

Marketing & Communications Guidebook



2025 Edition

PREFACE



Newspaper coverage and television/radio newscasts can be extremely credible and powerful vehicles for carrying your views to your target audiences. But, in order to use the media, you must convey your message—whether it is issue or marketing oriented—in the form of compelling news.

This guidebook for working with the media was developed as a general guide for NABIP members to initiate and maintain relationships with the media in their local areas. Its objective is to provide guidance and examples of ways to gain media exposure for the role of health insurance agents/brokers and coverage of health insurance issues.

This guide can be most beneficial if used in the following ways:

Acquaint yourself with the techniques and tools that contribute to a successful public relations effort. Use this time to lay the groundwork on issues and position yourself as the expert so that you are prepared to move ahead with the media when the timing is appropriate.

Review timely industry issues and find ways to relate them in a meaningful and legitimate way to the current events happening at the local level.

Find angles to help communicate the impact of how the national debate on healthcare reform is affecting your local community by sharing anecdotal information from your clients.

RESPONSIBILITIES/JOB DESCRIPTIONS

A. GENERAL OVERVIEW – PART 1

The Marketing & Communications (M&C) Committee will strive to educate NABIP members as to the tools that are available for chapters to utilize on the NABIP website as it relates to marketing & communications. The committee will work to consistently have available press releases and editorials and support when it comes to sharing NABIP's message with the media. The committee will also strive to keep current and relevant presentations available for our chapters to use to educate the public. And, lastly the committee will ensure that members of the committee speak on behalf of NABIP and will do so while speaking with one voice, NABIP's voice.

1. MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE CHAIR

The marketing & communications chair is appointed by the President of NABIP.

- Select the committee made-up of "subject matter experts" in print, broadcast and social media, public speaking and training.
- Assign regional representatives and monitor the committees' progress.
- Develop and execute the committees' goals that complement NABIP's strategic plan.
- Communicate regularly with the vice chair and staff liaison to ensure that committee goals are being accomplished.
- Train all national media chairs to "Speak with One Voice."
- Assist with the development of media tools and resources.
- Lead monthly teleconference calls and in-person meetings
- Conduct an evaluation at the end of each year to determine if the committee accomplished its goals.

2. MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE MEMBER

Each committee member is assigned to a region to oversee and manage. The responsibilities of these positions are as follows:

- Identify yourself as a national committee member to your assigned region.
- Establish relationships with the chapters in your region.
- Coordinate monthly conference calls with state and local chapter presidents and marketing & communications chairs to collaborate and discuss effective initiatives for local media outreach.
- Provide regional updates and submit a brief report to the national media relations chair at least 3 days prior to the national committee conference call.
- Set goals with region and meet them by the end of your term on the committee.
- Serve as a resource to NABIP's communications department to distribute press materials to your region's media outlets; i.e. media advisories, press releases, etc.
- Encourage state and local marketing & communications chairs to participate in local media outreach by using the media tools provided on the NABIP website.

RESPONSIBILITIES/JOB DESCRIPTIONS

B. GENERAL OVERVIEW – PART 2

There are two basic roles held by members who work with the media: 1) M&C chair and 2) media spokesperson. M&C chairs will work primarily behind the scenes with the press and the media spokespeople. The media spokespeople will be those who are most comfortable giving interviews and sharing knowledge with the press on specific issues.

B. 1. MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS (M&C) CHAIR

- Identify media outlets and reporters in your area using local, state and national resources.
- Identify your local and state media spokespersons on specific issues.
- Monitor media outlets daily.
- Establish relationships with local reporters.
- Respond to media requests for information/interviews.
- Coordinate with local, state and national leadership to “speak with one voice.”
- Prepare press releases and media advisories.
- Submit press releases and media advisories for review by local or state leaders.
- Distribute press releases and media advisories to media outlets.
- Distribute prepared Letters-to-the-Editor and Op-Eds to media outlets.
- Attend marketing & communications training webinars.
- Use NABIP resources at www.NABIP.org.

B. 2. MEDIA SPOKESPERSON

- Identify yourself as a local, state or national media spokesperson.
- Establish relationships with reporters.
- Coordinate with local, state and national leadership to “speaking with one voice.”
- Respond to reporter requests for information/interviews.
- Schedule and conduct media interviews.

RESPONSIBILITIES/JOB DESCRIPTIONS



B. 3. STATE MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS (M&C) CHAIR

Each state chapter should establish a M&C Committee. The responsibility of the state committee should be to:

- Coordinate the state M&C campaign with local implementation.
- Direct the state M&C campaign.
- Assist in planning the state legislative advocacy agenda in coordination with the Legislative Council.
- Conduct a strategic planning session to establish issues and relationships of those issues to the state legislative agenda.
- Develop a mass media communication program designed to achieve communication goals.
- Assist local chapter M&C committees with developing and meeting the goals and tasks.
- Develop a system for monitoring target issues and emerging issues in the news media.
- Monitor the achievement of state and local goals.
- Attend and participate in regional teleconferences and training.

B. 4. LOCAL MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS (M&C) CHAIR

The local M&C chair is in the unique position of being able to identify local issues that affect NABIP members. The local chair's responsibilities include:

- Conduct the local M&C activity.
- Participate in the establishment of the state M&C agenda.
- Attend and participate in the state M&C teleconferences.
- Identify local spokespersons with expertise in the target and emerging issues.
- Develop relationships with media reporters and editors.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE



A. BUILDING THE PRESS LIST

Before beginning any media outreach, there is a fundamental piece that needs to be in place—the press list. No matter how good your news, if it doesn't land in the hands of the reporter who covers that topic or issue, it is likely to be overlooked.

First, you must identify the most appropriate sections within your local newspaper that will be most interested in covering your news—as well as the type of reporter. Normally, health insurance issues are addressed in the business or health section of your newspaper by those handling insurance matters, health-related business, business news announcements or healthcare issues. There may also be a regular column in the publication devoted to insurance or healthcare topics. You should also explore whether there are specific television or radio programs that focus on insurance or healthcare topics and issues.

With the print media you should direct your information to the business and health editors, and to reporters who cover business and health-related issues. In some instances, depending upon your news, the reporter who covers state legislative developments might be the appropriate person. (You may also find there is a columnist at the newspaper that writes about these topics or has a personal interest in the issues.) Finally, if there is any question about what section a story will best fit into, the press communiqué should be directed to the news editor who will make the decision and send to the appropriate reporter.

With broadcast media, you will need to seek out the producer who handles topics related to health and business or the assignment editor. This applies for both television and radio stations. You also will want to include specific programs or talk shows that focus on health or business issues. In addition to local newspapers, television and radio media make certain you compile a list of key industry trade publications—insurance, health, medical and business trade press. Unless you are familiar with a particular reporter, it is best to send your information to the publication's editor.

