

5th Annual

2007 Medical Reserve Corps National Leadership and Training Conference



FORGING POWERFUL PARTNERSHIPS



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Providence, Rhode Island



Working with the Media: A Communications Session for MRC Volunteers

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2007 Medical Reserve Corps Leadership and Training Conference

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Recognize Media Opportunities: What is News?

News is:

- Something different today than yesterday
- Surprising, unexpected, counterintuitive
- The first, biggest, most comprehensive
- Something that raises new issues, problems, solutions
- Linked to what's already in the news

Messaging

What is “message”?

*Message is the crux of the matter –
the reason why anyone should care about what
you are doing or have to say.*

*It must be clear, compelling, accurate
and short !*

Messaging

Why have a message?

To get YOUR point across

To get your point across ACCURATELY

To help maintain control of the interview

To stay CONSISTENT when things are changing around you

Messaging

Developing Your Message

- Speak in headlines and use vivid imagery
- Avoid jargon
- Offer the conclusion first, then support with facts
- Use carefully chosen national and local statistics to reinforce your points
- Use “real life” examples to enhance your comments
- Narrow your message to no more than three points
- Adapt your message to match your audience

Messaging

Delivering Your Message

- Develop talking points for all spokespeople
- Use punchy, precise words; short sentences for impact
- Flag your message with transitional phrases
- Anticipate difficult questions – think like a reporter
- Restate your message in several different ways
- Be prepared to ask for something specific
- Showcase your personality, and relax

Messaging

Examples of Good Message

"We have to be prepared for a Category 5 pandemic. It's not easy. The only thing that's harder is facing the consequences. That will be intolerable."

*–Dr. Martin S. Cetron,
Director of Global Migration and Quarantine,
U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

"We have a grossly inadequate public health infrastructure. I sometimes feel we're trying to run the O'Hare airport control tower with tin cans and strings."

*– Michael Osterholm,
Director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy,
University of Minnesota*

Working with the Media

Being Prepared

- Build media relationships
- Train agency leaders
- Prepare materials in advance
- Create expert lists
- Promote preparedness efforts
- Unify your partners

Working with the Media

When a Reporter Calls...Ask Questions First!

Who are you dealing with?

What is the story about?

What's the deadline?

What type of story is this – breaking news or a feature?

Who else is the reporter interviewing for the story?

Working with the Media

Talking with Reporters

- Know your message and use concise, clear language
- Be candid and honest, never say, “No comment.”
- Supply written background
- Don’t argue with reporters
- Don’t assume that anything is off the record
- Suggest additional sources
- Be sensitive to reporters’ deadlines