

NATIONAL CHIROPRACTIC MONTH



ACA Staff Assistance is Available

If you need assistance with National Chiropractic Month activities, please contact ACA's Communications Staff. We are happy to answer your questions or hear your ideas. Please e-mail clukacs@acatoday.org.

Working with the Media

The media can be a powerful ally in delivering National Chiropractic Month messages to a large and diverse audience. But to attract coverage, you must tell your story effectively, which includes providing the media with accurate and newsworthy information about chiropractic. The tools in this guide offer ways to reach out to the media—and be sure they're listening.

News Releases & Media Alerts

Typical communication with the media begins with news releases and media alerts. These formats are the most effective ways to notify the media about new data, events or positions on issues and to help generate story ideas.

Try the suggestions below to get the most from your media outreach strategies.

- If you have no local media contacts, call outlets to find out which journalists would cover your issue or event. Introduce yourself to reporters by telephone, and let them know that October is National Chiropractic Month. Let them know that you will send a news release about your planned event, and encourage them to contact you for more information.
- Follow-up after your initial contact by sending the news release and a copy of the *Healthy Living* fact sheet on headaches. Be sure to notify the reporter of your event well in advance. Give at least two weeks notice to a weekly newspaper and allow up to three months for coverage in long-lead publications such as magazines.
- Always be professional and honest with reporters. Regard them as allies in your

campaign. The relationships you cultivate now will flourish later, even if your efforts don't result in a story this time.

If you are planning an activity tied to National Chiropractic Month, send out a media alert or a second news release at least one week before your event as a reminder. Be sure to note:

- What the event is and include any key speakers, titles and affiliations.
- Where and when the event will take place.
- A sentence or two describing National Chiropractic Month.
- A contact name, telephone number and e-mail address.

Television Coverage

As a primary source of health information in America today, television can be an effective way to communicate National Chiropractic Month messages to your community. Placing a chiropractic story in the broadcast media is an ambitious endeavor, but it can be achieved with adequate preparation.

Broadcast journalists and talk show hosts choose stories that pose problems and offer solutions. The stories you pitch must be credible and interesting, and offer viewers an opportunity to relate to them personally. Airtime is limited, so break your story into several short segments.

To increase your chances of a successful pitch:

- Call your local television station or visit its Web site to determine the appropriate editor or news director. Contact him or her and be ready to pitch the story quickly and accurately.

- Offer experts in your area who can communicate valuable information on the topic. Suggest possible interview subjects, such as people who have benefited from chiropractic care of headaches and who can share personal stories about their treatment.
- Feel free to offer ACA's Web site (www.acatoday.org) as a source for more information.

Radio Coverage

Radio is an indispensable medium that reaches people 24 hours a day. Approach your local radio station with new research, current issues affecting your community, and general health and wellness messages.

During National Chiropractic Month, get radio coverage by following these recommendations:

- Call the radio station to determine the appropriate reporter, producer or talk show personalities for your topic.
- Send a personalized letter to the contact with information about National Chiropractic Month and your local campaign events. Offer statistics and facts about chiropractic treatment of headaches.
- If the radio station decides to run your story, be prepared to talk about your issues and share statistical and anecdotal information, when appropriate. Keep your answers and statements short and positive.
- If the station isn't interested in conducting an interview, ask if they would consider airing a few public service announcements

(PSAs) regarding National Chiropractic Month.

More Opportunities for Media Coverage

Letters to the Editor, Opinion Pieces

An effective and simple way to spotlight chiropractic is to submit a letter or editorial to your local newspaper. Editors often require exclusive pieces, so limit your letter or editorial to one newspaper in your area, preferably the one with the largest circulation. If the paper does not print the letter, send it to the next largest paper.

Editorials present well-defined issues and rational solutions to problems, and serve as effective tools for reaching the public. Editorials allow people to present a personal point of view with much more detail than other formats allow. Editorial boards and readers respond well to op-eds that have a human-interest slant.

To improve your letter or editorial's chances of placement:

- Call the newspaper and ask about its policies concerning letters to the editor. Follow the instructions.
- Tailor your letter to address your community's concerns. Use personal stories or other specifics whenever possible.
- Keep it short and focused. Many newspapers have strict length limits and edit letters for space. A concise, single-issue letter has a better chance of retaining its salient points and keeping the reader's interest.
- Be factual. Highlight aspects of the issue that haven't been previously addressed through solid facts. You can always find key

chiropractic information at www.acatoday.org.

- Include your contact information. Many newspapers will only print a letter to the editor after calling the author to verify his or her identity and address. Newspapers will not give out that information, and will usually only print your name and city should your letter be published.

Photo Coverage

Photos can often attract more attention to your event or issue than news articles. If you have a photo-worthy event, invite photographers from your local newspaper or magazines.

Inserts and Supplements

From time to time, newspapers will print special supplements on informative topics or issues affecting the community. Call to find out if the paper is willing to either produce an insert on your topic or publish one that you can provide. Either way, a National Chiropractic Month insert spreading positive chiropractic messages will call attention to the observance. Inserts or supplements often take several weeks to prepare; be sure to contact the publication well in advance.

Calendar Listings

Most newspapers, magazines and news stations publish calendars in which you can include any National Chiropractic Month activities that are open to the public and the news media. Find out the publications' deadlines, format requirements and contact information, and notify them of your event.