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Strategic Media Advocacy for Enforcement of Underage Drinking Laws

Prepared by

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Introduction

- *A local coalition trying to reduce youth access to alcohol would like to generate more media coverage for its "shoulder-tap" project. But coalition leaders don't know how to get more coverage or exactly how that coverage is going to help them reach their goal.*

- Another coalition is partnering with local law enforcement agencies to educate local merchants about laws that prohibit alcohol sales to minors. They are ready and willing to answer calls from the media, but few reporters are calling—and those that do call never seem to ask the right questions.

- Yet another coalition is frustrated by media stories that treat underage drinking as a "natural right of passage" and never cover the serious problems caused by underage drinking or strategies that could reduce these problems. They would like to see better stories but feel helpless to have an impact on the way the media covers their issue.

The concerns expressed in the stories above are not uncommon and the strategy that can address all of these situations is media advocacy – the proactive use of news media to get a message out. This guide can help empower organizations to take control of the media messages about underage drinking portrayed in the news. Media advocacy has been used throughout the country to influence media coverage of a wide variety of health issues. In the alcohol area, it has been used to draw attention to the marketing of "alcopops" and alcohol energy drinks to kids and to generate support for alcohol enforcement and policy changes aimed at creating safer and healthier community environments.

When the UDETC first published its guide to media advocacy in 1999, it focused on how to get appropriate and useful coverage from traditional news media – television, radio, and newspapers. Since that time, the news landscape had been dramatically altered. People still read newspapers, but

they are likely to read them on their laptop or cell phone rather than sitting at the kitchen table getting ink on their hands. And if they want to talk back to the news they read or make their own news, they have a multitude of choices: They can make online comments on the newspaper's website or they can twitter or blog for friends, acquaintances, and ultimately the whole world. Audiences have so many choices about where to get information that they may be overwhelmed.

Yes, the landscape has changed. The tools available for getting important messages about underage drinking – or any other health and social issue – out to the general public and policy makers have proliferated. They are likely to continue to evolve so fast that manuals like this cannot be written and published before they appear outdated and quaint. But the fundamental goals remain the same and many of the strategies for accomplishing these goals also remain the same:

- Advocates still have to find ways of getting the attention of the public and policy makers.
- Advocates still need to frame the issues that they want people to understand in ways that will create healthier environments.
- Advocates still need to know how to work with traditional news media to get their message out in an effective way.

Especially in an evolving media world, there is an important place for media advocacy to empower people to proactively tell their own story. Now, more than ever, organizations that want to prevent underage drinking or to intervene in other health and social problems can take charge of their own message.

In the past, it was easy to see the news media as a force that was inflicted on us rather than an institution that we could influence. These days, it is more possible than ever before for organizations to make their own news *and* to influence the coverage they receive from traditional news outlets. Media advocacy is an approach to media that helps people tell their own story rather than wait passively for news media to "get it right."

When people think of media advocacy, they often think of simply getting a news story in the local paper or on television. But media advocacy can refer to a very wide range of activities, especially since the proliferation of electronic media has greatly widened the definition of "news coverage." It can include such things as:

- Knowing how to initiate and respond to calls from reporters;
- Designing good visual images for television or for online media;

- Staging effective media events;
- Writing letters to the editor or op-ed pieces for the newspaper;
- Getting featured in online news blogs or other online news sources;
- Using social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, or Twitter to garner support and advance policy and alcohol enforcement goals;
- Developing long-term relationships with editors, reporters, and producers; and
- Getting the message out about important policy related developments or alcohol enforcement efforts.

The list could go on. The important characteristic of all these activities is that they be planned and used strategically to accomplish your policy and action goals. Regardless of the specific strategy used to draw attention to issues, the key to success is to focus on the most effective messages and the most effective way to get those messages out.

When people think of using the media to solve social problems, too often their imaginations are limited by what they've seen or done before. Posters, bumper stickers, and public service announcements become the media tools of choice, not because there is any evidence that those tools work, but because these are the tools they've used—or seen used—before.

A traditional media approach to reducing underage alcohol use might focus on giving people a message—that is, "Kids should not drink." The goal would be to persuade individual kids or parents to change their behavior. Often this type of approach can appear to have an impact. For example, *x* number of people might see or hear the message and remember it. They might even change their behavior as a result.

One of the problems with this approach, however, is that it ignores the fact that individual decision-making is influenced by the environment in which those decisions are made. Are merchants allowed to get away with selling alcohol to kids? Does advertising glamorize alcohol use without showing the negative consequences? Are there effective enforcement efforts in place to prevent youth access to alcohol? These questions are left out of the equation if the focus is solely on individual decision-making about drinking.

Media advocacy provides advocates with a framework for thinking about solutions in a broader context. Although many people feel powerless to affect the way the news media cover social issues, media advocates consider the news media their primary tool. Media advocacy focuses on changing the amount of coverage social issues receive in the news media and, more importantly, the *type* of news coverage they receive.

Media advocates seek to guide attention to issues in such a way that the *policy* implications of the problem, not just the individual implications, are

the primary focus. For example, in the early 1960s, a huge public relations effort was designed to reduce traffic fatalities. It defined the problem by saying "there's a nut behind the wheel" and encouraged drivers to drive defensively by "watching out for the other guy." The implication was that crazy drivers were the cause of traffic fatalities and that drivers would be okay as long as they took care of themselves.

But consumer advocate Ralph Nader said that the problem had been defined incorrectly. It's not the nut behind the wheel, he said, it's that the nuts and bolts that are supposed to be holding the car together aren't safe. By redefining the problem from the drivers of the car to the car itself, Nader allowed for a whole range of public policy advances—from mandatory seatbelts and airbags to improved bumpers and safety glass—that would never have become part of the discussion if the problem had remained narrowly defined as one of bad drivers loose on the roads.

Traditional media approaches, such as public relations or social marketing—and the news media itself—tend to portray social issues primarily from the perspective of what *individuals* can do to help themselves (e.g., stop smoking, practice safe sex, don't drink and drive, etc.), rather than what *society* can do to alleviate or prevent the problems. These approaches often try to change people's behavior by giving them more information about their health-related behaviors. While knowledge about health is undoubtedly important, this focus on individual responsibility can have the effect of leaving policy discussions off of the agenda. This guide focuses on media advocacy—using media to alter the public health and safety environment.

Definition

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Media advocacy has been defined as the strategic use of media to advance a social or public policy goal.

One part of that definition in particular is worth noting: media advocacy is aimed at *advancing policy goals.* Not all media strategies are designed to advance a policy. Traditional public relations, for example, are often more concerned with advancing the name of the organization than the policy goals being pursued by that organization. Media advocates, however, consider advancing their policy goals to be more important than generating media attention for themselves.

Social marketing focuses on trying to get individuals to change their behavior, for instance, by not drinking and driving or by quitting smoking. Media advocacy is more concerned with changing the environment within which individuals make their behavioral decisions.

Consider a traditional media campaign designed to prevent drunk driving by encouraging people to use a designated driver. A media advocacy approach might attack the same problem by focusing on the need for zero tolerance policies, which have been proven to be effective in reducing drunk driving.

Another important part of the definition of media advocacy is the emphasis on the *strategic* use of the media. Thinking strategically is key to successful media advocacy.

Media advocates are constantly confronted with situations that call for strategic thinking. Does it make sense to hold a press conference, for example, when a few phone calls to reporters may generate just as much press coverage? When a reporter asks a question, what is the real information you want to make sure they get?

The point is that media advocacy is driven by strategic thinking. The result has been an approach that blends science, policy and advocacy to advance public health goals. Every step of the process—from the decision to use the media in the first place to how to answer a specific question from a reporter—should be determined by what makes the most strategic sense for your goals.

The table below provides a quick comparison between traditional framing of an issue and a media advocacy approach.

Traditional Media	Strategic Media Advocacy
Focuses only on attitudes	Focuses on shaping attitudes, affecting policy, and building social movements
Responds/reacts to media inquiries	Proactively seeks media attention
Views media as a threat	Views media as a useful tool
Responds passively to media framing	Works to shape media coverage
Defines problems from an individual perspective	Defines problems from a policy perspective

Framing

When you look at a picture hanging on a wall, the frame around the picture serves a purpose: it defines for you where the picture is and isn't. The frame tells you exactly where to look to see the picture—not to look over to the left or up above or over there.

In a less literal way, news stories are also framed. By necessity, reporters and editors have to choose how to describe an issue, what information to leave in their story, and what information to leave out. Even the most detailed story you read in *The New York Times* will contain only a fraction of the information available to the reporter and editors who put it together. The decisions that are made about what to put in and what to leave out of a news story frame the story and tell the news reader or viewer how to look at the issue being reported.

There are many factors that influence the decision about what goes into and what gets left out of a story: the information that is provided by the reporter's sources; the personal beliefs and experiences of the reporter and editors; the editorial philosophy of the news organization; the time or space available for the story; previous reporting that has been done on similar stories, etc. These decisions are typically made without conscious awareness of how they affect the framing of the story.

If a reporter is working on a general story about alcohol and young people, the story is likely to focus on how much kids drink, why kids drink, where kids drink, etc. If the reporter working on that story talks only to law enforcement representatives working for better enforcement of youth alcohol laws, the story is likely to focus on the problems associated with minors having easy access to alcohol, the positive contributions to the community made by reducing youth access to alcohol, how effective policies could reduce youth access to and consumption of alcohol, and examples of successful partnerships between community advocacy groups and law enforcement agencies.

If the reporter were to talk only with representatives of the alcohol industry, the story would probably focus on what programs the industry has to cut down on underage drinking and how there really isn't a need for more policies, which would cause

inconvenience for adult customers.

