



PA Week 2020 Media Guide

As a PA, your patients and the members of your community trust your advice and look to you for guidance on how to stay healthy. This PA Week, we are encouraging all PAs to join together to share an important public message: **Get your flu shot!**

In addition to sharing this message through your conversations with patients and through your presence on social media, **you can use your local media** to amplify this call to action.

Easy Ways to Work With Your Local Media

- AAPA has developed a template [op-ed](#) (Page 3) and [letter to the editor](#) (Page 5) that you can customize and submit to your local newspaper.
- Skim your local news outlets for recent coverage of COVID-19 and other health topics.
 - Identify the reporters covering these topics.
 - Send an email to introduce yourself, share some information about the importance of vaccinations, and offer to be a source. Use the key messages below to help get you started.
- Ask AAPA for help! If you can't find a reporter's email address, need help submitting an op-ed or letter to the editor (LTE), or have any other questions about working with your local media, please contact [Jenni Roberson](#), director of media relations.

Key Messages to Share With Media

- PA Week is observed from October 6-12, and this year PAs across the country are joining together to remind the public how important vaccinations are and to encourage everyone to get a flu shot.
- Throughout the pandemic, one of my concerns for my patients' health is the possibility that many will forgo routine health checks or other preventative care because they are avoiding going into medical settings.
- There has been sharp decline in vaccination rates during this pandemic caused by a combination of lockdowns, social distancing, and extreme caution. In fact, a decline in rates of childhood immunizations is particularly troubling.

- For example, New York City, which was overwhelmed by the virus in March and April, reported that in the two months after the beginning of the shutdown, vaccinations for children older than two declined 91%.
- In August, a national study by Orlando Health found that two in three parents were afraid to take their children in for vaccinations – even though 84% of those parents believe vaccines are necessary to protect their children from a host of diseases.
- Now, as the flu season overlaps with COVID-19, I want to urge parents and all patients to make vaccinations a priority.
- We all have a duty to each other to keep our immunizations up to date – and to remind our friends and family to do the same.
- We must remember: Even though right now we are justly focused on the threat the COVID-19 pandemic poses to our health and the health of our children, we cannot lay down our weapons in the fight against other vaccine-preventable diseases.
- It's important for the public to get the facts on vaccinations and should feel welcome to talk to their healthcare providers if they have any questions or concerns.

SAMPLE OP-ED

As a PA, I Encourage You to Prioritize Vaccinations This Year

Today, the world is engaged in a battle against COVID-19, for which no vaccine is currently available. As a PA (physician assistant), I am deeply committed to helping my patients through this difficult time.

Aside from the threat of coronavirus itself, one of my concerns for my patients' health is the possibility that many will forgo routine health checks or other preventative care because they are avoiding going into medical settings.

When it comes to vaccinations, I am especially concerned. In August, a national study by Orlando Health found that two in three parents were afraid to take their children in for vaccinations – even though 84 percent of those parents believe vaccines are necessary to protect their children from a host of diseases.

I want to urge parents and all patients to make vaccinations a priority. We must remember: Even though, right now we are justly focused on the threat the COVID-19 pandemic poses to our health and the health of our children, we cannot lay down our weapons in the fight against other vaccine-preventable diseases.

This is a message PAs are joining together to share across the country as we celebrate PA Week – annually observed from October 6-12. I can think of no better way to celebrate being a PA than to do my part to remind the public of how important vaccinations are.

Patients must also be aware of the sharp decline in vaccinations rates during this pandemic caused by a combination of lockdowns, social distancing, and extreme caution. In fact, a decline in rates of childhood immunizations is particularly troubling. For example, New York City, which was overwhelmed by the virus in March and April, reported that in the two months after the beginning of the shutdown, vaccinations for children older than two declined 91%.

This year, as the flu season overlaps with COVID-19, the usual methods for delivering the flu vaccines will be disrupted. In previous flu seasons, there were many convenient opportunities for the public to obtain flu shots – such as at a pharmacy offering quick and easy walk-up flu shots or during a wellness visit with a primary care provider. But now, everyday routines and behaviors have changed, and getting flu shots may take a little more planning and effort.

It may be less convenient, but it's never been more important. Our healthcare system cannot afford a vaccine-preventable disease outbreak, or a worse-than-usual flu season.

We all have a duty to each other to keep our immunizations up to date – and to remind our friends and family to do the same. PAs have an important role to play, as well.

There are more than 140,000 PAs in the U.S., practicing in every state, and in every medical setting and specialty. According to research from the American Academy of PAs, half of PAs have tested, treated, or diagnosed COVID-19 patients. We've been serving on the front lines for months and are committed to encouraging our patients and the public to get their flu vaccination.

The challenges that our healthcare system will face next are unknown. But we do know that the flu will come this year, as it always does – and it is in our best interest as individuals and as a nation to fight with one of the most important weapons we have on hand: the flu vaccine.

[Author name] is a PA currently practicing in [city, state], and is also [a member OR official title] of [constituent organization].

SAMPLE LTE

As a PA, I Encourage You to Prioritize Vaccinations This Year

Today, the world is engaged in a battle against COVID-19, for which no vaccine is currently available. As a PA (physician assistant), I am deeply committed to helping my patients through this difficult time.

Aside from the threat of coronavirus itself, one of my concerns for my patients' health is the possibility that many will forgo routine health checks or other preventative care because they are avoiding going into medical settings.

When it comes to vaccinations, I am especially concerned. This year, as the flu season overlaps with COVID-19, the usual methods for delivering the flu vaccine will be disrupted. In previous flu seasons, there were many convenient opportunities for the public to obtain flu shots – such as at a pharmacy offering quick and easy walk-up flu shots or during a wellness visit with a primary care provider. But now, everyday routines and behaviors have changed, and getting flu shots may take a little more planning and effort.

I urge parents and all patients to make vaccinations a priority. It may be less convenient, but it's never been more important. Our healthcare system cannot afford a vaccine-preventable disease outbreak, or a worse-than-usual flu season.

[Author name] is a PA currently practicing in [city, state], and is also [a member OR official title] of [constituent organization].