question and transition quickly to your agenda key messages



For more radio and TV tips, review the "Radio and TV 'Etiquette'" section of the following resource:

www.arts.gov/manageaward/working-with-the-Media-Toolkit.pdf

TIP → Keep an eye out for upcoming OPA Media Training CE classes for pharmacists and students. It will teach you how to prepare for and perform an interview, with one-on-one on camera critiques.

STEP #5: FOLLOW UP

Even though you have given your presentation, published your article or nailed your interview, your work is not done yet.

- You should follow up with a call and/or personal email to the reporter or group:
 - Thank reporter or group for their time, especially if it went well
 - Offer to meet them to cultivate ongoing relationship for future stories or presentations
 - Ask what other kinds of stories or presentations they would like to hear about
- Consider sending out a follow up press release for presentations or events held after your initial press release. It's a great way to get extra coverage of your message.

TIP → If you had a successful presentation, article or interview that you would like to share with OPA, please email opa@ohiopharmacists.org with a short recap and any links to articles, posted videos or radio clips.

Now you're ready to go be a vocal pharmacy advocate, right?! Stay positive and be persistent! Don't let the unsuccessful attempts to get published or garner an interview deter your efforts. Keep at it and you will have your voice heard! Thank you for all you do for this great profession!