Ideally, of course, news stories will be based on a variety of sources. This means that a lot of different points of view will be competing to influence how the story is framed. The fact is, however, that certain aspects of alcohol problems tend to be neglected in news stories. For example, a recent study found that the news media seriously underreport the role alcohol plays in violent crimes, injuries and traffic crashes.[1] If you want to make sure that your issue becomes part of the framing of news stories , you need to

- be sure you get your perspective covered in the news
- be sure you express your points of view in a convincing manner.

What Coverage is Already Out There?

It is important to know what kind of coverage your issue is already getting. What angles are news stories featuring? Who are the spokespersons being utilized. Throughout any effort to utilize media advocacy, following existing (and sometimes competing) coverage is important. This can be done by paying attention to local and national media as a regular media consumer, but can be done very easily now by signing up for a Google Alert on your topic (www.google.com/alerts).

How To Frame

In scholarly journals, issues are framed by science and detailed data. In mass media, issues are framed by labels and symbols. The key to framing an issue is to be aware of how the labels and symbols you use express more complex thoughts. This doesn't mean that when you deal with news stories, science and facts go out the window—far from it. In fact, an environmental approach to prevention relies on science. The symbols and labels you use when framing a news story should reflect that science.

Seemingly subtle differences in labels can convey very different underlying meanings. Consider two possible headlines for a story about a local program working to improve enforcement of youth alcohol laws:

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1 Slater, M., Long, M., Ford, V. Alcohol, Illegal Drugs, Violent Crime, and Traffic-Related and Other Unintended Injuries in U.S. Local and National News. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol, Vol. 67, 2006.*

Even without reading the story, two different messages are conveyed by these different headlines. The first headline focuses on what is being done *to* the merchants; even the word "sting" can imply a trap or an unfair ambush. Merchants, or people who are sympathetic to merchants, may have a negative feeling about the story before they even read it. The second headline focuses on a solution: improving the enforcement of laws. This headline implies cooperation and suggests a positive approach to a community problem. Even merchants who see this headline may feel positively toward the story right from the beginning.

Sometimes, what gets left out of a message can communicate as much as what gets put in. Consider the messages conveyed by this headline:

What does this headline convey to you? From a prevention perspective, do you think this would be a positive or negative story? What if the following quote appeared in the story: "It is gratifying that so many young people are displaying so much responsibility and watching out for the safety of their peers," said a local health official.

On the face of it, there may not be much to argue with in the statement from the local health official. But what if that is all that was said? Aren't there some important messages that have been left out?

Consider that driving while impaired is only one safety risk associated with drinking. By leaving out the other risks, is there an implication that these risks aren't significant or not as important as driving while impaired? And doesn't the idea of a young, inexperienced (albeit sober) driver driving a group of his or her intoxicated friends raise additional safety concerns?

And what about the fact that the story under this headline is about teen drinking—an illegal, unsafe activity? If the story leaves out or downplays youth access to alcohol issues, what message does that convey about teen drinking in general? But what if there had been a different quote from the health official, for example: "While it's important to avoid drinking and driving, there are many other risks associated with drinking—and teens, of course, should not have access to alcohol in the first place."

In roughly the same number of words, a very different message is conveyed. If this second quote was used in the story, the framing of the story would be very different.

But How Did That Quote Get in There?

How do you make sure that the quotation that you think is most important is what appears in the story? If you are talking to a reporter for a traditional media outlet, you may feel that you have little control over what quotations appear in the final story since you're not the one asking the questions or making the final editing decisions. You have more control over what goes into the story than you may realize.

When a reporter asks a question, most people do what comes naturally—they answer it. Every time you are asked a question, however, you have many options as to how you respond. For example, there are many different possible answers for virtually any question that is asked.

You have other options as well. If you think that a different question would be more appropriate, you could suggest a different question and answer it instead. Or, you could suggest that the reporter ask that question of someone else—someone with more experience or credibility on that particular subject. In some cases, you may be better off simply saying you don't have an answer but would be glad to get more information and call the reporter back.

How Does This Work in Practice?

Consider how the two quotes about designated drivers might have come up during an interview. In one example, the health official might have simply answered the questions as they were asked:

Reporter: Hello, I'm doing a story about how more teens are using designated drivers; do you agree that it is safer for kids to use designated drivers?

Health Official: Designated drivers? I'm not sure if more young people are using them or not, but I suppose that, overall, it's safer if they don't drink and drive.

Reporter: That's great. Any other comment?

Health Official: Not about designated drivers, no.

Reporter: Thank you for your time.

Health Official: Thank you.

Now, how could that interview have gone if the health official considered other options when asked the same question?

Reporter: Hello, I'm doing a story about how more teens are using designated drivers; do you agree that it is safer for kids to use designated drivers?

Health Official: Designated drivers? Well, I'd be happy to talk with you about that, but while it's important to not drink and drive, there are many other risks associated with drinking. Teens, of course, should not have access to alcohol in the first place.

Reporter: What are some of these other risks?

Health Official: There are many health risks for teens who use alcohol. Teens who drink are more likely to be victims of interpersonal violence, drowning, suicide, or alcohol poisoning, just to name a few. And, of course, when you talk about teens and drinking you really should mention that, for teenagers, alcohol is an illegal drug. How are they getting access to this substance in the first place?

Reporter: That's a good point. Is there anything being done to try to keep kids from getting alcohol?

Health Official: Sure! I'd be happy to talk with you about some local efforts that are doing just that. I can also connect you with some other resources if you'd like.

You can see how the different approaches taken to the interview would likely result not only in different quotes being used but also, possibly, a whole different frame to the story. In this example, an interview that started about designated drivers quickly shifted to a focus on youth access to alcohol.

What Is Your Goal?

Before you put any news information out for publication, you need to consider what your goal is. Are you trying to get publicity for your organization? Are you trying to support local efforts to improve youth access compliance? Are you trying to focus on the role of merchants or alcohol companies?

When you talk with a reporter or provide an online comment on a news story, your underlying goal should tell you how to frame your response. Consider this common question:

Why do kids drink?

There are a lot of different answers to that question, and whether they are designed to do so or not, the different answers serve different goals.

- Answer: *It's against the law for kids to drink, but the community has not made it clear to law enforcement agencies that they should address this issue. Law enforcement agencies need to know that this community wants enforcing underage drinking laws to be a very, very high priority.*

  Goal: Support law enforcement efforts.

- Answer: Kids who drink do so for a lot of reasons, but to find an answer to this problem we need to turn to those who know kids best: their own peers. Kids aren't the problem; they need to be part of the solution.

  Goal: Support and encourage programming that involves kids in addressing underage drinking issues.

- Answer: *One reason kids drink is because they can; as a community, we're making it altogether too easy for them to get alcohol.*

  Goal: Support policies related to reducing underage drinking.

- Answer: *Advertising can make alcohol seem very appealing to kids; why should we be surprised when they respond to that advertising?*

  Goal: Raise awareness of or support policies to restrict alcohol marketing.

These four different answers to this common question convey very different meanings and support different goals. These different answers could have a lot of influence on how an overall story is framed. Another common answer to the question, "why do kids drink?" is: *Peer pressure—they want to fit in with their friends.*

This answer doesn't directly support any policy goal. It makes drinking seem like a natural part of growing up and something that is impossible to stop. Providing this answer to the question would work *against* any environmental policy strategy designed to reduce underage drinking.

Remember: Even if a reporter is the one asking the questions, you have the ability to provide different answers to those questions and, by using that ability wisely, you can have a powerful influence on how the story is framed. You can help make sure that *they get the story right.*

Here's another common question related to youth access to alcohol:

Where do kids get alcohol?

Consider these different answers and goals:

- Answer: *They usually steal it from their parents; in some cases, the parents actually give it to them.*

  Goal: Put responsibility on the parents.

- Answer: They use fake IDs, get a friend to get it for them—kids are very clever and difficult to stop.

  Goal: Put responsibility on the kids.

- Answer: They get it from stores. Storekeepers need to do a better job of checking IDs.

  Goal: Put responsibility on the stores.

Which of the above answers makes the most sense to you? Who do *you* think is responsible? What is *your* goal? How would *you* answer this question? The different answers above imply very different solutions to the problem.

It's a question you are likely to hear quite often so knowing ahead of time how you want to frame the question—who you think is responsible and what is the solution—is important.

Since media advocacy is an approach to using the media to advance your policy goals, those goals should influence all of your contacts with the media. In other words, interaction you have with the media—every single question you are asked—should be seen as an opportunity to advance your goals.

A useful exercise for staying focused on your goals and anticipating opportunities to advance your goals is to complete these two sentences:

1. Every story about youth and alcohol should include _____.

2. Every story about _____ should include youth and alcohol.

For question 1, possible answers to fill in the blank include

- "information about our program"
- "how reducing access to alcohol is the most effective means for reducing alcohol problems for youth"
- "effective strategies for enforcing youth access laws"

For question 2, possible answers include

- "car crashes involving teens"
- "high school social events"
- "adolescence"

How would *you* fill in those blanks?

Framing for Access

Getting into the news is easier than it was when only traditional outlets were available. But local newspapers, television, and radio are still very important ways of getting public and political attention. Getting the attention of the news media isn't always easy, of course. You might think you have the most important story in the world, but if media gatekeepers don't think it's significant, interesting, or new, your story won't be carried in these media outlets. In addition, given the many media sources that people can turn to for news, getting the attention of your target audience is also challenging.

Here are some examples of questions that reporters ask themselves about a potential story's newsworthiness. They are the same questions you should ask yourself when designing a news story to maximize impact and appeal to audiences:

- *Is the story timely?* Has the story already been reported somewhere else? Does it concern a topic of current interest to readers or viewers, or would it be considered boring to the public?