The media is an industry that is notorious for high turnover of staff; therefore, don't rely solely on any resource book to provide you the names of the most up-to-date listing. As you are compiling your initial press list it is critical to call each individual media outlet to obtain the most current names of those reporters who cover the topics. You can start with the receptionist at each outlet to ask who covers healthcare policy or insurance issues. You will also want to know to whom you should direct company or chapter news such as awards, promotions or meeting information. If the receptionist cannot answer your questions, ask to speak to the business and health editors. In addition to an address, you also will need to know the reporter's direct telephone number, fax number and email address. When you finally speak to the reporter directly, inquire whether he/she prefers to receive news announcements by fax or email.

As you continue your outreach efforts, you should constantly build upon your list. Be on the lookout for additional reporters who seem to be covering industry topics for your local media or new broadcast programs airing relevant information. Periodically call each outlet—especially prior to a news announcement—to be certain your press list is up-to-date.

If you need a customized media list for your area, please contact Kelly Loussedes at kloussedes@nabip.org.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE



A. 1. PRINT, BROADCAST, TRADE SAMPLES

PRINT

The Washington Post
Sandra Boodman
Health Reporter
sandra.boodman@washpost.com
(202) 334-7391

BROADCAST

NPR
Rob Stein
Senior Health Editor/Correspondent
(202) 513-2000
rstein@npr.org

CNN
Elizabeth Cohen
Senior Medical Correspondent
(404) 827-5255
elizabeth.cohen@turner.com

TRADE PUBLICATIONS

National Underwriter Life & Health
Bill Coffin
Editor-in-Chief
(201) 455-2340
bcoffin@nuco.com

TOOLS OF THE TRADE



B. LETTER OF INTRODUCTION – BEGINNING A MEDIA RELATIONSHIP

B. 1. LETTER OF INTRODUCTION – TEMPLATE

Dear **<Reporter/Editor/Producer>**,

As **<your title>** of **<your company>**, I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. I've been in the health insurance industry for **<number of years>** and am active on the **<legislative council/media relations committee/board leadership>** for the **<Chapter>** Association of Benefits and Insurance Professionals.

In this capacity, I stay abreast of healthcare reform implementation and insurance-related issues, trends and concerns. Furthermore, as a liaison between the insurance carrier, the employer and the consumer, I can offer great insight and a unique perspective into the concerns related to health coverage.

I would be pleased to serve as a local resource for you or any of your colleagues as you are developing stories on healthcare policy and insurance issues. **<Provide relevant information about your professional experience that would contribute to your knowledge of the industry>**.

Some of the topics I am knowledgeable about include:

- **<Any topical issues that are currently in the news>**.
- State exchanges and navigators.
- Wellness programs and other cost containment measures.
- Healthcare reform legislation.
- The employer role in healthcare coverage.
- Ways individuals/employers can access affordable health insurance.
- Free-market reforms.
- Medicare.

I will call in the next few days to introduce myself personally and discuss possible topics of interest for your **<publication/program>**. In the meantime, don't hesitate to contact me if a background briefing would be helpful or if you are working on a specific story.

Sincerely,

<Name>, **<Title>**

<Chapter> Association of Benefits and Insurance Professionals

<Phone>

<Email>

TOOLS OF THE TRADE



C. PRESS RELEASE – ANNOUNCING THE NEWS

The press release is the most commonly used public relations tool to announce news to the media. To be most effective, it should follow a certain format that succinctly relays the essence of the news, such as Who...What...When...Where.

The standard release has several familiar components:

- A crisp headline that captures the significant news.
- An introductory paragraph that leads with the most newsworthy information.
- Several paragraphs that describe the news and its relevancy in more detail.
- At least one quotation from a credible spokesperson (preferably local).
- A closing paragraph known as the “boilerplate” that clearly identifies the company or organization issuing the release.
- The date and city from which it is being issued and a contact name and number.

While press releases are the most familiar press tool, they are often overly used or misused altogether. The most effective release conveys legitimate news—information previously unknown. It works best to relay such things as key developments within the industry, policy or legislative initiatives at the local, state or federal level, or recent news occurring in your company or state chapter (“Day on the Hill” meetings with governors or legislators, awards, charitable activities, member achievements and professional achievements).

As with all the media tools, distribution of the press release must be coupled with personal follow-up calls to make certain it was received by the appropriate reporter and to explore whether it is something that can be included in the publication. This type of follow-up also provides another opportunity to suggest an interview for a more in-depth discussion of the news.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 7, 2023

Contact:

Kelly Loussedes

Senior Vice President of Public Relations

(202) 595-3074 or kloussedes@NABIP.org

NABIP Statement on the American Health Care Act

Washington, D.C. — The National Association of Benefits and Insurance Professionals (NABIP) issued the following statement today on the American Health Care Act (AHCA) released last night by the House Republican Leadership:

“We are pleased that the new plan to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act (ACA) does not include a tax on American workers’ employer-sponsored health insurance,” stated NABIP CEO Janet Trautwein. “Employer-sponsored coverage has worked for Americans for decades, and preserving this coverage and the continuation of the employer-sponsored tax exclusion will allow working Americans to receive high-quality coverage at the lowest cost.

“The proposal maintains many of the key provisions in the ACA that that provided important consumer benefits – such as guaranteed issue coverage, coverage of pre-existing conditions and keeping children on their parents’ policies until age 26 – while making changes that could help bring down health insurance costs and increase options for consumers.

“AHCA also enhances consumer options under Health Savings Accounts and includes other important market-stabilization provisions including the creation of the Patient and State Stability Fund, creating strong incentives for continuous coverage, allowing tax credits to be used for catastrophic coverage, expanding age rating bands and eliminating the Health Insurance Tax.

“While we are disappointed that the AHCA does not permanently repeal the ACA’s ‘Cadillac tax’ on high-cost health plans, we are pleased that it will be delayed until 2025. This levy does nothing to rein in actual healthcare costs, the true driver of the cost of coverage. We look forward to working with Congress to address real cost drivers and more appropriate funding sources for important provisions of the new law.

“As further changes are considered, NABIP believes it will be critical to carefully consider the impact on health insurance markets. While AHCA is under consideration and while Congress looks at other areas that would be a part of an overall replacement plan, it will be important that a coordinated effort is made with the Biden Administration to ensure continuous market stability.

“We look forward to continuing our dialogue with members of Congress and the Administration on the implementation of health reforms that reduce costs and encourage competition. Our goal is to help all Americans receive the coverage they deserve at a price they can afford. By working together, we can ensure this happens.”

