



Oncology Nursing Society

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Media Advocacy Issue Brief

What is the Media?

Local media outlets provide a wide range of opportunities to disseminate the Oncology Nursing Society's (ONS) message and advance the Society's health policy agenda. Perhaps most importantly, it affords another medium through which to interact with and influence members of Congress.

There are four major areas of media: Newspapers, Radio, Television, and On-line (relatively new). Each area of the media has different needs and standards. Even within each specific medium, there are different rules for publication or broadcasting for news and opinion.

A first important step is to build a media list. The list should include which Members of Congress are likely to be influenced by each media outlet. In addition, you should consider the options available to you within each medium. This outline can help you form your own state-based media list. ONS's communications department can also be an asset in that task. ♦

Below are some of the media outlets that should be included in your local media list and a very brief description of how they can be used to further your advocacy.

Newspaper (Daily and Weekly) – Opinion

Letters to the Editor:

These usually appear on the editorial pages of newspapers. They are written by readers to address specific issues of the day. Most importantly for ONS, these pages are widely read by Members of Congress and their staffers.

Op-eds:

The op-ed page of a newspaper each day typically carries a number of opinion-editorial columns, often written by regular columnists, both local and nationally syndicated. Most newspapers also will leave space for opinion columns from other viewpoints and authors, including community leaders.

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Editorial Boards:

The editorial page editors write the opinions (editorials) of the newspaper. They will meet with concerned citizens and groups to develop a better understanding of issues and how they affect the community.

Newspaper (Daily and Weekly) – News

Traditional Reporting:

This is what fills up most of the pages of the newspaper. Most newspapers have their own reporters who cover a beat - health, city hall, state politics. Reporters want “hard” news, not opinion. Information presented during clinical sessions at the ONS Annual Congress, for example, could be of interest to reporters.

Wire Services:

The best-known wire service is the Associated Press. AP has reporters covering a wide range of beats at the local and state level. The AP provides articles to papers and other media outlets. You should always include AP in any press advisory or press release you send.

Radio

Local News Radio:

Many cities have a radio station that is devoted solely to news, often on the AM dial. They are looking for content with a local perspective.

Talk/Call-in Shows:

AM stations often are likely to have several hours dedicated to call-in shows. Often, these shows have an ideological bent, but they do have guests, like members of Congress, whom you may want to impact.

Public Radio News:

The public radio stations have news departments that often take a more in-depth look at stories. In addition, they often have news call in shows.

Television – Local Broadcast Channels

News:

Your local television stations have several news shows during the day. There is a great deal of competition for the news segments on these shows.

Public Interest Programming:

In addition to the news, most television stations provide public interest programming in the community interest. While these are often shown during low viewership periods, they provide great opportunities.

Television – Local Cable Channels

Cable News:

Many areas have a 24-hours news channel that provides primarily local coverage. These stations are in constant need of content.

Public Access:

Cable stations have channels dedicated to public access. Programming varies widely.

The Internet

Local Blogs:

Blogs are increasingly a source of news and commentary on a wide-range of issues including politics. Recent studies have shown that the media are major users of blogs.

On-line News:

Almost every medium (television, radio and newspapers) also has a web site. The web sites often provide more opportunities to provide content not available in the broadcast or print versions. If you are in on-line stories, you will show up in Google and Nexus searches.