

Leveraging Earned Media to Boost Your Advocacy

Jenni Roberson, AAPA Director, Media Relations

Josh Birch, AAPA Manager, Media Relations

Alyn Welchel, MSPA, PA-C, CAPA Treasurer

Disclosure

Jenni Roberson: I have no relevant relationships with ineligible companies to disclose within the past 24 months. (Note: Ineligible companies are defined as those whose primary business is producing, marketing, selling, re-selling, or distributing healthcare products used by or on patients.)

Josh Birch: I have no relevant relationships with ineligible companies to disclose within the past 24 months. (Note: Ineligible companies are defined as those whose primary business is producing, marketing, selling, re-selling, or distributing healthcare products used by or on patients.)

Alyn Whelchel, MSPA, PA-C: I have no relevant relationships with ineligible companies to disclose within the past 24 months. (Note: Ineligible companies are defined as those whose primary business is producing, marketing, selling, re-selling, or distributing healthcare products used by or on patients.)

Learning objectives

- Examine communications strategies and tactics for advancing legislative goals.
- Apply lessons learned from effective CO communications initiatives.
- Evaluate AAPA tools and resources available to help drive your success.

Americans **don't trust the media.**

Only **34% of U.S. adults** have a "great deal" or "fair amount" of confidence in media.

38% have no trust at all in newspapers, TV and radio.

Source: Gallup, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/403166/americans-trust-media-remains-near-record-low.aspx>

Adults under 30 are now almost as likely to trust information from **social media sites** as they are to trust information from national news outlets.

Source: PEW Research Center <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2022/10/27/u-s-adults-under-30-now-trust-information-from-social-media-almost-as-much-as-from-national-news-outlets/>



kyliejenner

Follow

Message



6,850 posts

398M followers

90 following

Kylie

kyliecosmetics.com

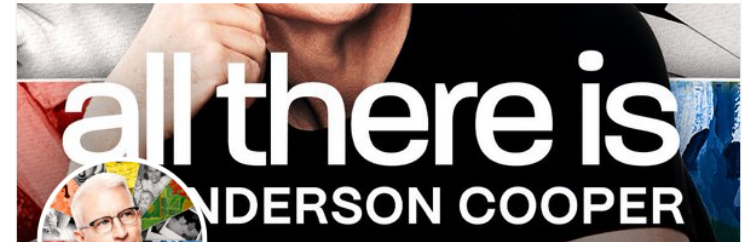
Who do Americans trust more?



Settings

Anderson Cooper

18.3K posts



Follow

Anderson Cooper

@andersoncooper

CNN/ 60Minutes. Podcast "All There Is." My new book ASTOR - The Rise and Fall of an American Fortune comes out Sept 19th. Pre-order at link below

New York hc.com/ASTOR Joined June 2008

338 Following 9.6M Followers

The challenge you face first and foremost is
to **earn the trust of the audience.**



90%

of U.S. adults say
PAs are **trusted**
healthcare providers.

Communications strategies & tactics

- What is **earned media**?
- Why should earned media be a **part of advocacy**?
- How can your **CO work with the media**?

What is earned media?

+ paid

billboard
radio sponsorship
digital banner ad
print ad
tv commercial

+ owned

blog
Facebook
Website
X (formerly Twitter)
Instagram
YouTube

. earned

newspaper article
online news piece
broadcast tv news
radio story
letter to the editor
op-ed



Why should earned media be a part of advocacy?

**LEADERSHIP
ADVOCACY
AND
SUMMIT**

- Establishes independent **validation**
- Gets your message to a **broader audience**
- Helps to **educate** the general public
- Positions PAs as **patient advocates**
- Raises **awareness**
- Builds **public support**
- **Drives change!**

**Daily
Memphian**

**Poll shows Tennesseans, nation
dissatisfied with health care system**

**Quad-City
Times**

**James Earel: We must keep our physician
assistants in state**

**Pelham clinic participating in nationwide
Alzheimer's research**

6 WBRC

AAPA

How can your CO work with the media?

- **Start small**

- Letters to the editor get lawmakers' attention!

- **Think long-term**

- Building awareness of PA value will drive public support of change

- **Be persistent**

- Reporters are busy; keep emailing them!

What is the story?

- **Who?**

- Who is participating? Who is the intended audience?

- **What?**

- What is happening?

- **Why?**

- Why is it important? What impact does it have on the intended audience?

- **When?**

- Is this an event with a set time (ex. – lobby day), or is this a story addressing an ongoing issue (ex. – access to care challenges)?

- **Where?**

- If it is an event, where is it taking place?