The National Association of Benefits and Insurance Professionals represents 100,000 professional health insurance agents and brokers who provide insurance for millions of Americans. NABIP is headquartered in Washington, D.C. For more information, visit www.NABIP.org.

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Insert Your Own Logo

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: **Insert Name**

Insert Date

Insert phone number and email address

Open Enrollment Gives Consumers Greater Access to Agents/Brokers

(**City, State**)—As open enrollment begins for the individual healthcare exchange as well as the launch of the Small Business Health Options Program (SHOP exchange), **state/local area residents** will find new features that provide easier access to experienced, trained professionals in the community.

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) will provide an agent search feature on healthcare.gov for both the individual and SHOP exchanges so all consumers can search for local benefits professionals who will continue to serve them throughout the entire life of the healthcare policy, including assistance with enrollment, resolving billing issues, answering coverage questions and much more.

“Local brokers and agents are ready to help you, your family or your business find the health insurance that you need at a price you can afford,” said **First and Last Name**, president of the **Chapter** Association of Benefits and Insurance Professionals (**XABIP**), said. “With better access to licensed health insurance agents and brokers, members of our community will be armed with the highest quality information, consumer protections and advocacy as they work to find the health insurance plan that best fits their unique health and financial needs.”

XABIP will continue to work closely with state legislators and regulatory agencies in the state to make the federally facilitated exchange more effective while ensuring that all **state/local area residents** receive the coverage they deserve at a price they can afford.

Insert your Chapter’s Boiler Plate or use NABIP’s (below).

The National Association of Benefits and Insurance Professionals represents more than 100,000 professional health insurance agents and brokers who provide insurance for millions of Americans. For more information, please call (**insert contact name, phone number and email address**).

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 28, 2023



Contact:
Kelly Loussedes
Senior Vice President of Public Relations
(202) 595-3074 or kloussedes@NABIP.org

NABIP Hosts 87th Annual Convention

Hundreds of Healthcare Agents and Brokers Travel to Orlando to Learn, Develop and Network

(Washington, D.C.) – The National Association of Benefits and Insurance Professionals (NABIP) will host its 87th Annual Convention on June 25–28 at the Renaissance Orlando at SeaWorld in Orlando, Florida, where more than 700 health insurance professionals from all across the country will be in attendance.

At this premiere industry event, NABIP will focus its efforts on training health insurance professionals on how to adapt to the healthcare industry's ever-changing regulations as well as provide networking opportunities and business-development tools.

"NABIP members are dedicated to helping consumers find the best and most affordable health insurance options that fit the unique needs of individuals, families and businesses across the country," stated Janet Trautwein, CEO of NABIP. "This is the place they come to access the tools and training necessary to deal with complicated compliance issues and guide consumers in their search for affordable and appropriate health coverage.

"Gaining further knowledge and staying informed about the industry's most relevant subject matter help NABIP members face challenging issues with a proactive mindset instead of a reactive one."

Our guest speaker is a four-time Olympian, Ruben Gonzalez, who will provide inspiration as he teaches the personal effectiveness system he used to achieve nonstop success in both the Olympics and in business. He is proof that ordinary people can achieve extraordinary things if they will follow a few simple steps. In addition to Gonzalez, other industry professionals and legislative experts will address the health insurance rules and give insight into business trends that affect the healthcare market. More than 20 professional development workshops will take place, offering continuing professional education credits toward state-required agent licensing, which supports the agent's vital role in helping healthcare consumers obtain and understand health insurance.

The National Association of Benefits and Insurance Professionals represents 100,000 professional health insurance agents and brokers who provide insurance for millions of Americans. NABIP is headquartered in Washington, DC. For more information, please call Kelly Loussedes at 202-595-3074 or email kloussedes@NABIP.org.

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TOOLS OF THE TRADE

D. MEDIA ADVISORY—ANNOUNCING AN EVENT

The media advisory is an effective communications vehicle for advising the media about an upcoming event or reacting to a news development. The format of the media advisory is more defined in terms of the Who...What...When...Where. Often the information is presented in bulleted form to highlight the salient points.

The media advisory should be labeled as such, followed by an eye-catching headline. The event or reaction should be succinctly described within the “What” section, followed by key information for the “When”, “Where” and “Who” sections, as appropriate. As with the press release, it is critical to include a contact name and number, as well as a brief “boilerplate” description of the sponsoring organization.

MEDIA ADVISORY EXAMPLE:

Local Healthcare Reform Expert Available for Interviews

As questions and concerns increase about health insurance exchanges and the implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, get information from one of the most trusted sources in **City. First and Last Names, Title of Chapter**, is available to answer media questions.

BIO: **First Name, Title of Company** in **City**, has worked for many years to improve the health insurance industry through **his/her** extensive legislative work. A member of NABIP since **year**, **s/he** is the current **Leadership Title** of the **Chapter** Association of Benefits and Insurance Professionals (**XABIP**) and has received **name of awards** for **his/her** legislative work on **specific topic** in **State**. **He/she** has been previously featured in articles in **Publication**. **(This is not the time to include personal information about family and hobbies, unless those things are directly related to the subject of the testimony.)**

TOPICS:

- Healthcare reform implementation
- Federally facilities exchange
- State exchange enrollment and subsidies
- Individual coverage through the exchange
- Role of health insurance agents and brokers
- Effects on local businesses and employer coverage
- Containing health care costs
- Preserving Medicare

CONTACT: For more information about the event, please contact **<Name>**, **<Position in the Chapter>**, at **<phone number>** or **<email address>**.

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Media Advisory

Who: National Association of Benefits and Insurance Professionals (NABIP)

What: 27th Annual Capitol Conference – Changing the Benefits Landscape, NABIP’s Opportunity Has Arrived

When: February 14-15, 2023

Where: Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill (400 New Jersey Ave., NW , Washington, D.C.)

Why: The health insurance industry is changing at a record pace. NABIP sees this as an opportunity to continue our advocacy efforts with both Congress and the Administration to focus on marketplace stability. This conference will examine the congressional outlook for health reform moving forward.

Tuesday, February 14

General Session, 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

- **Healthcare in the U.S.: Preparing for 2023 and Beyond**
 - o Dr. Aaron Carroll, Director, Center for Health Policy and Professionalism Research, Indiana University School of Medicine
- **Remarks on The Patient Freedom Act**
 - o Senator Bill Cassidy (R-LA)
- **What to Expect with the Unexpected**
 - o Len Nichols, Ph.D., Director, Center of Health Policy Research and Ethics, George Mason University
- **Presentation of the Spirit of Independence**
 - o Dean Mohs, Division of Small Business and Agent/Broker Innovation, Center for Consumer Information and Insurance Oversight
- **Perspectives from a Think Tank**
 - o Joe Antos, Wilson H. Taylor Scholar in Healthcare and Retirement Policy, American Enterprise Institute
- **A Discussion on the Perspective of Insurance Carriers Navigating an Ever-Changing Marketplace**
 - o Marilyn Tavenner, CEO, America's Health Insurance Plans, and former administrator, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

Wednesday, February 15

General Session, 8:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.

