

media TUTORIAL

This **Media Tutorial** will help you move your media activities forward, whether you're new to the process or are looking for fresh ideas. We've provided tips and follow-up strategies concerning the media outreach tools introduced in this **Toolkit**.

YOUR MESSAGE SHOULD:

- ❖ Be simple, clear, persuasive and compelling;
- ❖ Point out the problem and potential solutions and it should reflect your coalition's beliefs and your audiences' values, preconceptions and information needs;
- ❖ Mesh with other messages that your audience may be receiving;
- ❖ Be credible and target your audience;
- ❖ Humanize the issue with real-life stories;
- ❖ Acknowledge that just as the tragic, drug or violence-related events that spawn many communities are newsworthy, if properly packaged, so too are positive, compelling events and programs that prevent these problems.

MEDIA ALERT ❖

TOOLS

A **media alert** is an abbreviated version of a press release, providing the “what, why, when and where” of an event. Media alerts are disseminated to broadcast, print and web-based media contacts.

TIPS

Include the date and whether or not the information is for immediate release or should be embargoed for a later date.

- Add a snappy headline, center justified in bold, capital letters that states the action or content described in the advisory.
- Include one paragraph introducing the upcoming event and incorporate your coalition's name in the text.
- Include a list of the participants in the event and the organization with which they are affiliated.

- Display the event's date, time and location.
- Use a “-30-”, “-end-” or “###” to mark the end of the advisory.
- In addition to sending via e-mail and through wire services, consider creating a social media release and sending via free social media release sites, such as PitchEngine.com.

FOLLOW-UP STRATEGIES

- Distribute the media advisory one week before a scheduled event.
- Disseminate your press release—which contains more detail—one-two days before your event. If the activity is taking place on a Monday, send your press release on a Thursday and follow-up on Friday.

OPINION EDITORIALS (OP-EDS) ❖❖

Opinion editorials (op-eds) are located opposite a newspaper's editorial section. They are one of the best ways to disseminate your message through traditional media because they give you 500-800 prominently displayed words of your choosing that have not been changed, misstated or contorted by a reporter or news anchor.

TIPS

- Contact the newspapers you are targeting to confirm submission protocol.
- Call the editorial page editor to pitch your story. You may need to submit your op-ed two-three months in advance of when you'd like to see it published, given the competition for editorial space.
- Write your op-ed:
 1. Deliver one clear message or opinion, and keep the piece short and to the point.
 2. Tailor the message to your community.
 3. Make the piece self-contained by giving readers whatever background information they need.
 4. Provide strong evidence in support of your opinion, i.e. local statistics, a story, research results, without being too technical or straying off-message.

- Include an authorship line (in italics) that provides your contact information and a brief description of what qualifies you as an expert on the subject discussed.
- Write a cover letter to accompany the op-ed. Re-emphasize the importance of calling attention to this specified problem.
- If you get published, distribute a copy of the piece to your membership and use it in coalition promotional packets.

FOLLOW-UP STRATEGIES

- Submit the op-ed as indicated by the editor's requirements.
- Wait about a week, and follow-up with a telephone call.
- Complete a Google search by title on the Internet once your article has run. That way, you can confirm where your article has been picked up by other publications.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS (PSAs) ❖❖

Public Service Announcements (PSAs) provide excellent opportunities to quickly convey Rx abuse information and what the community is doing to address the problem. PSAs can be placed on radio, television and the web. They are disseminated to the press as scripts, video clips and audio tapes and are typically formatted to run for 30-, 15- or 10-seconds.

TIPS

- Have a specific goal in mind when you create PSAs.
 - Learn all you can about the problem and the target audiences you wish to reach.
 - Create PSAs that appeal to the broadest audience possible.
- Ensure that your PSAs are timely and sent in user-friendly formats, and consider providing a variety of formats to the stations.
 - Consider disseminating your PSA through social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.
 - Schedule PSA campaigns to launch in the first quarter of the year. There is more air time then.
 - Recruit spokespersons with broad appeal.
 - Localize your PSAs by including local contact information.
 - Develop an information package to accompany your PSA that includes a tracking postcard.
 - Consider turning the broadcast PSA scripts into print ads and pitch their availability to local media outlets.