- *Is there a built-in conflict?* Are there two different policies being supported as a solution to a problem? Are there people who object to the public health approach you are supporting? Like it or not, news media and audiences are attracted by conflict—if you don't give it to

them, they may look for it anyway.

- *Is the story about a breakthrough or milestone?* Is this the "first" or "biggest" or "most successful"?

- *Is there a good picture?* A good photo opportunity will make newspapers more likely to want to cover your event: without good visuals, television stations will not have interest in covering your event. It is easier than ever to post online videos and photographs, but they have to be interesting or they are unlikely to draw much attention.

- *Is there a personal angle?* Can the story be illustrated by how it affects one person or one family? Is there a "human interest" side to your story?

- Community/Population of interest. Media outlets must reach many consumers in order to stay profitable. Oftentimes, some demographic groups (and stories that appeal to them) are of greater interest than others. Contact advertisers and see who they're advertising to-those can often be your target markets-folks that are interested in your story.

Fortunately, youth access to alcohol is an issue that contains many newsworthy elements. Your job as a media advocate is to make sure you highlight those elements that are most newsworthy.

Example: If you publish a story or tell a reporter that you have a study about youth access to alcohol, it may be of some interest. If you say that you have personal stories of kids who know how easy it is to buy alcohol near their school, it will be of more interest. If you can tell a story about kids who are voluntarily working with law enforcement officials to improve enforcement of youth access laws despite political opposition from the business community, your story will be of great interest.

Framing—"Media Bites"

Anyone who has been interviewed for a local television news program knows the drill: first, you get the call from the producer asking if you are available for the interview. Then, you set up a time for the video crew to come and tape the interview. In the intervening time, you might cram over factsheets to make sure you are up on the latest information, talk to your coworkers about what you should say, straighten up your office (and yourself), and maybe call friends and relatives to let them know you'll be on TV that night. When the crew arrives, you drop everything to help them find a place to set up. While they're setting up the lights and the camera, you talk nervously with the producer and/or interviewer. Finally, the interview begins. Under the hot lights, you are asked a few questions and give the best answers you can. You may be asked to repeat a few. The interview may be over in five minutes; it may go as long as 20 minutes. Half of your day has been devoted to getting ready for and conducting the interview.

After all of this investment—*if* you did a really good job—you may end up on the news that night for...10 seconds. If you're talking with a newspaper reporter, the process is similar and, again, *if* you're good, you might end up with a sentence or two in the finished story.

Does that make it a waste of your time? Is the payoff worth your time and effort?

It may seem like you've spent too much time preparing for too little in return. Besides, you have so much to say on this topic! How can 10 seconds be worth it?

Fortunately, it is possible to have a lot of impact in 10 seconds. (How long did it take General MacArthur to say "I shall return"?) The key is knowing what you want to say so that you use your 10 seconds strategically. What you need is a good "media bite"—a succinct sentence or two that conveys your most important message.

There are certain components that help make a good media bite. By definition, media bites need to be short: ideally, 10 to 15 seconds or one or two sentences. While a short media bite may not convey the entire depth of what you want to say, a short bite can express the meaning. Think of the most in-depth article you've read in *The New York Times.* That article contained a headline and a lead paragraph that expressed the essence of what the rest of the story was about. A good media bite will do the same thing. Even when you are generating your own news story through blogs or other means, a good media bite will attract attention and get your story quoted and reproduced on other websites or twitter feeds.

Examples of Good Media Bites

Good media bites are often memorable. Not necessarily memorable in the same way that a slogan is, but in the sense of expressing an idea so eloquently that people will remember what you said.

> **Example:** Parents who are worried about drugs should worry about the illegal drug that is most likely to kill their kids tonight: beer.

Sometimes good media bites are surprising or humorous. Even in a short bite, you can express an idea in an original way and still get your point across.

> **Example:** We don't have any teenagers in our high school. They're all 21—and they have the photo IDs to prove it.

Although the public health facts about underage drinking are on your side, expressing those facts in a memorable way is important. Statistics can be boring. A good media bite can express complicated data in a memorable way.

> **Example:** College students spend more money on beer than they do on books.

Alcohol problems are often seen as a weakness or failure on the part of individuals. Shifting the focus to an environmental perspective of the problem can be difficult. Media bites can help achieve this shift in focus.

> **Example:** Kids today are swimming in a sea of beer—beer ads, beer sales, keg parties. Sure, we should teach them to swim, but we should also try to stop the flood.

What Makes a Media Bite "Good"?

If you are dealing with traditional news media, a media bite needs to be good enough to get on the air or in the article. If you don't get quoted, it doesn't much matter what you said. If you are using other media formats, you still have to draw the attention and interest of the audience. Beyond their catchiness or appeal, media bites aren't inherently either "good" or "bad." It is impossible to judge the effectiveness of a media bite without knowing what its strategic purpose is. The definition of a "good" media bite is one that helps advance your goals.

So the first question you have to ask is: what are your goals? This seems like an easy enough question, but, surprisingly, it is one that many advocates have a difficult time answering. It may be worth sitting down with your colleagues periodically and asking what your short-term and long-term goals

are. Keeping your goals clearly in mind makes it more likely that your media bites will be strategic and successful.

One type of media bite might be called "social math." Like media bites they are short to the point and easily memorable. Often it's difficult to make sense of large impactful numbers so social math can make those numbers more "digestible". For example, "Underage drinking costs 56 billion dollars a year. That is enough to purchase a computer for every child in grades K through 12." Or, "Young people drink enough alcohol to fill an Olympic swimming pool on every college campus in this country."

Preparing for an Interview

Media interviews should rarely, if ever, catch you completely by surprise. If you've worked with alcohol issues for even a short time, you probably already know most of the subjects you are likely to be questioned about in an interview.

In the underage drinking area, unfortunately, it is inevitable that tragedies involving young people and alcohol will occur. You should be prepared to respond to these situations immediately with appropriate responses and analysis that make the public aware of the key issues that can contribute to these problems.

Before you begin an interview you need to make sure you understand what the story is about. Feel free to ask the reporter or producer such questions as what is the main point of the story so far, who else have they interviewed, and what have others said on the subject?

When you have determined what the point of the story is, ask yourself what effect can you have on this story? If the story is a bad one, can you say something that will mitigate the damage? If it's a good one, can you add something that will make it even better? Can you steer it in a new, helpful direction? Is this story an opportunity to advance your long-term policy goals? The answers to these questions will help you figure out what your most strategic media bite would be.

Ideally, you will have a little bit of time to think through what you want to say. If you are preparing for a television or radio interview, take advantage of the time you have while waiting for the crew to arrive or before you go on the air. If a newspaper reporter calls you—once you understand the point of the story and what they want to ask you about—you may want to ask if you can call him or her back in a few minutes. Take those few minutes to review your strategy and figure out what you want to say. (Important: *Make sure that the reporter isn't on a tight deadline before you make this request and, if you promise to call back in a few minutes, be sure to do so! If you don't, your opportunity may be lost—the reporter may have already called someone else.*)

Remember that no matter how much you *could* say about the subject, your words will eventually be reduced to a few seconds or a sentence or two. Plan ahead what you want to say in those few seconds. Then, make sure you say it. If necessary, say it several times.

But What if They Don't Ask the Right Questions?

One mistake people often make in media interviews is that they treat them like a regular conversation. In a regular conversation, one person asks a question and another person answers it. It's that simple. But as we've already reviewed, every interview question provides you with numerous strategic options. If you already know what to say, then your goal in the interview is to say it—regardless of what specific questions you are asked. The point here is not to be evasive or uncooperative, but to highlight the issues you believe need to be emphasized.

Let's say that you receive a call from a reporter asking to interview you for a story about a car crash that killed two high schoolers returning home from a private, after-prom party. She wants to interview you because she knows you are an expert on underage drinking.

The first thing to do is ask yourself what you expect the interview to be like. Based on past experience, you can predict that the story is going to focus on such things as reactions from friends and family of the victims, grief counseling that is being offered to the students at the high school, and perhaps some history on traffic fatalities involving high school students or previous crashes at that location. You may also expect a photograph of the mangled car or of the crash site with flowers and tokens.

There may be nothing inherently wrong with the story you believe is about to be written, but it probably doesn't directly help accomplish your goals. Suppose your long-term goal is to improve enforcement of underage drinking laws. Can you use this story to advance your goal while remaining sensitive to the situation?

You decide ahead of time that no matter what else this story says, it should include a mention of the importance of enforcing underage drinking laws. After talking it over with your colleagues, you decide that a good media bite may be something like, "As a community, we need to make sure that our children can grow up in a healthy and safe environment. If we can't do a better job of enforcing our underage drinking laws, then we can expect to see more tragedies like this one."

Earlier, we looked at an example of how to stick with the subjects you want to talk about during an interview. Here's a similar example of how to stick to your goal while talking with a reporter.

Reporter: You know about last night's crash. Can you tell me how common these kinds of accidents are around prom season?

You: I don't have any specific statistics on that, but the important thing to remember is that as long as we allow kids to have access to alcohol, crashes like this can happen any time.

Reporter: Is there anything about proms in particular that encourage kids to drink?

You: I don't think it's so important to focus on special events. Underage access to alcohol is a year-round problem.

Reporter: But don't kids drink more at this time of year—with proms and graduations—than at other times?

You: By setting a drinking age of 21, we've decided as a society that kids shouldn't drink. If we want to allow our children to grow up in this community in a healthy and safe environment, we need to do a better job of enforcing our underage drinking laws, no matter what time of year it is. If we don't, we should expect to see more tragedies like this one.

