

IV. Working with the Media

Press coverage or advertising is an integral part of spreading *Pick Your Path to Health's* messages to the community and to the public at large. In planning your activity or event, it is important to include advertising components (flyers, posters, letters, newsletters) and the media (newspapers, radio, television) as essential tools to get the word out to your audience.

We have included a brief explanation of “what is” and “how to create” PSAs (public service announcements), a press release, proclamations and resolutions, and talking points to publicize your events. There are also specific examples for each highlighted community activity listed in Section III.

Promoting Your Activities

Once you have determined which kind of community event you would like to organize, you will need to have promotion as part of your planning and implementation strategies.

Promotion just means getting the word out, letting the people you want to attend and know the what, when, and where, so that they can plan on participating.

Promotion can be as simple as putting up posters and flyers in the community, mailing out letters, word of mouth, or putting an announcement (public service announcement) in the local newspaper. Promotion can also be more involved, such as placing ads in newspapers or using radio or television.

The more people are aware of your event, the better the chances of getting the numbers of participants you would like.

Creating and Using PSAs

What is a PSA?

A PSA or public service announcement is a short video or audio announcement that is played on radio or television with the purpose of persuading the audience to take specific action(s) regarding a specific cause.

They can be of varying lengths (10 seconds, 30 seconds, 60 seconds, 90 seconds) but are usually under 2 minutes. They are meant to be direct, giving very specific information and a very specific action to take, such as calling or writing. When placing these ads, the cost will most likely be based on the length of your PSA and how often it is aired.

Many radio and television stations air announcements on upcoming community events free of charge.

How to Get a PSA Aired

All radio and television stations have an advertisement, public affairs, or promotions department. Get in touch with your local radio stations or television stations and ask them about the procedure for getting a PSA aired, but first ask if they have a free community event announcement in place.

Sample PSAs

Health Fair

Celebrate Your Health!

Join us! [**Name of your organization**] is sponsoring a free community health fair that will focus on the improvement of women's health. This will be your chance to learn about how you can take simple steps to improve your health, while getting your blood pressure and cholesterol screened, and learning your body mass index. Flu shots will also be available. Bring your family, friends, and neighbors on [**date**] to [**location**]. For more information, call [**contact number**].

Monthly Workshops

Pick Your Path to Health Workshops

Take simple steps to better health by attending our workshop for women on "How to Eat Right—for Busy Mothers". Find out how you can incorporate healthful and simple strategies to prepare well-balanced and nutritious meals. Join us on [**date and place**]. To sign up, call [**contact information**].

Creating and Using PSAs

Walks/Runs

It's Easier Than You Think!

Staying active, even walking just 10 minutes a day, can improve your health and protect against heart disease and high blood pressure. Come start your walking regimen by joining the Healthy Heart Walk. [**Date, place, start time**]. Bring your family, friends and neighbors as we all walk paths to better health. For more information, call [**contact info**].

National Women's Health Week

Mother's Rule!

Mother's Day is the first day of National Women's Health Week, and the *Pick Your Path to Health* campaign is celebrating! African American women and Latinas—this is your chance to take a stand against heart disease and HIV. To find out what simple, manageable steps you can take to improve your health, contact the National Women's Health Information Center at 1-800-994-WOMAN, or log on to www.4woman.gov.

Creating and Using Press Releases

Press coverage is an integral part of spreading *Pick Your Path to Health's* messages to the community and to the public at large. In planning an event or activity, it is important to include the media as an essential part of the audience. *Pick Your Path to Health* provides an excellent opportunity to work with the media to highlight your organization's efforts.

To begin, develop a list of appropriate contacts for all types of media: radio, television, and newspapers. The media list should contain the name of the media outlet, as well as the reporter's name, address, phone number, fax number, and e-mail address.

What is a Press Release?

The press release is your basic tool for communicating with the media. Whether you are publicizing an upcoming event or drawing attention to an important issue related to the *Pick Your Path to Health* campaign, your release should stimulate interest. It should also be connected to something concrete that is happening in your area. Including a local angle to any story you are trying to place with the media greatly increases the likelihood of getting coverage.

If you prefer to develop your own release, begin with an attention-grabbing headline and fill the text with supporting details and a quote from someone in your organization or another local expert or activist. Press releases should be brief and easy to read. Keep the length to one or two pages. Also, include a date for the release and the name and phone number of a person the media can contact. You may find that somebody in your group has excellent writing or media experience and can help you with this and other media tasks.

