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## VIII. Public Relations

Public relations and media outreach are an effective way to generate awareness and excitement about your program and organization to the media and general public. By successfully working with your local media (e.g., newspapers, television, radio, the internet, and cable), you will bring increased visibility and credibility to your program or organization, which can reap tremendous benefits, including attracting new clients, supporters, and funding sources.

On behalf of the Avon Foundation Breast Care Fund, this public relations guide was written to assist in your publicity efforts. The public relations section contains practical and detailed information about generating publicity and samples of the written communication tools you will need to work with the media effectively. Please review this information and select the publicity elements that would be most effective for you and your organization.

Please contact the **Avon Foundation Breast Care Fund Coordinating Center** ([admin@avonbreastcare.org](mailto:admin@avonbreastcare.org)) if you have any questions or need additional information.

After you receive your award letter, you should start to develop a publicity plan to announce your grant. **We ask all grant recipients to begin publicizing the AFBCF grant within 30 days of receipt.** This is of mutual benefit to both your organization and the Avon Foundation and ensures the news is released in a timely manner.

### This public relations section will:

- Give you specific guidelines on how to work with the media.
- Provide detailed information on how to develop your media list, write a press release (using a press release sample template included with this Guide), and follow-up.
- Describe other ways to publicize your grant, including radio public service announcements (sample radio PSAs are included and contained on the disk provided), and the hosting of a press conference or a press event, and how to determine which format is right for your organization.

**Please note:** The Avon Foundation public relations department has an active outreach for national media (such as Today Show, Oprah, CNN, network news, etc) and major newspapers (such as *The New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Washington Post*, etc.). If you have an idea for a story that may be of interest to media of this nature we ask you to contact the **Avon Foundation Breast Care Fund Coordinating Center** before making any outreach to the media.

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## **A. Getting Your News to the Media: The Public Relations Process**

In order to work effectively with the media, there are two basic things you need to know:

(1) The media receives information about “news” through documents called press materials, such as a press release or media advisory. There are samples of both these materials included with this Guide. By using these standard press materials, you will be able to communicate news about your program and to the media, in an informative and effective manner.

(2) It is very important to send your press materials to media that will be interested in news about your program or organization. Targeting your press materials to interested media will help increase your opportunities for media exposure.

Listed below are the steps for writing and distributing your press release to the media which should be completed within 30 days of receipt of your grant award. Information on each step is provided in the following section.

- Step 1.** Acquire, compile, update and formalize a media list of reporters.
- Step 2.** Create your press release adapting the sample template provided.
- Step 3.** Submit all press releases to the AVON FOUNDATION BREAST CARE FUND COORDINATING CENTER for review and approval.
- Step 4.** Locate or take a new photo to accompany the press release, if appropriate.
- Step 5.** Mail, email or deliver press release and photo to media list.
- Step 6.** Identify spokespeople
- Step 7.** Conduct follow-up calls, scheduling interviews if of interest.

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## **B. Steps for Writing and Distributing Press Release**

### **Step 1: Acquire, Compile, Update and Formalize a Media List**

Develop a local media list, which includes the names of contacts from your local television (network affiliates and cable), radio, newspaper, magazines, online media, newsletters and major employer publications (if applicable). As a reminder, do not include major national media even if they are based in your home area. For example, an organization in Chicago should not consider *Oprah* to be local media even though the show is taped in Chicago.

The following resources can be helpful for identifying media contacts – the media itself (magazine, newspaper, TV, radio station, etc) and the editor or reporter's name. Identify the appropriate contact person- such as the health, women's issues or community news producer, assignment editor, general reporter or editor.

- Check the websites of your local media – virtually every magazine, newspaper, TV and radio station has one!
- Look in the yellow pages listings of radio, television, or local cable stations in your area.
- Check your local library for a current copy of *Cision's Media Directories* (formerly known as *Bacon's Media Directories*), which contain the names and contact information various media listed by media category.
- Include weekly and daily newspapers, "shoppers", and "penny savers" on your media list – whatever media is popular in your area, and media outlets that target audiences appropriate to your program, such as ethnic and worksite publications.

Contact the following to see if they can share their media lists with your organization:

- The media or press office in the Office of the Mayor or the City Council.
- The Health Department's public affairs office and other women's services.
- The nearest CDC, NCI and ACS programs (you will find their phone numbers in the Program Guide).