Although the reporter persisted in asking about high school drinking associated with prom season—a subject only indirectly associated with your long-term goal—you were able to keep bringing the story back to the issue you thought was important. In the process, you were able to deliver your media bite almost exactly as planned.

Of course, if you are using a form of media in which you are more in control of the content, you still have to make sure that your message is clearly and succinctly stated front and center and not hidden in unnecessary details or tangents.

A few key interviewing tips worth remembering:

- Know your issue, message, and key points
- Answer in complete sentences
- Always stay on two or three key points
- "Think nationally… act locally."

Developing a Message

Developing a message to help frame a story basically comes down to answering five questions:

1. *What do you want?* Do your research. What are your goals? As specifically as possible, what do you want to accomplish? Has it been done before? What were the accomplishments? The challenges faced?

2. *Who can give it to you?* Do you need cooperation from local merchants? Action by the city council? Help from the governor? Who has the power to provide you with what you need to accomplish your goal?

3. *What do they need to hear?* Once you've determined who has the power, you need to figure out what type of message they will respond to. Will they be influenced by new health information? By demand from the community? By examples of success stories in other communities?

4. *From whom do they need to hear it?* Who is going to be the most influential with your target audience? Local merchants may be less responsive to a message from a local teenager than they are from a local parent. Choose your spokespeople strategically.

5. *How can we get them to hear it?* What kind of media coverage can you generate that will get the attention of your audience? Will a letter to the editor be noticed? Will it take an investigative report about how easy it is for youth to buy alcohol from local merchants? How does your target audience access/receive their information?

The New World of Media Advocacy: Citizen Journalism

As was discussed earlier, news media is no longer limited to a few media sources and outlets. Advocates have an array of electronic media that can be put to use to disseminate their message. At the same time, audiences can choose from a huge number of media channels and specific sources and may sometimes be overwhelmed by information. If people can spend all day reading about their hundreds of "friends" on Facebook, will they read about the health and social issues of their community on other websites?

There are two main challenges for working in this new media environment:

- First, how to navigate the much more complicated landscape of media possibilities.
- Second, how to make your important message stand out in all the noise and clutter.

One term that is currently used to refer to the type of media advocacy that does not rely on the traditional news outlets and their reporters and gatekeepers is "citizen journalism." This is the concept of members of the public "playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing and disseminating news and information."[1]

The idea behind citizen journalism is that people without professional journalism training can use the tools of modern technology and the Internet to create or critique media on their own or in collaboration with others. For example, you might write about a city council meeting on your blog or in an online forum. Or you could fact-check a newspaper article from the mainstream media and point out factual errors or bias on your blog. Or you might snap a digital photo of a newsworthy event happening in your town and post it online. Or you might videotape a similar event

1 Bowman, S. and Willis, C. "We Media: How Audiences are Shaping the Future of News and Information." 2003, *The Media Center at the American Press Institute*.

and post it on a site such as YouTube[2]

Media for citizen journalists can include a variety of types:

1. Audience participation (such as user comments attached to news stories, personal blogs, photos or video footage captured from personal cameras, or local news written by residents of a community)

2. Full-fledged participatory news sites (such as NowPublic.com or DigitalJournal.com)

3. Collaborative and contributory media sites (such as www.Newsvine.com)

4. Mailing lists, email newsletters

5. Personal broadcasting sites

Citizen journalism has had an impact in a number of areas, including consumer advocacy alerting the public to hazardous products and presidential election coverage, in which citizen journalists watch for biases and inaccuracy in mainstream reporting.

Another approach is "hyperlocal journalism" in which online news sites invite contributions from local residents of their subscription areas, who often report on topics that conventional newspapers tend to ignore. For example, the Bakersfield (California) Voice (www.bakersfieldvoice.com) describes itself as a "'citizen journalism' newspaper in that we rely on you, the community, to submit stories and photos online. We then select these stories and photos for publication. . . Anything important to you is important to us! We are a better community newspaper for having thousands of readers who serve as the eyes and ears for the Voice, rather than having everything filtered through the views of a small group of reporters and editors."

Often, what starts as citizen journalism is picked up by traditional news media when it is interesting and timely. We have all seen instances where a YouTube video or blog posting or Twitter feed has gone "viral" and shown up on a nightly news program or the opening page of Web browsers. Of course, your issue will be competing with videos of kittens playing the piano, but there is always a chance that a well framed and interesting story of importance for community health and safety will achieve prominence.

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2 Mark Glaser (September 27, 2006). "Your Guide to Citizen Journalism". Public Broadcasting Service. http://www.pbs.org/mediashift/2006/09/your-guide-to-citizen-journalism270.html. Retrieved March 22, 2009.

Keep in mind that the same rules about being strategic, careful framing and crafting interesting stories apply to newer media and citizen journalism as apply to dealing with traditional media. The message that you are trying to get out should further your strategic goals, the story should convey the right message to help create healthier environments, and the story has to be interesting, novel, and compelling if it is to draw needed attention from the public and policy makers.

Some steps for taking advantage of new media:

- Familiarize yourself with the variety of potential new media formats and outlets.
- Develop a strong online presence for your cause or organization: Make sure your website is interesting and up-to-date. Develop a Facebook presence. When the public's interest is piqued, you want to make sure they can easily get complete information about you and your issues.
- Look for local opportunities: Make use of the local newspaper's website; search for other local websites that might feature your issue.
- Be creative in the use of blogs, YouTube and other formats for getting your message out in public view.

In using new media, as with traditional media, it is essential to keep your strategic goals firmly in mind. Success means getting a clear message across in order to accomplish policy goals.

Some examples of New Media

New media technology is any type of application meant to transfer information via digital techniques, computerized systems or data networks. Most forms of this technology are interactive.

Posting on Facebook page to reduce college drinking

Article from *Napa Valley Register, Napa Valley, California*

Police, ABC to monitor adult role in providing alcohol to youths

Turning up the heat on teen access to booze

By ALISHA WYMAN
Register Staff Writer Napa Valley Register | Posted: Tuesday, January 12, 2010 12:00 am | (1) Comments

Buyer beware: Adults who sell alcohol to minors or purchase alcohol for minors in Napa could face charges should the youths' drinking result in tragedy.

The Napa Police Department has adopted a new program called TRACE — Targeting Responsibility for Alcohol-Connected Emergencies — at the encouragement of Justin-Siena High School's Friday Night Live.

Friday Night Live is a program in which youth lead efforts to address health and safety problems that affect them, such as alcohol consumption.

Under the TRACE program, the police will contact the state Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control in the event of a fatality or major injury crash involving a minor who was under the influence of alcohol. Police would also use TRACE for other cases, such as alcohol-related homicides. The agency would conduct an investigation alongside Napa Police Department's, looking for how the minors acquired the alcohol.

"It makes the investigation more thorough," said Napa Police Lt. Debbie Peecook. "It adds a resource for the police department."

Any individual who provides alcohol to a minor faces charges such as furnishing alcohol, contributing to delinquency of a minor, or willful harm or injury of a child. The consequences range from a fine to jail or prison time.

The program is an effort to help make the community safer, Peecook said.

For adults who give alcohol to minors, "there needs to be a consequence," she said.

The 2008 California Healthy Kids Survey found that 69 percent of 11th graders within the Napa Valley Unified School District have consumed alcohol. Thirty one percent have either driven after drinking or been in a car with a driver who had been drinking.

Within the same group, 78 percent said it is easy to acquire alcohol.

Educating youth about the risks of alcohol use is not enough, said Katie Keating, Friday Night Live coordinator.

"It's partly an individual choice, but (teens) don't grow up in a bubble," she said. "There are community norms around alcohol use that kind of bombard them and influence their choice."

The TRACE program is part of taking more comprehensive tactics to prevention, she said.

"It's an enforcement piece, but if people know that the police are taking this seriously … then hopefully it will be a deterrent for people," Keating said.

Justin-Siena's Friday Night Live group was excited to see the police act on its request. "This is an example of them coming to the table and addressing something that affects them," Keating said.

Online response to news story posted by local advocate

A serious effort to address the underage drinking problem

By Luisa Jojola | Posted: Saturday, February 6, 2010 12:00 am |

Thank you for printing the Jan. 12 article "Turning up the heat on teen access to booze."

We are the youth members of the Napa County Friday Night Live at Justin-Siena High School. We'd like to thank the Napa Police Department for partnering with us to help reduce youth access to alcohol and underage drinking by implementing the TRACE protocol.

When teens drink alcohol, they don't take small sips or have one drink: They binge drink. This means they usually have about five drinks at a time, which is dangerous.

Most parents probably don't want another adult putting their kids at risk for drinking and driving, alcohol poisoning and sexual assault by selling them alcohol or allowing them to drink at a party. We don't want adults putting us and our peers at risk either, so that is what we're trying to prevent.

Over the last year we have learned that there is no single cause for underage drinking. Lots of factors lead to this problem. Yes, teens are the ones making the choice to drink alcohol, but there are lots of things that influence our choices. Alcohol advertisements, community norms around alcohol use and adults allowing us access to alcohol all influence whether or not we choose to drink alcohol.

Letting kids drink at a younger age so they "learn how to drink responsibly" is not the answer to preventing the problems associated with underage drinking. Some people think that the U.S. should lower the drinking age, as is done in Europe, to help prevent underage drinking. What they don't know is that some European countries with low or no minimum drinking age have even more problems with underage drinking-related death and injury than the U.S. does, and are starting to increase their legal drinking ages.

Reducing youth access to alcohol can help reduce underage drinking. According to the 2008 California Healthy Kids Survey results, it is easy for local teens to access alcohol (78 percent of 11th-graders in Napa Valley Unified School District reported it was easy to get alcohol.) It's

not fair, or effective, to only hold teens accountable for the problem of underage drinking. Adults in the community need to stop making it so easy for kids to get alcohol if we want to make a real difference.