- **A View from The House—Health Reform Priorities in the 115th Congress**
 - o Representative Chris Collins (R-NY)
- **Health Reform Remarks from:**
 - o Senator Lamar Alexander, (R-Tenn.), Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee
- **Congressional Outlook on Healthcare Reform**
 - o Representative Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ)
- **A Discussion of the Past and Future of Bipartisan Healthcare Policy**
 - o Senator Tom Daschle (D-SD)
 - o John Nelson, Past-President, NABIP

For more information or to RSVP, please contact Kelly Loussedes, senior VP of public relations, at kloussedes@NABIP.org or 202-595-3074.

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E. PHOTOS - HOW TO USE THEM EFFECTIVELY

A photograph can greatly enhance the appeal and increase the chance for coverage of certain stories (i.e., the announcement of an award, speech, personnel promotion, meeting with a dignitary, opening or new location of an office.) Each photo distributed to the media must be accompanied by a photo caption known as a “cutline.” Attach the cutline to the back of the photo with tape or by printing it on a self-adhesive label. NEVER write on the back of the photo, as the imprint ruins the picture for press use. Many reporters now often prefer a digital picture with at a least 300 dpi but be sure to check with them to determine their preference.

Captions are a brief description of the picture and should identify each individual in the photograph by name and affiliation. In addition, the cutline should include a sentence or two of background information to give the reader a sense of why the picture is newsworthy. For example:

<Full name> has been promoted to <position/title> for the <organization>. <Last name> has been with the company since <year> as <former title>.

<Full name, title> took part in <an awards ceremony, public hearing, speech> on <Weekday, Month Day> at <location>. The topic was <brief explanation>. Others in the picture include <full names, titles>.

<Full name> met with <politician name, title> on <Weekday, Month Day> in <city> to address issues about <the uninsured, risk pools, prescription drugs, etc>. The National Association of Benefits and Insurance Professionals (NABIP), which represents more than 100,000 professional health insurance agents and brokers nationwide, sponsored the meeting.

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F. EDITORIAL OPTIONS

Every newspaper offers an “Editorial” or “Opinion” section to its readers that voice the editorial position a publication has on an issue and provides ways for the community to respond. This section differs dramatically from the news side of the paper that strives to report news and information objectively.

There are three basic vehicles for expressing an opinion in the newspaper:

- An “editorial” prepared by the newspaper’s editorial staff that communicates the official position of the publication on an issue.
- A “letter to the editor” which is a means available for all citizens in the community to respond or react to a news article or editorial that has appeared in their local newspaper.
- An “op-ed” or opinion piece that is written and submitted by someone not on the newspaper’s editorial staff.

The placement of some “op-eds” are paid for and considered somewhat as an editorial advertisement. While very expensive, these placed editorials can be effective if the content is issue-oriented rather than commercial. The more common and credible op-ed, however, is one the newspaper decides to publish on its own merits that has been written and submitted by a member of the community or an expert in a particular field related to the issue.

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F. 1. LETTER-TO-THE-EDITOR (LTE)

Every newspaper has an opinion page that offers readers the opportunity to express their point of view on a topical issue. One of the vehicles for responding is the “Letter to the Editor”—a useful tool for communicating your views on behalf of the industry that too often is overlooked. A significant benefit to this format is that the writer has control over what is said since normally a letter of this nature is published as submitted, without editorial revision.

Ideally the appropriate time to consider this communications tool is in response to an article that has appeared in the newspaper regarding a healthcare or insurance issue that impacts your local community. Your letter can reinforce what is reported in the newspaper or debate the coverage of the issue. This tool allows the writer to present another point of view that was overlooked in the original reporting or to correct inaccuracies and misperceptions reflected in the article.

The first step before preparing a letter for submission is to contact the appropriate section of the newspaper to determine the guidelines and perimeters for your letter. It is important that you react to the article and issue it in timely fashion to better assure its publication.

Normally the letter should be limited to a few well thought-through paragraphs (150 – 300 words) that reference the article to which you are reacting and present a unique perspective supported by facts.

Once the letter has been submitted it is important to follow-up by phone to check on its status if it has not been published within a couple days. It also is appropriate to express your concerns to the editor if the newspaper airs one point of view and does not publish yours.

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LTE SAMPLE

Contact Info: **<Editor's Email>**

Subject: Letter to the Editor

I'm submitting the following letter on behalf of the president of the **<Chapter>** Association of Benefits and Insurance Professionals, **<President's Name>**, in response to an article you published about **<topic of article>**. Is there any chance you might be able to run it?

Best,

<Your Name>, <Position with Chapter>

<Chapter> Association of Benefits and Insurance Professionals

<Contact Information>

=====

Dear Editor,

A recent editorial praised the creation of a new state health insurance exchange as a **"<short quotation from article>"** ("**<Title of Article>**," **<Date published>**). In order to guarantee that outcome, Empire State consumers must continue to have access to licensed, professional insurance agents through the new marketplaces.

Most small businesses -- including many who would shop in the exchanges -- depend on agents to run their health benefits programs. The Congressional Budget Office reports that brokers "handle the responsibilities that larger firms generally delegate to their human resource departments -- such as finding plans and negotiating premiums . . . and processing enrollees."

Agents' importance will only grow. A recent survey by consultancy TNS revealed that 75 percent of businesses believe agents will play a greater role in guiding them through health reform.

Sincerely,

<President's Name>, President

<Chapter> Association of Benefits and Insurance Professionals

<Contact Information>

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LTE SAMPLE

Contact Info: ptnews@presstelegram.com

Link to article: <http://www.presstelegram.com/health/20160126/millennials-at-cal-state-long-beach-mull-whether-to-get-health-insurance-or-pay-fines>

Email Subject: Letter to the Editor

Hi,

I'm submitting the following letter on behalf of the CEO of the National Association of Benefits and Insurance Professionals, Janet Trautwein. Is there any chance you might be able to run it?

Best, Kelly

Kelly Loussedes

National Association of Benefits and Insurance Professionals

202-595-3074

Dear Editor,

A recent article reported that Affordable Care Act penalty for remaining uninsured is forcing young adults to either pay hefty fines or purchase health insurance plans they deem unnecessary and too expensive.

Plans can be pricey -- but they also cap out-of-pocket expenses, preventing financial catastrophe when illness or accident strikes. About half of young adults without insurance have trouble paying medical bills.