How to prepare your spokesperson

- **Identify individual(s) you trust to represent the group/cause.**
 - Comfortable on and off camera
 - Live interviews vs. taped interviews
 - Knowledgeable on the topic
 - Calm under pressure
 - Well spoken



Setting your spokesperson(s) up for success



- **Short and concise messaging/talking points**
 - Use publicly available data to bolster your points
- Avoid **“landmines”**
- Don’t get caught up in the **mudslinging**
- **Mock interviews**

Crafting your story pitch

1

Make it
stand out

2

Keep it short

3

Include your
contact
information

4

Be cognizant
of grammar
and spelling

Case study: South Carolina

- Met with **state chapter**
- **Identified spokespeople** in each media market
- Had **background calls** with each spokesperson
- Crafted **story pitches** for each market
- **Coordinated interviews** with spokespeople and chapter leadership
- **The Results:**
 - **9 primary stories** placed in all SC media markets
 - **TV and newspaper stories**
 - **Stories shared** in neighboring media markets (Charlotte, NC; Macon, GA)
 - **Potential reach: over 250,000 people**



Lobby day checklist for success



- ✓ Identify a **main point of contact**
- ✓ **Think strategically** about time and place of the event
- ✓ Write and share a **short press release** to notify reporters
- ✓ **Spread the word** – try to get a large group to participate
- ✓ Create a **photo opportunity** (ex. – standing on the steps of the capitol)
- ✓ **Work with bill sponsors** to help ensure they can attend the event
- ✓ Wear white coats to make a **“visual statement”**

Sample story pitch from South Carolina

On Wednesday, healthcare providers from across the state will rally in Columbia in support of South Carolina Senate Bill 553, which in part would modernize physician assistant (PA) practice and regulation and ultimately provide healthcare teams the flexibility needed to meet the growing needs of South Carolina patients in both urban and rural areas.

This bill would be extremely impactful for patients in Myrtle Beach and the surrounding area who currently struggle to find adequate access to healthcare. Dustin Hayes is an emergency medicine PA in the PeeDee region who is working to spread awareness about the bill and how it would positively impact both patients and providers. If this bill were to pass, Hayes said PAs would be empowered to practice in rural and underserved communities to improve access to care for South Carolinians.

The bill would also help alleviate some of the strain being felt by the healthcare workforce shortages in the region. Hayes said many providers are burning out due to increased workload and not enough staff to meet patient needs. In February alone, Hayes worked 22 12-hour shifts in the ER.

I'd be happy to help coordinate interviews with Hayes who can discuss the bill further and explain its impacts in your area.

South Carolina story example

Physician assistants push for state bill to expand access to healthcare



Testimonial from SCAPA

**LEADERSHIP
AND
ADVOCACY
SUMMIT**

“The amount of attention garnered was noticeable and far surpassed the amount of attention the Nurse Practitioners in our state have been able to bring to their similar legislation... Our goal is to educate legislators about our profession and how we affect patients directly in their community so when our bill is in front of them they have a point of reference.”

- *Jennifer Marshall, SCAPA Legislative Committee Co-Chair*



**South Carolina
Academy of Physician Assistants**

Welcome Alyn Whelchel, MSPA, PA-C!

- Colorado Academy of PAs (CAPA) Treasurer
- CAPA Co-Chair of Government Affairs (5 years)
- Former CAPA President
- Faculty, Red Rocks Community College PA Program



Lessons Learned

- **Choose a point person** to assist in media outreach.
- **Repurpose earned media** (social media, emails, etc.)
- Take time to **learn about PAs** in your area.
- **Find media outlets** that target decision makers.
- **Say “Yes” to help!**



Colorado story example

Proposed bill would give Colorado physician assistants more leeway in treating patients

This is not the first time a bill of this nature has been introduced in the Colorado legislature. The topic was first introduced in 2021, then again in 2022.



Colorado legislators hope 2023 is the year they can provide physician assistants (PA) more leeway when it comes to treating patients



ADVERTISEMENT

Behind the scenes work

- **Long-term, continual correspondence with the reporter**
 - Education, answering questions, coordinating interview times
- **Finding the right spokesperson(s)**
- **Working with bill sponsors** to ensure media availability
- **Being flexible** to the reporter's needs
- **Responding quickly!**

Proposed bill would give Colorado physician assistants more leeway in treating patients

This is not the first time a bill of this nature has been introduced in the Colorado legislature. The topic was first introduced in 2021, then again in 2022.



Colorado legislators hope 2023 is the year they can provide physician assistants (PA) more leeway when it comes to treating patients.



ADVERTISEMENT

**LEADERSHIP
AND
ADVOCACY
SUMMIT**
LEAD. ENGAGE. INSPIRE.

Closing Information

Call to Action

Communications Resources

- **AAPA Media**
 - media@aapa.org
- **Resources for COs**
 - AAPA.org – Tools for State Advocates
- **PA Week**
 - aapa.org/pas-go-beyond/spread-the-word/