



GRASSROOTS MEDIA KIT

Media Outreach Kit

The media can play a valuable role in helping to raise awareness about National Medicine Abuse Awareness Month (NMAAM) and the dangers of medicine abuse, and to help generate interest in your event. Use this Media Outreach Primer to help you identify the right reporters, get the media's attention, and communicate your event to the community.

Getting the Media's Attention

Reporters receive hundreds of requests to attend and cover events, so it is important to distinguish your NMAAM event from other events in your community. The following items can help you entice the media to cover your event:

A Relevant News Hook

Reporters like to cover topics that are likely to spark interest or debate, and that connect to issues that are already being discussed in the community. For example, was there a recent incident in your community involving medicine abuse? If so, then link your event to that incident. Personal stories are also extremely powerful, so try highlighting a local person's story, such as a parent of a teen who abused prescription drugs or over-the-counter cough medicine and how they sought help.

A Strong Local Angle

How is your event connected to your local community? Do you have local statistics showing the rates of medicine abuse in your city, county or school district? Be sure to include those stats when pitching your event to the media. Also, make sure your event presenters and panelists are local experts, such as the head of your health department or a local government official or well-known figure – don't forget to note that when reaching out to the media.

Interview Opportunities

In advance of your event, identify 1-3 individuals, including youth, who can speak to the media. Make sure you prep them on what to say and how to speak to the media. Then, when it comes time to reach out to reporters, be sure to mention that there will be interview opportunities at your event and note who they are. If your community has a large number of non-native English speakers, you might identify and prep interviewees to conduct bilingual interviews.

Quick Tips

Do Your Research – Make sure you research newspapers and TV and radio station websites to identify the right reporters, editors and producers to pitch to.

Be Timely With Your Pitch – Depending on the media outlet, you may have to reach out to them a month or more in advance. For example, magazine editors often work a month or two in advance.

Call, E-mail and Follow up – Don't just e-mail a reporter or producer with your pitch, call them too. And don't forget to follow-up the next day if you haven't heard back.

Promote Your Event using the News Release Templates – Utilize the news release templates CADCA has developed to promote your event to the media and the public.

Send a Post-Event Article & Photos – Prepare a news article about your event along with photos and any video footage to send to your media contacts after your event. Some newspapers will run the article as is and some TV stations will run the video footage if they have space.



Creating a Local Media List

- **Call local newspapers, TV and radio stations** in your area and ask them who covers health-related and/or substance abuse issues. At some newspapers, the same person who covers crime and violence also covers substance abuse issues, or there may be someone assigned to cover the health beat, which includes substance abuse.
- **Find articles written in your local newspaper** about related topics, such as a drug-related incident, and add the author to your list. You can often find their e-mail address and/or phone number on the newspaper's website or by calling the publication. An easy way to search news articles is by searching on the newspaper's websites or by doing a Google or Google News search.
- **Visit local TV/Radio stations websites** and do a search for "drug use" or "substance abuse" and see if any past news reports come up. If so, jot down the name of the reporter and add him/ her to your media list.
- **Set up a Google Alert online** to track news reports about substance abuse or drug use. Add the reporters and authors to your media list.

Did You Know?



Many reporters, TV anchors and producers are on Twitter. A good way to build and maintain a relationship with them is to follow them and communicate with them on Twitter.

- **Don't forget to look beyond traditional media** for other types of online sources, such as blogs. A great way to identify relevant bloggers is to conduct a Google Blog Search at www.google.com/blogsearch. Simply enter a search term, such as prescription drug abuse, cough medicine abuse or drug use prevention, hit "enter" and see what comes up.
- **Use paid services, such as Cision or BurrellesLuce**, which offer a list of reporters, their news beats and their contact information.

Sample Pitch Letter

Hello [name],

After reading your recent article on [topic], I thought you may be interested in an upcoming educational event we're hosting to raise awareness of the dangers of prescription drug abuse and over-the-counter cough medicine abuse. The intentional abuse of medicines is a growing problem in our community and we're bringing together several local experts, such as [enter names], to discuss why it's happening and solutions to the problem. The event will be held on [event date] in the [city/town name] area as part of National Medicine Abuse Awareness Month, observed every October. Locally, [insert local statistics on the prevalence of medicine abuse]. Below is a media advisory with more details on this event. Please feel free to contact me if you need further information, or would like to schedule an interview with [name and title of person being offered for interviews]. I will follow up prior to the [event] to see if you or someone from your organization will attend the event. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,
[your name and contact information]