Millennials can use health insurance agents and brokers to find plans within their budgets. About half of agents and brokers spend most or a lot of their time investigating coverage options for clients. Brokers and agents were also rated as the most helpful source of information among people who sought assistance enrolling in ACA exchange plans in 2014.

Sincerely,

Jessica Brooks-Woods

Executive Vice President and CEO

National Association of Benefits and Insurance Professionals

999 E Street NW, Suite 400

Washington, DC 20004

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F. 2. OPINION-EDITORIAL (OP-ED)

Another influential tool for generating exposure for your message is the “op-ed”—an opinion piece written by you and published on the editorial page of the newspaper. Realistically, op-eds are not easily placed, but they have a significant impact when they are published and certainly are worth the effort. Make certain to contact the publication first so you are clear about the appropriate format, length or number of words. Typically, op-eds are limited to 600-800 words.

There are certain steps that will increase the chances for acceptance of your article by the newspaper. For example:

- The issue must be current, controversial and have a local angle (affect your community in some way).
- Select someone from your chapter who has the greatest sphere of influence or status in the community to author the article.
- Prior to approaching the newspaper, contact NABIP or the local chapter for guidance on talking points and the association’s official position, as well as supportive background information.
- Initially, you should contact the editor of the “Opinion” page, either by email or phone, to raise the issue as an important one, establish your credentials to address the issue, and let the editor know you would like to submit an op-ed for the newspaper’s review. Be prepared to share your angle and the key points you intend to make.
- Seek feedback from the editor before developing the article. If the reception is positive, submit your article as quickly as possible. Include your professional title or the most relevant affiliation to the issue you are addressing, along with your complete biographical background.
- Many publications are good about letting you know if your op-ed will be published. However, if you have heard nothing after the first week, don’t hesitate to call and check its status. Newspapers do have license to make editorial changes to your article, however normally they do not publish an altered version without first alerting you to their revisions.

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OP-ED SAMPLE

Protect Commissions to Ensure Access to Agents

By **<chapter leader's name>**

On **<date>**, Senator **<first name> <last name>** pledged **his/her** support of a bill that promises to save thousands of jobs and make it easier for Americans to secure high-quality, affordable health insurance coverage.

With the support of lawmakers like Senator **<last name>**, the Access to Independent Health Insurance Advisors Act (S. 2068) would modify the way that the federal health reform law calculates health insurers' administrative costs by excluding agents' commissions.

Such a change may seem arcane. But without it, hundreds of insurance agents in **<name of town/metro area>** would be put out of work -- and everyone in our community would find it more difficult to obtain affordable coverage.

The federal health reform law dictates that insurers devote at least 80 percent of premium dollars to medical claims in the individual and small-group markets -- and 85 percent in the large-group market. Firms that don't reach these "medical-loss ratio" (MLR) thresholds must rebate consumers the difference.

The idea is to limit potentially wasteful spending on overhead and ensure that consumers get good value for their premium dollars. Unfortunately, agents and brokers are becoming collateral damage in the federal government's war on insurers' administrative costs.

Insurance companies set commissions, they do not pay them. Agents are licensed and independent, working for the client whether it is an employer or an individual. Insurance carriers simply serve as pass-through conduits for commission fees.

The misclassification of commissions has had swift -- and disastrous -- consequences. Many insurers immediately slashed spending on commissions when the MLR rules took effect last year. The U.S. Government Accountability Office found that agent commissions have fallen by as much as 50 percent since the passage of the federal health reform law.

With agents employing many people right here in **<name of community>**, MLR has made it impossible for them to afford to stay in business. And the exodus is already beginning.

A recent study by the Bureau of Labor Statistics found that the number of health insurance agents and brokers decreased by 3.3 percent nationally within the first few months of the enactment of the new MLR rules.

That's bad news not just for the employment situation -- but for families and small businesses, too. People depend on agents to help them navigate an insurance marketplace that will only grow more confusing as the provisions of health reform take root. Small employers depend on their agent to assist them with all related benefits and function as their human resources department handling any problems year round.

By supporting S. 2068, Senator **<last name>** showed that **his/her** understands that the skills and knowledge agents possess are more essential to our community than ever. Excluding commissions from the medical loss ratio will ensure that agents continue providing the stellar service on which families and small business rely.

<Chapter leaders name> is **<leadership position>** of the **<chapter name>** Association of Benefits and Insurance Professionals.

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TOOLS OF THE TRADE

OP-ED SAMPLE

Small Businesses Deserve More from Healthcare Reform

President Biden marked the recent conclusion of the open enrollment period for the federal healthcare law's insurance exchanges with a celebration at the White House. The administration exceeded its goal of signing seven million Americans up for insurance coverage.

However, many small business owners are in a less festive mood. They're dealing with burdensome new rules, taxes, and premium hikes. Fortunately, several measures that would offer small businesses relief from spiraling health costs are pending before Congress.

For many small firms, insurance is more expensive than ever. In a recent survey, 91 percent reported that their insurance costs rose following their latest renewal. A February report from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services estimated that premiums would rise for two-thirds of workers at small businesses -- roughly 11 million Americans.

One reason for these price increases is the federal healthcare law's annual \$8-billion fee on health insurance providers. Carriers will have to pass this added expense on to employers -- and consequently, their workers. Premiums are expected to increase by as much as \$160 per person this year.

New federal "community rating" rules may also lead to higher premiums and create administrative headaches for small business owners. These rules do not allow insurers from charging older workers any more than three times what younger ones pay. The goal is to protect older workers -- and ensure that they have affordable coverage.

But in the small group market, community rating could have the opposite effect.

Prior to passage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), insurers often charged small employers a uniform "composite rate," which took the overall age breakdown of the employees into account -- and did not reveal the details to employers or staff. In effect, the premium for each employee was the same, regardless of age.

But the ACA's community rating rules essentially bar insurers from issuing composite rates. Every employee's premium corresponds to his or her age. Imagine explaining to a 60-year old employee that her monthly premium will be \$900, while her younger colleague's will be \$325. And if the employer offers a set amount toward coverage for each employee -- or a percentage of the premium -- that older worker would have to pay more for coverage than she did pre-ACA. Employers could end up facing charges of age discrimination.

Fortunately, a bipartisan group of lawmakers in the House of Representatives has offered a measure that would moderate the rate shocks that small businesses may face. Their bill would allow states to determine the appropriate ratio between premiums for the young and those for the old. In states that failed to act, a five-to-one ratio would be imposed -- meaning that no person could be charged more than five times what any other person was charged.

This ratio more closely reflects the actual cost of care for the young and the old. Such a reform could also allow insurers to reinstitute "composite rates" for small businesses -- and thus achieve one of the primary goals of community rating.

