



Media Outreach 101: Getting Started

Below is a general overview of how to engage with reporters to increase broader awareness of activities and events taking place at your institution or practice.

When to Reach Out to Reporters

- To announce news of your practice such as a new procedure or product you offer to patients.
 - Reporters are often most interested in a story when you can put them in contact with local patients who can make the story “come alive” by providing interesting or unique perspectives. (Please consult with your legal counsel about obtaining patient consent before sharing patient’s name with a reporter.)
- To build upon or “piggy-back” on national news or other trends receiving media coverage.
 - If a story is popular in the national news, local reporters are often looking to cover how this news affects the local area.

How to Contact Reporters

- Make a list of media contacts at local newspaper, TV and radio stations and update it periodically.
 - Include such information as the reporter’s “beat” (i.e., topics he/she typically covers). Medical, health and science editors or reporters and feature editors or reporters are typically most interested in healthcare stories.
 - If you cannot reach the editor or reporter, call the general number and ask for the assignment editor who will direct you to the best contact for the story angle.
- The best way to identify local reporters is to follow the news. Watch local TV, listen to the radio and read the local newspaper to identify the reporters who cover the kind of medical stories most relevant to your practice and your patients.
- Do online research. Nearly all newspapers, television and radio stations have a website with general contact information.

Tools You Can Use to Contact Reporters

- Press Release
 - A press release is used to inform the media about a newsworthy topic, trend or interesting information.
 - Press releases can be sent to local media contacts or distributed via a news service or “wire” to a broader list of reporters who review them to obtain story ideas.
 - The best way to distribute a press release is via email so you can reach the reporter as quickly as possible.
- Pitch Email
 - A pitch email is targeted to a specific reporter and offers news or a story idea tailored to the reporter’s interests, media outlet and its audience.

Additional Tips

- Call the reporter within a day of sending the press release or pitch email to gauge their interest level.
- If you email information to a reporter, don’t send an attachment unless the reporter has requested it.
- Be persistent, but polite. If a reporter declines your story, ask them if it’s okay for you to stay in touch in case anything changes.
- Consider timing media outreach after a few cases; once your hospital has refined its processes and can accommodate increased patient flow.