### **Step 2. Create Your Press Release Using the Sample Template Provided**

Provided with this Guide is a press release sample (template) for your use. It is very easy to use and can be very effective. All you have to do is fill in the designated spaces with information about your program. (Electronic copies of all forms are provided with this Guide, and are also available from the Grantees Only section of the AFBCF website, or may be obtained by emailing [admin@avonbreastcare.org](mailto:admin@avonbreastcare.org)). In order to save you time and energy, it is advisable that you use the format we have provided. As you prepare your press release, please remember to:

- Open the file named “Grant Press Release Template” and “fill in the blanks” with your specific, local organization information.
- You or a designated colleague are the “contact” – this is the person who the media will call for more information, and who will make follow up calls. Include your name, affiliation (if any) and daytime telephone number at the top of the press release as the “contact.” Also include **Carolyn Ricci, Avon Foundation for Women, 212-282-5531, [carolyn.ricci@avonfoundation.org](mailto:carolyn.ricci@avonfoundation.org)** as a secondary contact on the press release for questions on the Avon Foundation, as included in the template.
- Add information about breast cancer in your state to attract local interest. You can use the American Cancer Society’s (ACS) 2004-2005 Cancer Facts and Figures included in the Program Guide. Remember to include the credit to ACS on the bottom of the document. You can also contact the ACS by calling 1-800-ACS-2345 or visiting their web site at [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org).
- You may want to include a quote from a local official or community leader in your press release. If so, be sure to get authorization directly from the person for any quotes that you use.
- Print out the final approved press release on your organization’s letterhead.
- IN ADDITION: If you are having an event within a few weeks of your press announcement, include a “media advisory” with the press release to invite members of the media to see your program in action. The alert should be a simple bullet point list of the facts of the event, including details on date, time, place, special guests, purpose of the program/event, as well as contact name and telephone number. (A media advisory template is also included with this Guide.)

If there is no event scheduled close to your initial press release, you can send a separate media advisory 2-3 weeks in advance of a later event to generate additional media coverage.

**Step 3. Submit Press Release to AVON FOUNDATION BREAST CARE FUND COORDINATING CENTER for Approval**

Please send your press materials to the AVON FOUNDATION BREAST CARE FUND COORDINATING CENTER for review. We will forward your press release to the Avon Foundation for final approval. Your organization should not distribute the press materials to the media without review. If you have a specific question related to the Avon Foundation, the Avon Foundation Breast Care Fund will contact the Avon Foundation on your behalf.

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**Step 4. Locate or Take a New Photo to Accompany the Press Release**

Take a photo that illustrates the service your breast care program offers or the population served. Send the photo, along with the press release, to all print media.

- The photo should show your organization “in action” -- events or health fairs, Mammovan or screening facility, staff or volunteers interacting with women, etc. Be sure to have the permission and names of people in the photo.
- Photo size should be the standard 4” x 6” or 5” x 7”, or a digital image. Confirm if your newspaper prefers color or B&W. If you are sending a digital photo via email or disk, confirm the photo format requirements.
- Type a concise 2-3 sentence photo caption describing the activity, identifying the people (from left to right), and giving the date and place the photo was taken. A very brief caption could be, “*Jane Doe, left, consulting with counselor Mary Smith at the new offices of the Downtown Breast Cancer Center on January 8, 2006. The new facility offers a variety of breast cancer support services funded with a grant from the Avon Foundation for Women.*” Include your organization’s contact name and number. Print the caption on your organization’s letterhead or label and tape to the photo or disk. (Do not write on the back of a photo -- this will damage the quality for reproduction).
- Remember to get written authorization from anyone in the photo and to protect patient privacy. A sample release form is provided on page 116.

**Step 5. Mail Press Release and Photo to Media List**

- Sending the press materials to the specific contacts that you identified in creating your media list. You may want to attach a brief personal note with each press release, particularly if you know the person.

**Step 6. Spokespeople**

- Select one or more interested interview subjects (breast cancer survivor, program spokesperson) identified in advance, and discuss the purpose and key messages of an interview with them.
- Be sure the selected spokesperson is correct for the reporter’s need. If possible, find out the needs or “angle” of the story prior to the interview. Provide the spokesperson with the name and affiliation of the reporter and supply the sample questions to prepare for the interview. If the interview is with a breast cancer survivor or client, be sure someone from the program accompanies her (or him) to ensure there will be correct and complete information about your program.

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**Step 7. Conduct Follow-Up**