Another group of lawmakers would like to get rid of the annual fee on health insurance providers. According to Oliver Wyman, a consultancy, such a move would ward off a 2.3-percent hike in premiums this year. That translates to savings of nearly \$500 per family per year.

By making insurance more affordable, these measures would encourage more small firms to retain coverage for their workers. And that saves taxpayers money -- by keeping small business workers out of the exchanges, where they could qualify for subsidized coverage. The total savings to the federal government? More than a billion dollars over the next decade.

But those savings can only come about if Congress acts -- and soon. A recent survey found that 15 percent of small-business owners are considering dropping coverage altogether in order to cut costs.

Lawmakers can't risk that outcome. With open enrollment now behind us, the Biden Administration needs to turn its attention to the small business market. Small firms need relief from skyrocketing health costs. Lawmakers must find a way to provide it to them.

<http://www.nsba.biz/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Health-Care-Survey-2014.pdf>

<http://www.cnbc.com/id/101441363>

<http://americanactionforum.org/research/impact-of-the-health-insurance-annual-fee-tax>

<https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2013/02/27/2013-04335/patient-protection-and-affordable-care-act-health-insurance-market-rules-rate-review>

<http://blog.heritage.org/2014/01/02/mb-12-new-taxes-fees-youll-pay-obamacare-2014/>

<http://stopthehit.com/hit/background>

Shulman Testimony.

<http://www.nsba.biz/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Health-Care-Survey-2014.pdf> pg 10

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

G. DEVELOPING AND USING A PRESS KIT

A press kit is a set of materials designed to communicate your message in detail to your local media. It's used to help reporters gain an understanding of the association so they will write about it. You may send the kit to the media when you make a significant news announcement, present the kit at a meeting you may have with a reporter, or distribute the kit at a press conference or other chapter event. The press kit should be updated at least annually with a new fact sheet and new biographical information on officers and chairs.

Every press kit should include the following:

- **Fact Sheet** — A concise summary of the association's important data such as founding date, mission statement, number of members, names of officers/committee chairs, and affiliation with NABIP.
- **News Clips** — Samples of past press coverage helps sell the newsworthiness of your story.
- **Brochures or Newsletters** — Including business literature will help identify you as an expert in the industry.
- **Sample News Story** — Reporters will often print this verbatim. Editors see ready-to-print-stories as an easy way to fill up space with little effort on their part.
- **Glossary of Terms** — A glossary will help reporters become familiar with the complex issues in our industry.
- **Contact information** — Provide a clear indication of whom reporters should call, and where to reach them, for more information.
- **Business Card** — Place a copy of the contact person's business card on one of the sides of the folder so when the reporter opens it up it's one of the first things that he or she sees.
- **Cover Letter or Pitch Letter** — A cover letter is a short correspondence (no longer than one page) that allows you to introduce yourself to the reporter. This also serves as a motivator for the reporter to review the contents of the press kit by quickly and clearly explaining why the media's audience would be interested in stories about our industry and association.

Your press kit is a reporter's first opportunity to meet the association so make sure it is visually appealing and well organized. Also include the association name and logo on the front of the folder. Send your press kit and a short cover letter to all of your local media contacts.

Finally, it's a good idea to have a version of your press kit available on your Website. That way, reporters can get instant access to everything they need when writing a story.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

H. TIPS PART 1: CONDUCTING BROADCAST MEDIA INTERVIEWS

The thought of being interviewed by a reporter, particularly in a live broadcast interview setting, can be a little scary. But, the advantages of such opportunities cannot be overstated.

Media interviews provide a wonderful opportunity to raise awareness of your company's name and to communicate information to the public that can enhance your reputation – essentially serving as a form of free advertising. They can also be an important tool in addressing crisis situations. As you are called upon to do media interviews on behalf of your company, the following information and tips will help to ensure that you are well prepared and comfortable serving in the spokesperson role.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

- **Define Your Message:** What's the issue and what do you want to have happen?
- **Know the Interviewer and your Audience:** Who is going to see and hear you? What's the most effective way to communicate your message to them?
- **Simplify:** Keep it simple and clear, in both concept and context. Hold on to one theme and two or three central, reinforcing points.
- **Be Prepared!:** Find out exactly what the reporter wants to discuss. Identify two or three key messages you want published.
- **Practice the 3 Rs:** Rehearse, Roleplay and Revise.
- **You are the Message:** Focus your words, voice tone, facial expressions and body language. Emote without shrill attacks.
- **Control the Interview:** Stay on target with your message. Use "bridging" and other techniques.

APPEARANCE - QUICK TIPS:

- **Dress accordingly for live studio interviews:** Interviews are occasionally conducted in director's chairs or "living room" sets showing the guests and anchor down to the knee.
- **Avoid overly bright colors,** as the studio lights will make them distractingly bright. Navy blues, greens, earth tones (including purples, wine red) and muted colors (winter white) show well.
- **Avoid busy patterns, narrow stripes and checks.** Dress appropriate to the occasion and location (if out of studio). Company logo shirts/jackets are often appropriate and encouraged.

WOMEN

Pantsuits are acceptable. Sleeves are recommended. Avoid sexy or frilly outfits.

Keep jewelry to a minimum, as the bright lights will make it really sparkle.

Wear normal (or slightly heavier for TV) makeup. Choose a matte lipstick with conservative reds and pinks. Bring a compact with press powder and keep colorful eye makeup to a minimum as well.

MEN

Wear over-the-calf socks in case you're seated and not behind a desk, and make sure your shoes are polished.

Avoid three-button suits or double-breasted suits because they bunch up at the waist if you're seated. Single-breasted suits or sport coats work best. Keep your tie length close to your belt so it doesn't stick out under the coat and avoid distracting patterns.

Remember to shave and don't wear jewelry of any kind. A little hairspray keeps everything in place.

Courtesy of The Hauser Group

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

H. TIPS PART 2: CONDUCTING PRINT MEDIA INTERVIEWS

Because we encourage all of our members to develop media experience and participate in media training in order to effectively speak with one voice to reporters, we are providing you with key tips and techniques to help you excel in any print interviews.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

- **Preparation:** Study your area of expertise. Know all of the latest news or current events regarding your subject that's being discussed.
- **Have a Strategy to Control the Interview:** Do some pre-planning on message bridging to influence the direction of the interview.
- **Practice, Practice, Practice:** Do some mock interviews — with a spouse, a trusted friend, or a professional media trainer — in which you try to anticipate questions.
- **Build Rapport:** Chat with the reporter right before the interview to show interest in his/her work. It helps to establish a connection that can translate into on-air compatibility.
- **Watch What You Say:** Don't tell a reporter anything you wouldn't want to see in print or hear. Anything you say can be "on the record" and will eventually find its way into the public arena.