The community needs to come together to support teens in making the choice not to drink. As the U.S. Surgeon General recommends, "It's time to change how we all think, talk and act when it comes to underage drinking. We need to stop accepting it and start discouraging it."

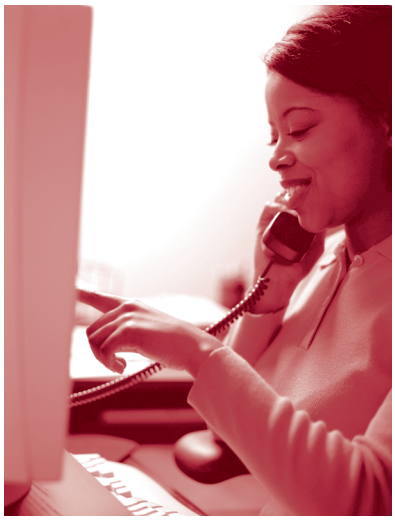
You can contact Katie Keating, Napa County Friday Night Live Coordinator, at 253-4724, if you want to learn more about how you can be involved in the local effort to reduce underage drinking in our community.

The U.S. Surgeon General has issued a call to action to parents and communities all over the country to share the responsibility of preventing underage drinking. Get more information at www.surgeongeneral.gov.

On behalf of the Friday Night Live Chapter at Justin-Siena High School, thank you for your time and support.

(Jojola is a member of the Friday Night Live Chapter at Justin-Siena High School.)

Dealing With Journalists



Once you have your goals and messages figured out, what do you do next? In some cases, you may want to get your story into traditional media. This will probably mean picking up the phone and calling reporters.

For some people, this can be the most intimidating aspect of working with the media. It can be a very nerve-wracking process; one might imagine that an inadvertent slip of the tongue will end up as an embarrassing revelation in tomorrow's headlines.

In reality, most encounters with journalists are not of the type we see on *60 Minutes;* in fact, it's fair to say that most journalists appreciate talking to people who have expertise on the topic they're researching. After all, how could they do their job if they didn't talk to experts?

Most journalists spend a majority of their day talking to people who can help them put a story together—people like you. They won't be surprised to get a call from you; in a sense, they already expect it. That's important. Too often, advocates wait for journalists to call them instead of picking up the phone and initiating contact themselves. Waiting for reporters to call you is unnecessary, and it's a good way to miss a lot of good opportunities to get your voice heard in the media.

There are many reasons to pick up the phone and call a reporter. You can call just to introduce yourself. If you are new to the area—or if they are—they will appreciate hearing about you, your project, and how you can help them in the future.

Of course, if you have a specific event or story to tell them about, it's a good idea to call. Calls from people like you are one of the primary ways that reporters hear about stories in the first place. Sometimes, even if they are already aware of a story, they may not be aware of its importance or impact on your community. If you can provide a new context for a story, pick up the phone!

Responding to a story is another good reason to call. If you've seen a story about alcohol, you may want to respond. Perhaps an important angle (e.g., youth access laws) was left out of the story. Or perhaps it was a good story, and you simply want to let the journalist know that you are available if they do any similar stories in the future. Or perhaps you already have an idea for a good follow-up story. In any case, reacting to a story is a good reason to call a reporter. (Hint: *Even if you didn't like the story, it never hurts to say something positive about it at the beginning of the conversation. Be respectful; it will do you no good to burn bridges with journalists.*)

Even if they know there's a good reason or opportunity, many people are still hesitant to call reporters—especially if they don't have much experience doing so.

In some ways, *who* you know can be as important as what you know. If you have a lot of expertise on a particular subject, but journalists don't know that you exist, you will have a hard time being effective as a media advocate. If that's the case, you need to get to know more people! That doesn't have to be a difficult task; just follow these five easy steps.

How To Contact a Journalist in Five Easy Steps

1. **Research**
   Know who you are calling. Reporters and editors have defined "beats" or specialty areas that they cover on a routine basis. Before you contact a journalist, you should know what his or her beat is. It can be embarrassing and a waste of time to call a reporter who covers state political issues if you want to inform him or her about a local parents' initiative.

   Questions to consider before you call include: What is his or her beat/what issues do they usually cover? Is he or she interested in local, state, or national news? Does he or she cover feature stories or hard news? Whom does he or she know in your field? What perspective does he or she usually take on underage drinking?

   The best way to find the answers to these questions is to search the website of the newspaper or television or radio station and look for previous stories on related topics or search on the name of the reporter to see what other things they have covered.

   If you're not sure who to call at a newspaper, television, or radio

station, call the assignment desk and ask to speak with a reporter (or editor or producer) who would be interested in a story about _____. Assignment desks receive such calls routinely and can easily connect you with the right person.

2. **Make Contact**
Public health advocates are often hesitant to contact journalists, especially if they are inexperienced or unfamiliar with the process. You need to keep in mind, however, that journalists rely on people with expertise—people like you. As mentioned before, if they didn't have input from experts like you, they couldn't do their jobs. Emails are an effective way to reach journalists and allow you to explain your story clearly. Remember to keep the message short and to the point. Phone calls can provide more immediate and direct access. (Hint: *When you call a reporter, you should always start your conversation with this question:* "Is this a good time to talk?" *If it isn't a good time, you can find out when you should call back. If it is a good time, the reporter will appreciate your thoughtfulness.*)

3. **Be Specific**
Reporters don't want to wait for you to get to the point. Starting a conversation with, "There are some important alcohol-related problems in our community that I would like to talk to you about" is not likely to generate an enthusiastic response. Better, would be: "The local police department is working *with* a group of students at Wilson High School to begin a new campaign to reduce underage alcohol use by young people. This kind of partnership has never been tried here before. Would you like to hear more about it?"

4. **Keep a Log**
If you plan to spend time talking with reporters, you should start a log of your media contacts in a notebook or on your computer. After each contact with a reporter you should record how you contacted the reporter - whether you called the reporter or the reporter called you, what the call was about, what information you were able to provide, and whether or not the call resulted in a story. In addition, you should record his or her contact information (phone, E-mail) so that you can easily contact him or her again if you need to follow up.

Over time, your media log will provide you with important information about journalists in your area: which ones are interested in what types of information and what types of stories they have worked on in the past. In the future, when you need to call a reporter about a certain story, you can check your media log for guidance on whom to call.

5. **Follow Up**
   Your good relationships with journalists can be an invaluable resource for you. However, this resource is fragile and needs to be tended carefully. Not being honest with a reporter can ruin your credibility and cause irreparable harm.

Similarly, it is very important to follow through with journalists! So, if you tell them that you will call back, call back! If you tell them that you will send some additional information, send it! If you tell them that you will keep them informed about future events, do so!

Four Questions To Ask When a Journalist Calls You

Especially if you have gone out of your way to call reporters and develop a relationship with them, you can expect them to call you when they need information. These four questions can help you respond to those calls.

1. **What is your story?**
   Often a reporter will call you for a specific piece of information for a larger story he or she is working on. If you don't ask, you may not find out what that larger story is. By asking, you may be able to give additional information that the reporter wouldn't have expected or help shape the larger story in a strategic way.

2. **What is your deadline?**
   If reporters need the information right away, you need to be able to respond right away—either by providing the information or by letting them know that you can't meet their timeframe. If they are working on a story that won't be completed or produced for several days, you might have time to do some additional research.

3. **Who else have you talked to?**
   Knowing who else has been interviewed for a story will tell you a lot about what you need to do and say. If someone with an opposing view has been interviewed, you want to respond. If a very effective local advocate has *not* been interviewed, you should be ready to recommend that the reporter call him or her.

4. **What do you need?**
   Do they just need a quote? Some background information? Other people to talk to? Help in understanding the issue? If you don't know exactly what the journalist needs, you will have a hard time providing it.

Maintaining a Relationship With a Journalist

Like any other relationship, your relationships with journalists must be tended carefully. Ideally, over time, you will develop good working relationships with many journalists. You don't want to have to reintroduce yourself every time you need their attention. Here are several guidelines to follow.

- **Respect the Journalist's Objectivity**
  It is sometimes difficult to remember that "friendly" journalists—that is, those who can be counted on to report on issues in a favorable, intelligent manner—are not really part of your "team." A journalist's credibility rests on her or his ability to remain objective on all issues. Journalists are not supposed to have a "position," especially on political or sensitive issues. If they are perceived as leaning too far one way or the other, they may respond by going out of their way to ensure that they are *not* showing favoritism to your organization or issue.

- **Respect the Journalist's Time**
  Time is a precious resource for a journalist; if you want to maintain a good relationship with your media contacts, don't ever waste their time. When you are talking on the phone, be brief and to the point. Get to know and respect their busy times of day. Learn what types of stories they are looking for, and don't waste their time by talking to them about stories that are not of interest to them.

- **Be Useful**
  Because journalists don't have a lot of time to waste, they appreciate any help they can get. As you develop your relationships with journalists, make it a point to learn how you can be helpful to them. Would they be interested in hearing about new reports or studies that you receive? Would they like to be on your newsletter mailing list? Do they want to know what other newspapers or television stations are reporting on? The best way to learn how you can be useful is to ask: offer different services, and if they are interested, follow through.

- **Follow Up**
  Not everyone who makes a promise to a journalist follows through. Journalists learn to not trust these people, and these people have a more difficult time maintaining good relationships with journalists. Follow through! Your efforts will be appreciated.