When you have completed your release, check to be sure you have included the basics: the who, what, when, where, and why of the *Pick Your Path to Health*-related event or theme. This information should be in the first few paragraphs of your release. Then print the release on your letterhead and mail it 2 to 3 days ahead of the release date.

Fact Sheets and Background Materials

It is not always possible to include all of the information in a one-page letter or press release. In this case, you may want to include the fact sheet provided in Section I of this kit with your mailings, or you may develop other background materials.

Creating and Using Press Releases

For example, you might develop a one-page description of your organization and a list of experts who can speak about your specific *Pick Your Path To Health* theme.

Fact sheets can also serve to remind the press about the campaign's central theme—taking manageable steps to women's health—when related topics make the news in a local paper or TV station, or in a feature or style column. Fact sheets can also be used as the information basis of a poster, headline, or flyer.

Sample of a Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE CONTACT: [INSERT SPOKESPERSON'S
NAME]
[INSERT DATE]
[INSERT NAME OF ORG.]
[INSERT TELEPHONE #]

[INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME] Joins
National Women's Health Campaign

Recognizing that women have multiple demands on their time and energy, often putting their own needs last on the "to-do" list, the [INSERT LOCAL ORGANIZATION] is joining a nationwide education campaign, *Pick Your Path to Health*, to help women lead healthier lives.

Pick Your Path to Health, a community-based program developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office on Women's Health encourages women to develop lasting good-health habits. Unlike other health programs that focus on single long-term goals such as losing weight or quitting smoking, *Pick Your Path to Health* suggests simple steps that can fit into any woman's hectic schedule. The campaign focuses on health disparities within different ethnic groups, particularly African American, Asian and Pacific Islander, American Indian and Alaska Native women, Latinas, women who live in rural areas, and women with disabilities.

In celebration of the campaign, [INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME] will be sponsoring the following event(s):

- [LIST EVENTS/ACTIVITIES WITH DATES, LOCATIONS, TIMES]

"All of us hear about exercise programs, weight management programs, and stress reduction classes, but finding the time and money to participate is difficult, especially for women," says [INSERT NAME AND TITLE OF OFFICIAL].

Creating and Using Press Releases

“*Pick Your Path to Health* focuses on simple, life-oriented steps such as taking the stairs instead of the elevator or taking 10 minutes alone in quiet time. These are practical and easy ways for women to improve their health—physically, spiritually, and emotionally,” **[INSERT LAST NAME OF OFFICIAL]** notes.

Risks and health requirements vary with lifestyle and circumstance, and women need to be informed so they can take actions to improve their own health. For example, heart disease is the number one killer for women in general, but for Asian and Pacific Islander women, cancer is the number one cause of death. Stroke is the third leading cause of death for American women, but it occurs at a higher rate among African American women and Latinas as compared with Caucasian women.

[INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME] is working with the Office on Women’s Health and other community partners to develop educational events for our area. More information about the *Pick Your Path to Health* campaign is available on the Web at www.4woman.gov/PYPTH or from the local offices of **[INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME]**.

Using Proclamations and Resolutions

Another way to bring recognition to your *Pick Your Path to Health* event is to get resolutions and proclamations at the local city or county level.

Local Proclamations

Ask a local official to issue a *Pick Your Path to Health* or *National Women's Health Week* proclamation in your city or community. To make it easier for the official and his or her ceremonial services staff, it helps for you to draft a proclamation and send it to them with a cover letter explaining the significance of *Pick Your Path to Health*. Indicate your interest in meeting with the official and request an appointment. For the signing, work with the official's staff to alert media. Arrange to have a photographer at the signing and distribute the photo to local papers. Be sure to display your proclamation at your *Pick Your Path to Health* events and reproduce it in newsletters and programs.

On the following pages are samples of a proclamation and resolution that you can use.

Using Proclamations and Resolutions

YOUR TOWN, USA

Proclamation

Whereas, National Women's Health Week was being initiated in the dawn of the new millennium by a coalition of public and private organizations dedicated to raising awareness of women's health issues;

Whereas, From that day forward National Women's Health Week has occurred in the spring with an annual celebration held the week following Mother's Day;

Whereas, National Women's Health Week is a celebration of women taking responsibility for their own health through greater knowledge and understanding;

Whereas, National Women's Health Week celebrates the efforts of national and community organizations working with partners and volunteers to improve awareness of key women's health issues;

Whereas, [Your organization's name] has chosen [your city and state] to officially launch our local efforts.