- The person handling publicity should plan to call each media outlet a few days after sending the press materials to confirm receipt and to offer further information and/or an interview with the Executive Director or head of your program. This personal contact can help build interest in your program and a relationship with the reporters. Remember, however, to be concise and considerate of the reporter's time.
- If a particular reporter or editor says he or she is not interested in writing about your program, ask if someone else on staff may be interested in covering the story (suggest that the story run in one of the following sections: "Metro/Community Affairs," "Women's Pages," "Features," "Health News," "Social/Events"). Offer to serve as a resource if the reporter decides to cover the issue of breast cancer at a later date. Again, be concise and considerate of the reporter's time.
- Keep in mind that reporters will be interested in any timely national news or controversies related to breast cancer. You may use any such developments as "news hooks" to engage media interest, but be sure to involve your Medical Director or any other specialists from your program as spokespersons if the topic requires it. No one should answer questions outside their own area of expertise.
- Continue to send press releases and media alerts on newsworthy events or developments to the contacts you make during this initial public relations outreach. If they don't cover your announcement immediately, they may be interested in doing a story on your program and services at a later date, especially when you have "success stories" and program statistics to share.
- Submit your final press release with your three-month report to the AVON FOUNDATION BREAST CARE FUND COORDINATING CENTER, along with a summary of other ways in which you have publicized your grant.
- Please send the AVON FOUNDATION BREAST CARE FUND COORDINATING CENTER copies of all news coverage you received, with each copy indicating the name, date and publication or station of the article or news broadcast. For TV, you may include a listing of the station, date, time, and program, as well as a brief recap of the news report; video is not needed. You may send news coverage as it appears, or wait to submit a final report. It is very important that you submit these media reports so we are able to track coverage of the Avon Foundation funded programs.

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## C. Additional Methods to Generate Publicity

### Press Conference and Press Events

The purpose of a *press conference* is to announce timely, substantive news to a group of invited reporters and journalists gathered specifically to learn of this news. Selected spokespersons, clients, VIPs and others would be present for Q&A and interviews.

In contrast, a *press event* is when you invite members of the media to see a program activity or to tour your facility. You can also announce the grant here, but there is more than simply announcing news.

If you would like to hold a press conference or press event, assess the following to determine if you are likely to get a good turnout (e.g. group of reporters):

- 1) Size of your city or town;
- 2) Number of available local media outlets;
- 3) Amount of time or people you have to plan an event;
- 4) Uniqueness of your program;
- 5) VIP's who would officiate at the press conference (e.g. having the mayor of your city, or a celebrity, greatly increases your chance for news coverage).

Most likely, smaller cities and towns will have more success with a press conference or press event than in the larger markets where there is far greater news to cover. Likewise, first time grants or very unique programs will have more success with these formats.

### Which Press Event Is Right for You?

Holding either type of media event to announce your receipt of the grant can be a successful option. The topic is newsworthy – (1) you are one of a select group of programs across the country funded by the Avon Foundation Breast Care Fund; and, (2) your program was deemed one of the best of a total pool of hundreds of applications.

Hosting a media event gives you the opportunity to highlight or “kick-off” your funded program. It also gives you a platform from which to talk about your ongoing work in the field of breast health care and describe previous successes. A media event will generate news coverage partly because it provides a “photo opportunity” for local newspapers, or necessary “footage” (e.g. video) for a TV station to accompany a local feature story. Offering the visual element to a media outlet may increase your chances of obtaining news coverage. In all cases, there must be true “news value” to the media and the readers and viewers.

The following are guidelines for both publicity options:

- Invite local/state officials to your event by contacting their press office. Their press offices may help with media event planning. (Note: presence of civic leaders or politicians may require special security or other considerations).

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- Invite a breast cancer survivor to speak. This may be your previously selected spokesperson.
  - Create “message points” – usually three key ideas or facts you want to communicate -- and review these message points with your speakers ahead of time. Set a time limit for each guest speaker of no more than a few minutes each. This helps to ensure that you are consistently relaying the same concise message. As a rule, there should be about three key message points. (See *Key Facts to Communicate*, page 112 in this Program Guide for assistance.)
  - Write a Media Advisory by following the sample template provided with this Guide. Issue a Media Advisory 1-2 weeks in advance of the event, and follow up with a call to media the day before and/or the morning of the event. Most news editors decide in the morning what events they will cover that day.
  - If possible, schedule your media event between 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 P.M., avoiding Monday, Friday and weekends, to maximize potential attendance and coverage. Also, if other big national or local news is “breaking” or taking place at the same time as yours, consider postponing the event.
  - Keep the media event to a maximum of 30 minutes. The media does not want to sit through long speeches. Each person should speak for no longer than 3-7 minutes. There should be no more than three speakers.
  - Create a “photo opportunity” for the media. This could be as simple as a photo illustrating the services your program provides. Or ask your local Avon District Sales Manager to present a mock “grant check” to you in the amount of your grant (See *Guidelines for Working with Avon District Sales Managers*, in this Program Guide for assistance). Be sure to create a mock “grant check” that is large enough to clearly show the funding amount in a photograph.
  - Hand out a press kit (an information packet) to reporters attending the event. Your press kit should include the following, in this order: the press release announcing your grant, a fact sheet on your organization and program, and a fact sheet on the Avon Foundation Breast Cancer Crusade. (See *Avon Foundation Breast Cancer Crusade Fact Sheet* in this Program Guide).
  - Following the event, send the press kit (with photo and caption) to all local media who did not attend the event.

Please remember to conduct follow-up calls to each media outlet a few days after mailing the press materials.