Nuts and Bolts

There are a lot of details involved in working with the media. These details can seem daunting and intimidating. People with little media experience sometimes hesitate to put their message out in the various media formats, call reporters or plan media events because they're afraid they won't get the protocol right or know exactly what to say. Ideally, your coalition will have people on board with media expertise and experience. If not, you may be able to provide media training for your coalition members and staff.

In addition, there may be help all around you that you can call on. Consider the resources that may be available to you:

- Other community groups working on similar, or different, issues may be able to share press lists and other information or provide general strategic advice.
- If you work with a government agency, it is possible that its press office can provide you with some guidance.
- Sometimes businesses or professional organizations (such as the National Public Relations Association) can offer pro bono help to nonprofit community groups.
- Online searches for information about media relations, relevant websites, relevant news outlets, etc. Looking at what other groups have done can provide inspiration and guidance.

The point is that lack of technical media "expertise" or experience should not dissuade you from working with the media. Because you are working on an important issue and have some important information to share, you already have most of what you need.

Following are some helpful hints about some of the more common nuts-and-bolts media issues that community groups deal with.

Advertising

When people who work in the public interest think of media, they often think of traditional public service announcements—advertisements for which the space or time has been donated.

Public service announcements (PSAs) seem like a good idea since they can cost little to produce and nothing to air. Some radio stations, for example, accept scripts for PSAs that their own announcers will read on the air. Cost to the sponsoring organization: virtually nothing.

The main problem with PSAs is that there is so much competition for a limited amount of space or air time. The time that stations use for PSAs is often what they can't sell to a commercial advertiser. Media consultant Tony Schwartz once defined public service announcements as "commercials that tell kids not to accept rides from strangers that are broadcast at 2:00 in the morning when the only people watching are the strangers."

Unfortunately, with free media you usually can't say when or where your ad will be placed. Another problem is that you often can't say what you want to say. Newspapers or radio stations or television stations will be reluctant to run any free ads that contain messages that conflict with paid advertisers. For example, radio stations that run a lot of beer commercials may be reluctant to run an ad that alcohol companies might find objectionable.

Despite these drawbacks to free media spots, they can be useful, especially if they are well crafted to be most effective. For example, research has found that health mediated campaigns with and enforcement component were more effective than those without.[1]

One alternative to PSAs is paid advertising. After all, if you're paying for the ads, you can have as much control over the placement and content of the ad as any other advertiser. The down side of paid advertising, of course, is that it costs money—sometimes a lot of money. There have been effective paid counter-advertising campaigns, most notably in tobacco control. The evidence indicates that these campaigns have been most effective when they focused on discrediting the tobacco industry and when they were extremely well funded.

1 Snyder, L. B., M. A. Hamilton, et al. (2004). "A meta-analysis of the effect of mediated health communication campaigns on behavior change in the United States." Journal of Health Communication **9**: 71-96.

Occasionally, a very small advertising budget can be used to create news attention. Controversial ads—ads challenging political leaders, for example—can generate a lot of news coverage if they are part of a larger campaign.

In general, though, paid or free advertising is of limited value to community public interest groups. That is why media advocacy is focused on gaining access to and influencing news media. (Keep in mind, of course, that the goal of media advocacy is not simply to generate more media attention but to use the media strategically to accomplish your goals.)

Creating News

Media advocacy is more than just responding to reporters. Simply waiting for reporters' calls leaves you with no control over when the media covers your issue, how often your issue is covered, or what the focus of that coverage is. These days, it is easier than ever to generate media coverage in a variety of electronic formats.

It is important in planning how to create media coverage to know what coverage is already out there. Using Google Alerts (www.google.com/alerts) allows you to follow particular issues or individuals in a wide range of media outlets.

The best way to control what kind of news coverage you get is to create the news you want covered.

When people think of creating news, often the first thing they think of is having a press conference. The image they have is of a presidential news conference with scores of reporters squeezed into a room desperately competing with each other to get their questions asked and answered. All of that attention and excitement can seem very enticing, but the reality is that most press conferences are more staid affairs, with few reporters and few or no cameras.

Most community groups can contact local media one-on-one via phone much more easily than they can hold a press conference. Before you decide to hold a press conference, you should ask yourself if your material is genuinely of widespread interest to the media and the public. If there is any doubt, you might be better off sticking with one-on-one contacts.

Holding a "media event"—a planned or staged occasion that will highlight your issue—can be an effective way of creating news. Creative approaches to staging media events can help generate media attention in a way that a report or official statement just can't convey.

Creativity is by far the most important factor in putting together a good media event. Here are some creative examples that have been successfully tried in the past.

- *"Piggy-back" on national news stories.* If a federal report on alcohol and youth is being released, provide local media with local statistics, local spokespeople, and other local angles on the story.

- *Timing.* Everyone's working on deadlines. Newspapers have set times they put the next day's issue to bed. This means if they come to your event at 5 p.m. on Thursday, coverage may not show up until Saturday. TV stations generally have a morning, noon, 5, 6, 10 and/or 11 p.m. newscasts during the week. Plan your event time so that it's not only convenient to the reporters but also increases your chances of getting more immediate exposure.

- *Respond to the environment.* If an alcohol company begins a new promotional campaign aimed at young people, help young people hold a demonstration or press conference to protest the campaign. Campaigns against alcoholic energy drinks were successful in using vivid images and stories about the potential risks of these drinks.

- *Create a context for an individual event.* If a young person dies in an alcohol-related car crash, hold a press conference in front of a local liquor store to draw attention to the ease with which youth have access to alcohol.

- *Create news.* Conduct compliance checks of local merchants. If you want to avoid appearing too negative, give awards to those merchants who refuse to sell alcohol to young people.

- *Hold a youth congress.* If the city council or state legislature won't take action on a problem, get some kids together to show them how it's done. Or, you could hold a "Youth Speakout." One group of teens, frustrated because alcohol companies had better access to political leaders than they did, publicly invited members of the state legislature for a peanut butter-and-jelly sandwich lunch, to draw attention to this inequity.

Again, the key is to be creative. Brainstorm with your colleagues, and don't be afraid of crazy ideas; sometimes those turn out to be the best. Pay attention to what other communities or groups are doing or

have done. Don't be afraid to adapt someone else's idea to your own situation.

At the same time, it is important to remember that, when it comes to designing media events, cleverness isn't enough. Commonly, media events are staged near a dramatic visual symbol, such as a mangled car that was wrecked by a drunk driver. While a crashed car can be an arresting visual image, it doesn't necessarily convey a specific policy message. What are people supposed to think after seeing it? That *they* shouldn't drink and drive? That youth access laws should be better enforced? That penalties for drunk driving should be more severe? A media event featuring a crashed car *could* convey all of those messages but doesn't necessarily convey any of them. Media events should be designed so that the reporters and other observers will walk away knowing exactly what your policy goal is.

The following checklist provides some items that will help you to run an effective media event.

- Choose and prepare key spokespeople.
- Prepare a list of story ideas, "go to" statements and photo opportunities.
- Notify the media.
- Prepare your own YouTube, blog, tweet or other online media release.
- Call the media to remind them of the event.
- Just before the event, call again!
- Make sure the location for your event is available, accessible, and can handle all of the equipment (e.g., microphones, cameras, tape recorders) that will be used.
- Make sure there are no conflicting events/activities near your event.
- Test all of the equipment.
- Develop written materials, including an agenda for the event.
- At the event, have people ready and able to give one-on-one interviews for reporters who want more information.
- Have a staff member register all reporters; add them to your press list for future events.
- Pay attention to what worked and what didn't; you'll be doing this again and again!

News Releases

A news release is used to announce a press event, a new study or report, policy position, or anything else of interest to the media. Although you can be creative with the contents of a news release, there is a general format that most people use. Here are some guidelines.

- Keep it short. A news release should almost never be more than two pages long and, ideally, will be only one page.
- Does the heading of your release include the date, name, address, and telephone number of your organization's contact person?
- Get to the point. Reporters and editors—who are inundated with news releases every day—may not get to your second paragraph if the first one doesn't interest them. Include the basic facts—who, what, where, when, and why—and make sure the most important point is mentioned up front.
- Use a good quote. Most news releases contain a quote from someone in the organization sending the press release and/or another expert on the issue. This is a chance to creatively state the main purpose of the news release in your own words.
- Mention all relevant details. List all available contacts or speakers, good photo opportunities, etc.
- Follow up. Don't assume that e-mailing your news release will mean that it will be read. Follow up with phone calls to everyone on your list to make sure they received the news release and to answer any additional questions that may have come up.

If you are not familiar with news releases, ask other friendly organizations for examples of their news releases or look for them online. With just a few examples, you will easily become familiar with the general format.

Spokespersons/Interviews

The person who speaks with the media can seem as important as what he or she says. Many organizations use their executive director as their main spokesperson. This isn't necessarily a bad idea, but it may not necessarily be the best choice. A volunteer from the community, a police officer, or a teenager may have more

credibility and be of more interest to the media than a staffer for an organization.

Involving a prominent public figure as a featured spokesperson at a media event (the mayor, the chief of police) can serve a dual purpose. First, this kind of prominent person can make the event newsworthy. Second, by giving these people an opportunity for positive media exposure, you may turn what might have been half-hearted support into strong endorsement in future efforts.

It is ideal to have several experienced spokespeople available to respond to different situations.

Some tips for preparing for interviews follow.