BRIDGING TO KEY MESSAGES

The bridging technique is one of the cornerstones of media training and an essential tool with which to control a media interview. Put simply, it allows the interviewee to move the conversation on from a negative or unhelpful question posed by the interviewer. The key to bridging successfully is to develop a phrase or form of words that will allow you to get from the interviewer's question to your own key message.

- Return to your key messages
- Deal with difficult questions

Rules to Remember:

- Use touch and go technique to get where you need to go – avoid the block and bridge approach where you completely ignore the question; instead address the initial question then bridge to your message.

Common Bridges Statements Include:

- | | |
|--|--|
| "We find the more important issue is..." | "Let me emphasize again..." |
| "I think it would be more accurate (or correct) to say..." | "And that reminds me..." |
| "Here's the real problem..." | "Before we leave this subject, I need to add..." |
| "What I've said comes down to this..." | "The key point here is..." |
| "Let me emphasize again..." | "Let's take that a step further..." |
| "What matters most in this situation is..." | "Let me add...." |
| While _____ is important, it's also important to remember that..." | "That's important, but the real issue is..." |
| "It all boils down to this..." | "You should also know that..." |
| | "That's an interesting point, but you should also consider..." |

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

I. MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS AWARD

The Marketing & Communications Awards honors the M&C Chairs in the state and local association chapters for outstanding M&C preparation and outreach activities. We created this award several years ago to serve as an effective step-by-step guide to launching a successful PR campaign for your chapter.

Criteria:

1. Maintaining an active M&C Committee

2. Compile list of local media contacts (including print and broadcast): The list of local media contacts must contain all information requested; including contact name, publication or broadcast station name, phone, and fax or email address. If all items are not included the list will not be counted for points.

3. Present any of NABIP's "Working with the Media" PowerPoint presentations (found on website) at a chapter, strategic planning meeting or state/local leadership training meeting: Provide the agenda/program for the meeting which shows the date, time and place and a list of attendees.

4. Attendance of NABIP's "Working with the Media" webcast teleconferences: Teleconferences with media training content are broadcast quarterly. Points awarded by chapter participant. Verified by NABIP.

5. M&C Chair attends Capitol Conference

6. M&C Chair attends Annual Convention

7. Create and distribute a press kit: Provide a copy of your press kit and document how it was distributed.

8. Sending press releases to media contacts: Provide copies of press releases and who they were sent to.

9. Send photos with press releases: Provide copies of photos and related press release, as well as who they were sent to.

10. Send media advisories to reporters announcing chapter events: Provide copies of media advisories and who they were sent to.

11. NABIP's communications staff within 30 days on press releases, media advisories and other communications with the media: Verified by NABIP.

12. Submit letters to the editor to local publications: Provide copies and indicate distribution.

13. Submit op-ed articles to local publications: Provide copies and indicate distribution.

14. Press Hits: Information published in news articles or features must mention either the national, state or local chapter of Association of Benefits and Insurance Professionals. In general all articles submitted for documentation need to include the publication name and the date of publication. Original copies should be submitted whenever possible. State and local organizations can discuss their position in broadcast appearances, as long as it does not conflict with NABIP's position.

15. Extra points for comprehensive media lists, quality of written materials, and innovative ideas to attract media attention for your chapter or the association: Include a description of the item and indicate why it is worthy of extra point credit.

Template:

Utilizing the dozens of media award templates we've created publically acknowledges member's success, diligent efforts and important contributions. These very easy to use "plug and play" templates are a critical part of promoting your chapter, it's leaders as well as NABIP.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE



Insert Your Own Logo

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: **Insert Name**

Insert Date

Insert phone number and email address

Insert Chapter Name Receives Marketing & Communications Award

Insert City, State (Insert Date) — **Insert Chapter Name** recently received the Marketing & Communications Award at the National Association of Benefits and Insurance Professionals' (NABIP) 85th Annual Convention and Exhibition in New Orleans, LA.

Insert Chapter Name was recognized for this award that honors local association chapters for outstanding achievements in using the media to reach out to their members, the industry and the public. Criteria for receiving this award includes projecting a positive image about the healthcare industry, generating understanding of role in healthcare, educating the public about insurance, utilizing NABIP members as a source of information, providing balanced commentary and advancing NABIP's legislative agenda.

"The leadership of NABIP members has a far-reaching impact on providing for the healthcare needs of individuals, families and business in their communities. We are grateful for **Insert Chapter Name** efforts to communicate with the media and recognize them for their media efforts with this well-deserved award," said NABIP CEO Jessica Brooks-Woods.

"**Insert Chapter Name** exemplifies the dedication to providing the best opportunities for our members through reaching out to the media," said **Insert Name of Chapter President**, president of **Insert Name of Chapter**. "This year, our chapter organized _____ in our local community, _____ as part of our communications efforts and hosted _____ to further our members' educational efforts. These projects and many others have set a standard of excellence in the health insurance industry that we are proud to represent."

The National Association of Benefits and Insurance Professionals represents more than 100,000 professional health insurance agents and brokers who provide insurance for millions of Americans. For more information, please call **(insert contact name, phone number and email address)**.

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TOOLS OF THE TRADE

J. SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGIES

NABIP is incredibly active with social media, and your chapter can do the same. Much more informal than traditional media, social media provides the opportunity to reach a different audience. But do not fall into the trap of believing new media sites are more forgiving than traditional media—anything you post on the internet can be searched, rebroadcast, quoted or misquoted.

“Speaking with One Voice” is very essential when reaching out to the media. Promoting the role of the broker is a part of NABIP’s message. When posting on social networking site, be sure to keep this in mind.

Besides hosting your own website, there are three major forms of social media:

1. **Social Media Networking**
2. **Blogging**
3. **Video Uploading**

If you are going to participate in social media, you need to be vigilant in your activity. Posting something once a year or even once a month will not be enough to make this medium worth the investment. You should check your sites daily, post something new at least once a day and actively recruit followers.

We encourage you to join, follow and participate in the social media opportunities NABIP has already established.

1. LinkedIn — Professional networking site to connect with other industry leaders, discuss issues and find job opportunities: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/nabipsocial/>.

2. Facebook — Informal site that allows you to connect in multiple forms, including create fan pages, post pictures, invite others to events and easily connect with friends. <https://www.facebook.com/nabipsocial/>

3. X — Micro-posting website where you can post your thoughts in 180 characters or less, including communicating your thoughts, rebroadcasting other tweets, posting links or responding to current events: <https://x.com/nabipsocial>.