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## D. Public Service Announcements

Another option is to create a public service announcement (PSA) for the radio. A PSA is a free “spot” that radio stations donate to community groups to promote their programs and services to the general public.

There are two basic formats for a PSA: a script is provided that the local “on-air talent” reads, or a fully produced spot, ready to air, is created and delivered to the stations. We expect most of you will prefer the script, unless you can enlist a production company to donate their services to produce a “spot”.

When providing a script, the copy should be double-spaced on plain paper, with a contact name, organization, and telephone number at the top of the page. It should be written to be 25-30 seconds when spoken at a normal rate.

Identify radio stations in your local area that reach the appropriate audience for your program. Send the station General Manager a personalized cover letter indicating the purpose of the PSA and your preferred time of airing with a "customized" copy of this PSA (identify the specific radio station's call letters, for example “...WXXX and {name of your program} want you to know...”In your letter, it is important that you highlight the value of your program to the station’s listeners and the community at large. PSAs may only run if they are of *public service*.

### **SAMPLE 2010 PSA- 30-SECOND RADIO TEMPLATE #1** **SUBJECT: Early Detection & Awareness**

Breast cancer is the leading cause of death in women age 40-55. And men can get breast cancer, too.

Early detection gives the best chance of finding breast cancer early—before it can be felt. The good news is that five-year survival after treatment for early-stage breast cancer is now 97%.

{Name of your organization and program} wants you to know more about early detection and can help you find affordable or no-cost services, including mammograms.

For more information, please call {your organization’s phone number}. Again, that number is {your organization’s phone number}.

This message has been brought to you by {Name of your organization} and {radio station call letters}.

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**SAMPLE 2010 PSA- 30 SECOND RADIO TEMPLATE #2**  
**SUBJECT: Education/Special Event**

Breast cancer is the most common form of cancer for women in the U.S. and men can get breast cancer, too. Early detection offers the best chance for successful treatment. Do you know all you need to know about breast cancer? On {date and time}, at the {location}, the {name of your organization} will be presenting a {identify event, e.g.: health fair, seminar, etc.} and offering {describe main activity only, e.g.: free mammograms, free educational material, seminar etc.}. Call {your organization's phone number}, to learn more. Again, that number is {your organization's phone number}.

This message has been brought to you by {name of your organization} and {radio station call letters}, who want you to take good care of your health.

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## E. Key Facts to Communicate

Listed below are key facts about the Avon Foundation Breast Care Fund, the Avon Foundation Breast Cancer Crusade and breast cancer. We encourage you to highlight this information in literature about your program and during media interviews. In addition to these facts, you should make a list of the most important facts about your program that you want to communicate to the public and the media. Refer to these “message points” prior to interviews to refresh your memory.

- **The money for the Avon Foundation Breast Care Fund comes from the Avon Foundation Breast Cancer Crusade.** Funds are raised through the sale of Crusade fundraising products, concerts, races, walks and other special events around the world; the U.S. *Avon Walk for Breast Cancer* series; and the global *Walk Around the World for Breast Cancer*.
- **Since 1993, the Avon Foundation Breast Cancer Crusade has awarded more than 1,300 grants to local breast cancer organizations** in the U.S. whose programs improve access for medically underserved women to breast health education and early detection services.
- **Early detection saves lives.** Current statistics show that five years after diagnosis, more than 97% of women who find breast cancer at its earliest stages are alive and well. However, lower income, older and minority women are at increased risk of dying from breast cancer since the disease is often diagnosed at later stages in these women.
- **The goal of a breast health program is to save women's lives by promoting detection of breast cancer in its earliest, most treatable stages.** The Avon Foundation for Women advocates for empowering women of all ages by ensuring they have access to medical experts with whom to discuss breast health and the knowledge to make informed decisions with their doctors on breast health care, early detection screening for breast cancer, breast cancer risk and risk reduction strategies.
- **Barriers to early detection vary widely based on population, culture, age, country of origin, and geography.** Some of these barriers include fear of discovering cancer; a lack of understanding that screening must be done on a regular basis, inability to pay for early detection services, lack of physician referral, fear of dying from cancer, inability to navigate the healthcare system, language barriers, and myths and misinformation about cancer and its treatment.

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## **Dos and Don'ts**

**Do Say...** Early detection

**Don't Say...** Prevention or protection

**Do Say...** Breast cancer survivors or women diagnosed with breast cancer

**Don't Say...** Breast cancer victims

**Do Say...** Successful treatment

**Don't Say...** Cure

**Do Say...** It is important for women to get to know their own bodies through breast self awareness and immediately report any changes to their doctor

**Don't Emphasize...** Breast self exam, which has never been demonstrated to affect breast cancer survival

**Do Say...** That it is important to know your family history, to ask your parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and siblings about their medical and cancer history

**Don't Say...** Medical history is an absolute indicator of risk.  
All women are at risk.