**Media Relations**

All organizations, whether profit-driven or charitable, must learn how to effectively communicate who they are, their objectives, functions, and activities. However, all organizations, can benefit from forming a relationship with the local and perhaps even national media.

Whether it is intended or not, the general public will form an opinion about an organization based on what it says or even what it does not say. An organization must therefore think about what it wants to communicate to the public and take the necessary steps to transmit that message effectively. ……… is crucial to being successful in influencing the healthcare policy debates in each country, in fundraising initiatives, and in communicating a positive image of people with hemophilia and other inherited bleeding disorders.

Some organizations have a communications plan: a document that maps out how the organization will share information related to its work with patients, the general public, government, healthcare providers, and other stakeholders. An effective communications plan addresses the following points: • What is your organization’s philosophy/mission? • What kind of message do you wish to transmit? • What limitations do you have? • What actions can you take to achieve your communications goals while taking your limitations into account?

Using the media to communicate with the public is often part of the communications strategy. Even organizations that do not have a formal communications plan can benefit from building a relationship with the media and from understanding the ways in which the media can help them meet their communications goals.

Types of Media

“Media” is a generic term that includes print media (newspapers and magazines) and electronic media (TV, radio, and the Internet). Certain types of media will be more relevant for a particular story than others. For example, if the story has a particularly visible element, consider contacting the local TV station. Another story will be more appropriate for print media or Internet. By watching, reading, and listening to your local media, you will be able to identify the types of stories used by different print and electronic media outlets

Do not underestimate the value of the regional press. Although its audience is usually smaller than that of national media outlets, its readers/viewers/ listeners are particularly interested in what the press has to say about the area/region.

Print media

Print media is ideal for comprehensive, thoughtprovoking information and useful for conveying long-lasting information (i.e. things that will still be true in a week or two). Print media is most interested in research results, figures, statistics, explanations through interviews, testimonials, etc

Newspapers

Newspapers can be daily, weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, etc. They can come in standard or tabloid size and reach a significant percentage of the reading public. Because of the broad demographic reach of most newspapers, it is difficult to target a specific audience. However, newspapers are effective in increasing awareness of the organization and its activities within a specific geographical area. Magazines

Magazines are usually focused on a more specific target audience but they have a much longer lead time (many days and even weeks between the writingand the publication of a story) so it is important to take into account the sort of news you are going to spread. Magazines are better suited for more in-depth coverage than newspapers.

Others

Other types of print media like flyers or brochures can either inform or educate a targeted group of people.

Electronic media

Electronic media is immediate so timing is critical and deadlines are even tighter. This type of media favours brief and specific stories and is ideal for transmitting impact information: overall data, specific figures, and brief testimonials.

Television

Television stations may be interested in stories that have a strong visual element, such as an event involving a local dignitary or the opening of a new treatment centre with high-tech equipment, etc. Television is one of the most popular and appealing media for these types of stories, but it can be expensive. Television commercials are costly to produce and air-time, even for a 15-second spot, is very expensive.

Radio

Radio offers the public a fast, effortless way of getting information. It is a popular medium and one to take advantage of. Local stations are often looking for local news. Radio provides numerous publicity opportunities: PSAs, newscasts, current affairs programs, interview programs, and open-line shows where listeners can call in and share information and opinions.

Internet

In today’s electronic age, the internet — where it is available — is an increasingly important way to communicate with the public. It is often the first place people will look when searching for information about an issue or organization. Therefore, it is very important that hemophilia and other inherited bleeding disorders organizations maintain easy-to-navigate and updated websites about their organizations and work. In addition, the internet offers a variety of other tools that reach a broad and international audience, which should not be overlooked. These include online journals, publications, news-alerts, on-line press release services, blogs, and social media websites (such as Facebook or MySpace), amongst others.

Building Media Relations

Build a list of media contacts

Establish and maintain relationships

Media Relation Tools

**Media Types**

Newspapers

Wire services/news syndicates

Magazines

Radio

Television

Company web pages

Blogs

Chat rooms

Podcasts

Social Media

Videocasts

Relationships are enhanced when public relations professionals conduct research to become familiar with what media organizations cover. Who is the audience that the particular media channel reaches?

**Fostering the relationship with the Media**

Research the media

Read their articles/publications/posts.

Know their beat.

Know their audience