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Thank you for being a part of the 25th Annual Oral, Head & Neck Cancer Awareness Week® (OHANCAW®), April 16-22, 2023.

You have joined a nationwide initiative aimed at:

- Raising awareness of oral, head and neck cancer
- Educating on the importance of early detection
- Screening as many individuals as possible, especially those at high risk
- Saving lives!

We are providing this OHANCAW® Media Outreach & Publicity Guide to assist your center in promoting your educational screening events. Provided below are tips to enhance your media relations outreach and your overall social media campaign.

In addition, to get you started, included are links to the customizable press (news) & matte (feature article) releases, and the 2023 OHANCAW® fact sheet.

**Timing is Everything: Start Now**

Start your media outreach today. Reporters are often working on stories several weeks in advance. Because OHANCAW® is quickly approaching, be sure to contact your media outlets as soon as possible. The potential for a longer feature story is greater if the reporter has more time to research story angles and interview your designated spokespersons.
Getting Listed in Your Community and Local Media Outlets’ Event Calendars

Having your local newspaper or community websites list your OHANCAW® screening is a good way to get started. Do a bit of research on the community calendar listings with your local organizational groups and media outlets. Remember that these calendars could appear only once a week or on a continuous basis, so call early to make sure your screening is listed in the appropriate week’s calendar or request it to run consecutive weeks leading up to OHANCAW®.

Thinking Local

To maximize interest among your local feature or health reporters, consider including local angles relevant to the story, such as:

• Local spokespersons
• A local patient success story
• Regional statistics or discussing any clinical trials on oral, head and neck cancer being conducted at your facility
• Local area fact sheet
• Remember what may be of interest to a national reporter may not be to your local reporters.

Building the OHANCAW® Brand

We appreciate your center/facility utilizing the media and promotional materials provided. With the hundreds of centers/facilities promoting OHANCAW® in the weeks leading up to and during Awareness Week, it will maximize awareness and bring wide-scale attention to this life-saving campaign.
Capturing Your Event in Photos

It’s a great idea to capture photos of your screening event. Why? They can be used to thank your participants via social media, publicize your future screening events, and they can help HNCA continue to build excitement and interest in the OHANCAW® brand. If you plan to take photos during your event, consider the following:

1. Confirm any existing photography policies your institution may have that may limit or prevent photographs being taken during the event.
2. If taking photos of specific individuals, either posed or candid, please ensure they sign the HNCA Photo Release Form.
3. If you are taking small group shots, either candid or posed, you do not need to obtain a signed release from every participant, but do ensure they know how photos may be used by your institution and/or HNCA.
4. Photos of general attendance (e.g., a wide shot of your entire event area) do not require a signed release.
5. Some ideas for photos include images of an individual being screened, your event setup, signage, crowds of attendees, your volunteers (especially those wearing the OHANCAW® volunteer t-shirts provided by HNCA), your representatives being interviewed by media, etc.
6. At the conclusion of your event, we encourage you to submit your photos, along with any signed photo releases, to HNCA. Please scan and email the photo releases, along with photos in .jpeg or .png format, to hello@headandneck.org.
Customizing the Press Release & Fact Sheet

The customizable press release is designed to assist you in announcing OHANCAW® activities in your community. The press release can be provided to members of the media or any other interested parties. To customize the press release, please be sure to insert the screening or event locations, dates, times, and details about any additional activities, such as seminars, that may be planned. A quote from your local spokesperson and a brief description about your center/facility’s role in the community certainly will enhance your news coverage. The fact sheet on oral, head and neck cancer may be of additional use to your local media.

Circulating the Bylined Matte Release
(“COVID-19 is on Track to Increase Incidence of Head and Neck Cancer”)

Unlike a basic press/news release, a matte release is longer, has a byline, and is more suitable for use as a feature article. Feel free to provide the matte release when submitting information to local newspapers. Simply add your name as the author of the article, insert the information about your local screening, and send to health or feature editors at your local newspaper. Weekly newspapers, in particular, frequently publish this type of localized and useful health information for their readers.

Targeting the Media

Once you have personalized your press materials, email, fax, or mail them to your local newspaper, television, and radio feature or health reporters. To publicize your screenings throughout the entire community, it is important to contact as many media outlets as possible, including daily and weekly newspapers, ethnic and religious publications, radio talk show programs, and
TV medical producers. Most of these media outlets now have websites or an online presence where you can access contact information for the respective editors or producers.

Following Up to Encourage Coverage

Contacting reporters after sending the press materials is key. It’s one of the most important steps in securing media coverage. Try to find out what story topics or angles are of interest to local reporters. For example, if the reporter is most interested in profiling cancer survivors, identify a compelling patient who could be available for interviews. Another reporter may be more focused on the newest clinical findings and be more interested in speaking to a researcher from your institution instead.

When conducting your media relations outreach, be sure to be responsive to inquiries from both the media and your spokespeople. It is also important to be accurate with the information you provide. Earning the trust of those involved will go a long way in ensuring a successful publicity campaign.

Featuring Local Spokespersons

One of the best ways to localize your story is to profile spokespeople who are associated with your center. Try to have available at least one oral, head and neck cancer survivor or current patient who can share a personal story of what it is like to be diagnosed, treated, and how your center has helped them to manage their
care. In addition, it will be beneficial to have a health care professional available during your outreach to ensure that important screening and treatment messages are communicated and questions are accurately answered.

Also, consider whether there are any prominent members of the community whom you could include as spokespeople, such as respected civic leaders or sports figures who have a relevant personal or family connection to oral, head and neck cancer, perhaps as patients themselves or as caregivers.

It is always a good idea to provide spokespeople with some training or guidance as to what to expect when being interviewed by reporters. Patients and health care professionals typically have little practice in speaking to the media, so advising them to keep their remarks informative, yet concise, might be helpful. Also, remind physicians to use layman’s terms, instead of clinical or technical language. Reporters prefer sound bites and quotes that are understandable to the general public.

**SOCIAL MEDIA - SUGGESTED POSTS**

Downloadable social media posts will be available in early 2023 to help you promote your event. Please keep an eye on our [OHANCAW Social Media page](#) on our website for details.