Now, therefore, I, _____, Mayor of _____, on behalf of [Your organization's name], do hereby proclaim the week following Mother's Day—Sunday May ___ through Saturday May ___, 2005—to be

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HEALTH WEEK

In the _____, I urge all citizens to participate in the activities planned hereforth.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Seal of _____, this ___ day of May 2005.

Mayor

City Clerk

Using Proclamations and Resolutions

YOUR TOWN, USA

Resolution

Whereas, National Women’s Health Week was initiated in 2000 by an alliance of private organizations dedicated to raising awareness of women’s health issues;

Whereas, The formal introduction of National Women’s Health Week occurred in the spring of 2000 and began an annual, national celebration held the week before and following Mother’s Day Sunday;

Whereas, National Women’s Health Week is a celebration of women taking responsibility for their own health through greater knowledge and understanding;

Whereas, National Women’s Health Week celebrates the efforts of local organizations working with partners and volunteers to improve awareness of key women’s health issues; and

Whereas, [Your Organization’s Name], a National Women’s Health Week organization, has worked in the town of [Your Town’s Name], USA, for ____ years/months.

Now, therefore, I, _____, Mayor of _____, on behalf of [Your organization’s name], do hereby proclaim the week following Mother’s Day—Sunday May __ through Saturday May __, 2005—to be

NATIONAL WOMEN’S HEALTH WEEK

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Seal of _____, this ____ day of May 2005.

Mayor

City Clerk

Using Talking Points

What are talking points and how are they used?

This kit provides national talking points, but you will want to create your own for local campaigns. Talking points are used primarily for interviews. The interviews might take place at a press conference during a question-and-answer session or at the end of a press conference during a one-on-one interview with a member of the media. These sessions typically come about in relation to the launch or announcement of a campaign.

Talking points can also be used by speechwriters, who may not be as familiar with the details of a campaign as those directly involved in it. They can help a speaker target statements to the language, perspectives, problems, and concerns of different audiences.

Sample Talking Points

Main Messages:

- This campaign was created both to address disparities among women of different ethnic groups and to provide workable health messages to all women.
- Health messages have long been too vague and overwhelming, and often are not realistic for women's busy lives.
- This campaign will help women take manageable actions to improve their health.

Supporting Points:

- Healthy People 2010 (the nation's agenda for health in the next decade) showed key health disparities between minority women and Caucasian women.
- African American women have a higher mortality rate from heart disease than all other groups of women.
- Alcoholism is more common among American Indian /Alaska Native women than among Caucasian women. The overall impact on American Indian / Alaska Native society has been devastating, with high rates of chronic liver disease, cirrhosis, and Fetal Alcohol Syndrome.

Using Talking Points

- Among women with AIDS, African Americans and Latinas account for more than three-fourths (77 percent) of all AIDS cases as of June 2001, even though they represent less than one-fourth of the U.S. population.
- Asian and Pacific Islander women are less likely to have preventive screenings for disease such as breast and cervical cancer, although cancer is the number one cause of death for Asian and Pacific Islanders.
- African American women are more than twice as likely as Caucasian women to die from breast cancer, and have the highest death rate from breast cancer of all population groups.
- Women tend to be the caretakers in our society—of children, spouses, parents, grandparents, friends and neighbors—often caring for others before themselves.
- This campaign offers health picks for each month to make it easy for women to incorporate simple steps into their busy lives, such as taking the stairs to increase their daily physical activity.

Monthly Themes:

January—Spirituality
February—Weight Management
March—Physical Activity
April—Alcohol
May—Mental Health
June—Responsible Sexual Behavior

July—Drug Abuse
August—Health Care Access
September—Prevention
October—Violence Prevention
November—Tobacco Use
December—Family

National Partners:

National partners contributing valuable time and effort to the campaign include the following: Association of Black Cardiologists, Inc., *Heart & Soul*, International Bottled Water Association, *La Salud Hispana*, National Association of Hispanic Publications, *Northwest Asian Weekly*, *Asian Fortune*, Spirit of Women, The Way of the Heart: The Promotora Institute, as well as many other organizations.