



# Pneumococcal Disease: Hard to say it; easy to get vaccinated

## Tips for Working with the Media

Media outreach plays an integral role in helping to get your messages out to the public. Working with the media can be very beneficial in educating your key audiences about important health information, but it can also be tricky. The following tips will be helpful when contacting reporters about news affecting your community.

- **Create a List of Local Media Contacts (phone, address, email):** Your list of media targets is one of the most important steps in the media relations process. It's important to familiarize yourself with the outlets and the reporters that cover health.
- **Local Angle Is Key:** When pitching media in your local community, it's important to show how your news will directly impact the coverage area for the media outlet (e.g., newspaper, TV and/or radio station). Tailor your cover note for each reporter.
- **Communication Preferences:** Email your feature release to reporters first. When you're ready to follow up by phone, try no more than calling twice. If you still don't reach someone, let it go; they may hold your feature release for a later date.
- **Timing Is Everything:** The best time to contact a reporter is morning and early afternoon.
- **Have Your Spokesperson Ready and Prepared:** A media opportunity can unfold very quickly depending on a reporter's deadline. Have your spokesperson prepared and ready.
- **Be Mindful of Deadlines:** Depending on the media outlet you're contacting, deadlines will vary. Always ask for their deadline.
- **Have Backup Ready:** Many reporters will ask to see the original data, so make sure you have it on-hand.

### 10 Rules of Good Media Relations

1. Practice what you'll say before calling or read your email aloud before sending
2. Keep your pitch concise and focused on your key points
3. Be confident
4. Offer to call a reporter back at a later time if he/she is on deadline
5. Follow up; don't assume a reporter will return your phone call or email
6. Ask for the name of an alternative reporter if the one you've contacted is not appropriate
7. Keep a good record of the reporters you've contacted
8. If a reporter does leave a message, return his/her phone call promptly
9. Invite reporters to your event, if appropriate, and offer on-site interviews
10. Be persistent but not pushy. If a reporter declines the story it's OK to ask why, and offer to keep in touch with future news

## Additional Items to Consider

- Do you have any visuals or tools that might be useful and help encourage them to report on your news?
- Provide a website where the reporter can go for more information.
- Ask the reporter when the story is slated for publication or when it will air.
- Send a thank you note once the story has been published or aired.