

A Checklist for Preparing Spokespersons for Media Interviews

- ☑ **Provide the necessary background information.** By clearly explaining the purpose of the interview and how the patient spokesperson's perspective will fit into the overall piece, you will help them feel more at ease with the interview process. Provide background on the media outlet and the individual reporter, including any previous coverage on a similar topic and insights into the reporter's interviewing and writing style. Outline potential topic areas and questions that you think will likely be covered in the interview. Fear of the unknown is what causes the most anxiety going into an interview, so the more information you can provide, the better!
- ☑ **Outline key messages to reinforce.** While you want your patient spokesperson to be authentic in their responses, prepare them by providing a list of key messages and points to reinforce. By providing these background materials, you will give the interviewee the opportunity to digest the information, prepare their thoughts and make the messages their own. As part of this effort, work with the patient spokesperson to identify topics that they may not be comfortable discussing. If the sensitive topic is brought up in the interview, they will be prepared to bridge to another point that they are more comfortable discussing.
- ☑ **Provide detailed logistical instructions.** Whether the interview will take place via phone for a print outlet or in studio for a broadcast outlet, providing specific logistical instructions is an important part of preparing the patient spokesperson – detail the time and location, as well as the anticipated length of the interview. Additionally, outlining any nuances about the circumstances around the interview is important to convey. For example, if the patient spokesperson is participating in a broadcast interview, giving them instructions on what to wear (i.e., no white or loud patterns) will ensure that they present themselves well on camera.
- ☑ **Hold a prep call prior to the interview.** Don't underestimate the importance of holding a prep call with the patient spokesperson. Sending information via email to prepare for the call is helpful, but verbally walking them through all the information over the phone could highlight additional questions the spokesperson may not even have known that they had. During this call, take the opportunity to ask a few sample questions to help practice responses and ensure the person's comfort level going into the interview. While an FAQ may make your patient spokesperson feel too coached, helping them prepare a response to the reporter's likely first question will allow them to start the interview strong.

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