- Develop two or three main points you want to get across, and practice making them. Have media bites in mind that you can deliver as naturally as possible.
- Avoid jargon or technical data that will get in the way of the point you are trying to make to your audience.
- If you are asked to go on a radio or television talk show, find out as much as possible about the format, the other guests, the moderator, whether or not there will be phone calls, etc. If you are uncomfortable about the situation, don't be afraid to turn it down. Bad exposure is worse than no exposure.
- Be prepared. Try to anticipate likely questions, and practice answering them. As you practice, get feedback from your colleagues.
- Keep control of the interview. If you have some points you want to make, don't wait for the "right" questions to be asked. Make your points. Then, make them again.
- "Narrowcast." Ask yourself whom in the audience do you care most about; what message do you want them to hear?
- Always tell the truth. If you don't know an answer, don't try to make it up or fake your way out of it. It's okay to say you don't know. If it isn't a live interview, you can offer to try to find out the information for later.

Working With Law Enforcement

Almost all coalitions that strive to reduce youth access to alcohol work with or in support of law enforcement efforts to enforce youth access laws. Therefore, it makes sense to include law enforcement agencies in your media plans. It is also to have the correct law enforcement staff involved. For media relations identify first who in the agency is responsible for working with the media. Often, the larger the department, the less direct contact the chief executive has with daily media relations. In those agencies with public relations departments and/or a press officer, the routine functions are delegated by the chief to subordinates. Get that person on board early!

Here are a few specific ideas. For additional ideas, check with your law enforcement partners.

- When planning a press event related to underage drinking, invite local or state law enforcement agencies to join with you. Their presence can add a unique perspective and credibility to your event. Be sure to coordinate with them early; don't wait until the last minute to get them involved! As mentioned above, enlisting these officials as allies and giving them the opportunity for positive media coverage can have lasting advantages.

- Consider asking someone from a local law enforcement agency (e.g., a chief of police, representative from the sheriff's office, etc.) to be part of your coalition. Having a law enforcement representative available to speak to the media on behalf of your coalition will reinforce the ongoing partnership you seek between prevention and enforcement.

- Plan ahead to create media events for the entire year that can highlight community-law enforcement partnerships. For example, holidays and other special events such as New Year's, prom season, graduation, Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Labor Day can be used to draw attention to community-law enforcement efforts to reduce drinking and driving by young people. Also, Halloween and the beginning of sports seasons can be used to draw attention to alcohol marketing practices that may appeal to young people and the importance of countering these practices with effective enforcement of youth access laws.

- Generate a letter-to-the-editor campaign thanking law enforcement agencies for enforcing youth possession laws.

Public officials are frequently criticized but rarely thanked for their services. A little bit of public praise could go a long way toward building good relationships with law enforcement agencies and toward cementing the public's perception of cooperation between the community and law enforcement agencies in trying to reduce youth access to alcohol.

- Let the media know about your enforcement efforts. The media are likely to be interested in hearing about your "shoulder tap" programs, compliance checks, or other youth-related enforcement efforts. Any press coverage these programs receive can help enforce the idea that youth alcohol use is a serious problem and deserves community support.

Letters to the Editor

Letters to the editor can be a good way to respond to a news article or local event or to raise a new issue. The letters section is generally one of the best read sections of the newspaper, and it is open to anyone who can write. For guidelines on writing to a publication, check the publication itself. Often these guidelines are printed on the letters page. In general,

- keep it short. Most letters are no more than 200 to 300 words long. Resist the temptation to say *everything;* pick a message and stick with it.
- be specific. If you are writing in response to a previous letter or article, refer to the article by headline and date. Keep in mind that readers of your letter may not remember the specific details of the article you are responding to.
- do not worry about responding to every point. You aren't engaged in a school debate. Consider your letter to be an opportunity to respond to the overall idea expressed in the previous letter or article.
- use credentials—but only if they will help make your point. In some instances, your status as a science expert or law enforcement official may be helpful. In other instances, your status as a parent or concerned citizen may be even more powerful.
- send information in quickly and more than once!

- **Op-Eds or Opinion Articles**
  Op-ed pieces—columns that usually appear **op**posite the **ed**itorial page—are an alternative to letters. Become familiar with your local newspaper's policy for printing opinion pieces. Out of a sense of fairness and community service, newspapers will often accept op-ed pieces that take a different approach from their own editorial pages.

  Op-ed pieces are usually more in-depth than letters to the editor—generally three double-spaced pages or about 750 words. Although op-ed pieces are longer than letters, it is still important to keep to one theme and only two to four main points. Asking a local celebrity or politician to author the op-ed may give it more attention and increase the likelihood that it will be published. Of course, they will probably be more willing to agree if you offer to draft the piece for them.

  Again, the best source for guidance on a newspaper's op-ed policy is the paper itself. Ask specific questions of the editorial staff, and, best of all, read the op-ed page to get a good feel for what works and what doesn't. Many major newspapers accept timely op-eds by email. Check the paper's website to be sure what its policy is.

Example of a guest opinion column

Youth access to alcohol hurts all Montanans: Guest Column

Posted: Thursday, Nov 05, 2009 - 01:11:38 pm MST

By Denyse Traeder, NW Montana Community Change Project

Source Link: http://www.thewesternnews.com/articles/2009/11/05/editorials/doc4af33116523d8218533044.txt

In Montana, underage drinking is often thought of as a "rite of passage" that every teen goes through. It is seen as a harmless pastime.

The exact opposite is true; this "harmless pastime" contributes to more deaths among our youth than any other preventable cause. Recent studies in brain development show that the human brain does not completely develop until the mid-20s and the damage alcohol inflicts on the adolescent brain is often irreversible and long-lasting.

Even moderate alcohol use by teens impairs learning and memory to a far greater extent than adults. Adolescents need to drink only half

as much as adults to suffer the same negative effects.

Alcohol is the gateway drug for teens and young adults. Combined with tobacco, alcohol is the first used drug and the drug of choice for youth, both in the nation and in Montana.

Not only are our youth drinking in excess, they are starting at earlier ages. Alcohol is the leading cause of death among teenagers. It is responsible for four times as many preventable teen deaths each year than every other illicit drug combined, and has been blamed for nearly half of all teen automobile accidents and up to 65 percent of youth suicides. Alcohol use and abuse by teens are correlated to an estimated two-thirds of all sexual assaults and date rapes. It is the major factor in unprotected sex among sexually active youth.

In 2001, alcohol sales to youth in the United States led to an estimated 3,170 deaths and almost 2.6 million injuries and other costly events. The economic cost of those 3,170 deaths by underage drinkers is staggering when put into dollars and cents.

The total monetary cost equaling $61.9 billion dollars – $5.4 billion in medical spending, $7.8 billion in property losses, $7.1 billion in work losses and $41.6 billion lost in quality of life. That equals $4,680 per underage drinker in 2001. Alcohol consumed by underage drinkers in 2001 accounted for at least 16.2 percent of all U.S. alcohol sales.

According to the Prevention Needs Assessment conducted in Montana schools in 2008, 36.9 percent of high school students in Montana experienced a binge drinking episode—consuming five or more drinks within a two-hour period, within the last 30 days. This was a higher percentage than any other state in the country. The data for individual counties and communities are even more disturbing.

A majority (53.4 percent) of current alcohol users ages 12 to 20 drank at someone else's home the last time they used alcohol, and another 30.3 percent drank in their own home. Whether in their own home or somewhere else, youth rarely steal alcohol from stores, or bars.

Instead it is supplied through an adult source by ease of access, or direct service, purchase and/or sales. At local, state and national levels, home parties have repeatedly been identified as the primary source by which youth obtain alcohol.

Due to the death, health and economic toll inflicted on populations

because of underage alcohol use, communities large and small have begun to realize the need for social host liability policies and/or teen party ordinances.

Social host liability laws are becoming commonplace across the nation and seek to impose civil penalties for violations. Penalties often consist of monetary damages to be paid by the social host for injuries caused by their intoxicated guests. New Jersey was the first state to adopt a social host liability law. Since that time, 20 states have enacted social host laws and many more states have individual county, city, and town laws pertaining to social hosting.

According to current research, social host laws are among the most effective forms of public policy in reducing binge drinking and drinking and driving in both youth and adults. Around the country, lawmakers and courts are increasingly recognizing that underage drinking is a serious threat to the health and safety of their communities and are taking steps to reduce it.

The Kansas State Senate recently passed a bill making it a crime (punishable by six months in jail) for adults to allow underage drinking in their homes. Pennsylvania sentenced a woman to four and a half years in prison after she allowed a party that led to the drunken driving deaths of three teenagers.

In many states, including Montana, the assignment of civil penalties is limited, or precluded by the state Civil Code, which requires an injured party to prove that his or her injury was caused by the host's illegal service of alcohol rather than the drinker's own consumption of alcohol. Therefore, a slightly different approach to social hosting law may be needed for Montana.

Civil liability issues aside, all Montanans will remain burdened by the cost of problem drinkers. Statewide, there are at least 32,000 problem drinkers in Montana, and 10 percent of all Montanans ages 18-25 are alcohol dependent. That's the highest rate in the nation for this age group, and evidence that problem drinking begins as underage drinking.

According to recent research from the Bureau of Business and Economic Research (BBER) at the University of Montana, every problem drinker in Montana costs the state and society $16,000 a year. "These costs are borne by businesses, individuals and governments, as well as dollars lost to the state economy due to alcohol abuse," reports Dr. Steve Seninger, senior research professor at BBER.

In Northwest Montana, the county-by-county, annual costs associated with problem drinkers are staggering:

Mineral County: $7.7 million

Sanders County: $7.7 million

Lincoln County: $9.2 million

Lake County: $35.6 million

The problems associated with underage drinking in homes are difficult for law enforcement agencies to resolve without greater authority. Instead of sanctioning civil penalties after a third party has been injured or killed, social host policies could hold adults accountable by imposing fines and allowing police departments to recover costs incurred in breaking up private parties where underage drinking occurs. An ideal social host policy would allow police to issue misdemeanor citations with fines attached to any adult who permits underage drinking in his or her home. Further, it could permit law enforcement to recover service costs from the adult offender the very first time police are called to the residence. Repeat offenders would face escalating fines. Social host policies give law enforcement a tool to control private parties where underage drinking occurs, and serve as a significant deterrent to hosting the parties for underage drinkers in the first place.

Social host policies help to generate county revenue through law enforcement and make the providing of alcohol and/or allowing of underage drinking a crime. Through such policies we can help dispel Montana's cultural acceptance of underage drinking as harmless and a youth's rite of passage.

(Denyse Traeder is a program officer for the Northwest Montana Community Change Project. This is the first in a series on this subject over the coming months.)

Ten Media Advocacy Tips

1. *Take the initiative.* You don't have to wait for the media to contact you; make news happen!

2. *Know your goal.* What are you trying to accomplish? How will working with the media help you get there?

3. *Be strategic in everything you do and say.* Don't go after media for media's sake: have a purpose. What do you want people to do? What change do you want to take place? What solutions do you have for the problems you raise? What messages will advance your cause? Who do you need to influence and how can you reach them?

4. *Be newsworthy.* Keep in mind what constitutes newsworthiness; highlight what is significant, timely, and groundbreaking when you contact the media. If your story doesn't receive good coverage, find out why. Is there a different aspect you can highlight next time?

5. *Be timely.* Don't wait to take advantage of media advocacy opportunities; be prepared to respond to events as soon as they come up.

6. *Practice.* Role-play phone calls to reporters; say your media bites out loud before your interview; hold practice question-and-answer sessions with your colleagues. Remember an interview is not a conversation. Keep the focus on your message. Practice will help make you more comfortable and effective in your contacts with the media.

7. *Frame your story.* Always consider how the story is framed. Are you emphasizing an environmental approach? Are you emphasizing the social aspects of the problem and avoiding putting all of the responsibility on the individual? Are you highlighting policies that will solve the problem?

8. *Think locally.* If there is a national story, offer local spokespeople to talk about what impact that story has on your state or community.

9. *Be strategic in selecting your spokespeople.* Be creative; the head of your coalition may not be the best spokesperson available. Are there parents, police officers, teenagers, or others who will have inherent credibility with the media? Putting an influential person in the media spotlight may not only enhance credibility, but help make them an ally for your cause.

10. *Tend your relationships.* Relationships with journalists, like any relationships, require two-way efforts. Get to know the reporters, editors, and producers in your area. But remember: a reporter is not your friend or enemy, just a professional trying to do a good job. What kind of information do they like to have? What kind of stories do they want to cover? On any given day, ask yourself how you can help them.

Media Advocacy Resources

American Public Health Association
http://www.apha.org/news/Media_Advocacy_Manual.pdf
Media Advocacy Guidebook.

Advocacy Institute
http://www.advocacy.org
Media advocacy information and tools

Tools for citizen journalism. This resource from www.sourcewatch.org provides nuts and bolts information to enable people other than traditional mass media professionals to gather, edit and share information through internet and other low-cost publishing systemshttp://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Tools_for_citizen_journalism

Citizen Media Initiatives. This website from www.cyberjounalist.net provides a list of citizen journalism initiatives.http://www.cyberjournalist.net/news/002226.php

SlideShare. This website includes a wide range of slide presentations on a variety of topics, including some helpful ones on media advocacy. http://www.slideshare.net/firefrore/new-media-advocacy-draft

Altman, D.{t}G., Balcazar, F.{t}E., Fawcett, S.{t}B., Seekins, T., & Young, J.{t}Q. (1994). *Public health advocacy: Creating community change to improve health*. Palo Alto, CA: Board of Trustees of the Leland Stanford Junior University.

> This book is intended as a practical tool for those involved with media advocacy. It includes advice on developing a vision, hints on advocacy tactics, and worksheets for clarifying objectives. Strategies for using the media effectively and tips for evaluating programs are also featured. The book concludes with some case histories to illustrate practical applications of this advice.

Chapman, S., & Lupton, D. (1994). *The fight for public health: Principles and practice of media advocacy.* London: BMJ Publishing Group.

This book discusses lobbying and advocacy as a means to overcome institutional barriers to public health goals. It explains the theories behind public health advocacy and shares the tactics and techniques that advocates can use to their benefit. It helps readers develop a strategy that combines research, community organizing, policy development, advocacy, politics, and the news media. The authors' step-by-step instructions for working with media to promote social change are invaluable.

Jernigan, D.{t}H., & Wright, P.{t}A. (1996). Media advocacy: Lessons from community experiences. *Journal of Public Health Policy, 17,* 306–330.

This article reports on case studies of media advocacy on alcohol and tobacco issues in a diverse array of communities, including efforts in African-American and Latino communities or using computer-based electronic communication systems. Some of the lessons from these case studies include the power of media advocacy when used as a complement to community organizing; the importance of staying focused on clear, long-term goals; the impact of message presentation on media coverage; and the need to use media advocacy in response to appropriate situations, not as an all-purpose fix.

Pertschuk, M., & Wilbur, P. (1991). *Media advocacy: Reframing public debate.* Washington, DC: The Benton Foundation.

This handbook is designed to show nonprofit organizations how to recognize a good story and then how to market it to print and broadcast outlets. It details the basic principles of media advocacy and illustrates a variety of strategies for gaining access to the media and strategically framing the debate on alcohol and tobacco issues.

Russell, A., Voas, R.{t}B., Dejong, W., & Chaloupka, M. (1995). MADD rates the states: A media advocacy event to advance the agenda against alcohol-impaired driving. *Public Health Reports, 110,* 240–245.

This article describes the "Rating the States" program conducted by Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) for the first time in 1993. MADD used the effort to focus public attention on state efforts to combat alcohol-impaired driving. MADD held a national press conference and used other media activities to reach more than 60 million Americans with news of the program. This article examines the program's goals and methods, publicity efforts, and changes in coverage and legislation. Tips for building on MADD's strategies are also included.

Simons-Morton, B.{t}G., Donohew, L., & Crump, A.{t}D. (1997). Health

communication in the prevention of alcohol, tobacco, and drug use. *Health Education and Behavior, 24,* 544–554.

Health educators can use media approaches to reach diverse audiences, change health attitudes and behavior, shape social norms, affect the coverage of health issues, and shape laws and policies. Such approaches are often used along with other strategies, including education, community development, empowerment, and social change approaches. This article discusses the role of media and communication in substance abuse prevention.

Treno, A.{t}J., Breed, L., Holder, H.{t}D., Roeper, P., Thomas, B.{t}A., & Gruenewald, P.{t}J. (1996). Evaluation of media advocacy efforts within a community trial to reduce alcohol-involved injury: Preliminary newspaper results. *Evaluation Review, 20,* 404–423.

This article discusses local newspaper coverage of alcohol-related issues before and after the media advocacy component of a community trial to reduce alcohol-involved injuries. News stories were measured in terms of their relationship to the timing of media advocacy training, technical consultation, and resulting media advocacy efforts. Coverage after the intervention in experimental communities appeared higher than similar pre-intervention coverage. No similar increase was perceived in comparison communities. Increases in local coverage in intervention communities also did not appear to be related to larger state or national trends.

Treno, A.{t}J., & Holder, H.{t}D. (1997). Community mobilization, organizing, and media advocacy. A discussion of methodological issues. *Evaluation Review, 21,* 166–190.

Media advocacy was an important feature of the Community Prevention Trial. This article discusses how the media advocacy activities of the project were evaluated. It stresses the need for a variety of community monitoring tools and the coding of local alcohol-related news coverage. This article also looks at the implications of audience segmentation on media advocacy efforts.

U.S. Department of Education. (1994). *Raising more voices than mugs: Changing the college alcohol environment through media advocacy.* Available from The Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention (http://www.edc.org/hec)

Media advocacy is an environmental strategy that can be used to support alcohol prevention and policy development efforts. This guide is intended for prevention program coordinators and students.

It can help them use media advocacy to bring attention to alcohol-related problems on campus and build interest in implementing promising solutions. The guide discusses the role of alcohol on college campuses, key elements of media advocacy, as well as tips for engaging the media.

Wallack, L., & Dorfman, L. (1996). Media advocacy: A strategy for advancing policy and promoting health. *Health Education Quarterly, 23,* 293–317.

Media advocacy can promote public health goals by strategically applying pressure for policy change. It moves the public health debate from a focus on individual behavior to that of policymakers and others who shape the environment. This article presents two case studies to illustrate key aspects of media advocacy.

Wallack, L., Dorfman, L., Jernigan, D., & Themba, M. (1993). *Media advocacy and public health: Power for prevention.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

"Media Advocacy and Public Health" shows how media advocacy can be a central strategy for the prevention of public health problems. This book provides both the theoretical framework and practical guidelines to create and implement successful media advocacy strategies. A variety of case studies demonstrate successful applications of media advocacy.

Wallack, L., Woodruff, K., Dorfman, L., & Diaz, I. (1999). *News for a change: An advocate's guide to working with the media.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

"News for a Change" explains that media advocacy is the strategic use of news media, advertising, and community organizing to advance a public policy initiative. It provides guidelines for advocates who want to increase the power and effectiveness of their social change efforts.

Winett, L.{t}B., & Wallack, L. (1996). Advancing public health goals through the mass media. *Journal of Health Communication, 1,* 173–196.

This article provides a useful comparison of a variety of media-oriented strategies. Social marketing, public relations, and media advocacy are discussed in some detail. A chart then shows the significant differences among these approaches.

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OJJDP Underage Drinking Enforcement Training Center

The Underage Drinking Enforcement Training Center

www.udetc.org