4. YouTube — The most popular video-sharing website that lets registered users upload and share video clips online: <https://www.youtube.com/@nabipnatl>.

You can learn more about our social engagements by visiting www.NABIP.org and click on the “follow me” icons at the bottom of the page.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

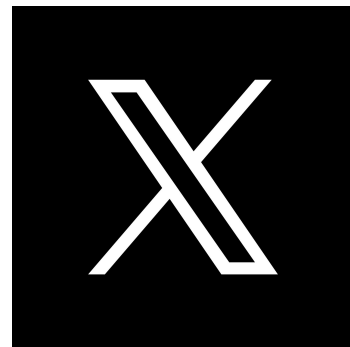
J. 1. SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Any member may communicate with a policymaker about an issue taking a position different than NABIP's as long as they do not promote NABIP affiliation or do anything that might cause the lawmaker to think they were speaking on behalf of the association. This dialogue must never take place during a meeting of NABIP members with the outside party.

Chapter leaders need to understand that as a result of their position, it can be difficult to impossible for media and lawmakers to make the distinction between when a leader is speaking on behalf of the association or representing a personal point of view. So, on issues of consequence to the association, **leaders must always represent NABIP's view or not speak to the issue.** If the leader cannot do this, then he/she should consider resignation.

To assist you with keeping on point and factually sound, make sure to:

1. Utilize templates provided on the Media Kits by Topic page for ideas or the Media for Chapters page for how-to information on working with the media.
2. Visit the Legislative Resources on Health Reform page for up-to-date information on what's happening nationally or the Legislative Issues page for details on hot issues.
3. Get assistance from NABIP staff with writing and editing any media content.
4. Be aware of your chapter's approval process before submitting op-eds, LTEs or other content to the media.



TOOLS OF THE TRADE

J. 2. SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKING

The most intensive form of social media, networking sites can be popular one day and fade into distant memory the next. Keeping abreast on what sites are popular with whom and using them appropriately is the key to success with networking sites.

1. X:

- a. Create an account, username and a bio that captures your business.
- b. Upload a photo or image that makes you stand out or your company's logo.
- c. Introduce yourself by sending your first tweet.
- d. Find new, exciting X users to follow. Follow your followers back.
- e. Begin scheduling your content. It's a must to post at least once daily.
- f. Share the content of other X users by retweeting and marking it as a "Favorite".
- g. Use catchy hashtags.

2. Facebook:

- a. **Timeline:** The space on your profile where you can see your own posts, posts from friends and stories you're tagged in organized by the date they were posted.
- b. **News Feed:** A constantly updated list of stories in the middle of your home page, including status updates, photos, videos, links, app activity and likes from people, Pages and groups that you follow on Facebook.
- c. **Status Update:** An update feature which allows users to discuss their thoughts, whereabouts, or important information with their friends. Similar to a tweet on the social networking site X, a status is usually short and generally gives information without going into too much detail.
- d. **The "Like" Button:** A feature that allows users to show their support for specific comments, pictures, wall posts, statuses, or fan pages. After a user "likes" something, their news feed is updated, letting their friends know what pages they "like."
- e. **Reactions:** With added customized options, the Reactions features lets users long-press on the like button for an option to use one of five pre-defined emotions, including "Love", "Haha", "Wow", "Sad", or "Angry".
- f. **Tagging:** When you tag someone, you create a link to their profile. The post you tagged the person in may also be added to that person's Timeline and they'll be notified.
- g. **Notifications:** Notifications tell the user that something has been added to his or her profile page. Examples include: a message being shared on the user's wall or a comment on a picture of the user or on a picture that the user has previously commented on. Initially, notifications for events were limited to one per event; these were eventually grouped category wise.
- h. **Groups:** Facebook Groups can be created by individual users. Groups allow members to post content such as links, media, questions, events, editable documents, and comments on these items. Groups are used for collaboration and allow discussions, events, and numerous other activities. They are a way of enabling a number of people to come together online to share information and discuss specific subjects.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE



J. 3. BLOGGING

NABIP as well as several NABIP members have extremely popular healthcare blogs that are often quoted and linked to. Also, most major media outlets have healthcare blogs. Monitoring and commenting on these blogs is a great way to promote NABIP issues and will be an effective use of your time.

To start your own blog, have a solid concept in mind. It is easiest if several members of the board agree to be bloggers so the responsibility of posting new ideas is shared. Decide who will post, and creating a schedule as to when the blog will be updated. There are many free blog sites available—blogspot, livejournal, wordpress—so make sure to select one that will be able to fulfill your needs. Promote your blog at chapter meetings, on your website and on social networking sites. Make sure to title, date and tag your posts so people can easily search your archive for issues that interest them.

Here are a few recommended blogs for you to follow, comment on and receive inspiration from:

- New York Times Prescriptions
- Washington Post Health Care Rx
- The Hill Healthwatch
- The Huffington Post
- Politico
- The Alan Katz Health Care Reform Blog
- Health Care Policy and Marketplace Review

TOOLS OF THE TRADE



J. 4. VIDEO UPLOADING

Go viral to promote issues and educate consumers. By utilizing both the visual and audio aspects of video blogs, you can bring a depth of understanding to issues of importance.

- **Pick your subject matter carefully** — NABIP has lists of talking points, legislative issues and consumer questions that can be effectively addressed in a video. Do a quick online search and make sure your idea is new and different. If you find other videos that address the same topic, comment, rate and link to that video so you can move on to a more unique topic.
- **Create a storyboard and script** — Make sure you know what you want to say before you try to say it. Having a solid storyboard and script means you will spend less time filming and editing your video. Keep a professional tone and avoid gimmicks, over-simplification or material that can be misconstrued as offensive. Know the audience you want to reach. Utilize the materials NABIP has provided to create your content.
- **Produce a professional looking video**— Videos uploaded to the video-sharing sites are generally low resolution and short, so keep videos simple and shots tight. Wear solid colors and use block fonts for any text you wish to include. Respect the law and make sure not to use music, pictures and clips that are copyrighted. Be familiar with the camera and video editing equipment you are using, or if you chose to contract a professional, make sure they know exactly where you are planning on marketing your video so they can help you make effective decisions.
- **Upload and promote your video** — YouTube is the most popular and easy to use video-file sharing site, but you can't just post your video and forget about it. Tag your video with the appropriate subject matter, and use YouTube's promotion options to link it to as many places as possible. Link and embed the video on as many social media platforms as possible, and encourage your members and friends to rate and comment on the video. Create a YouTube channel, make playlist and subscribe to other channels so people can find you more easily. (Find more information about video promotions at the YouTube Channel.)
- **Most importantly, let your personality show** — You are experts at educating America and feel passionate about the issues at hand, so help viewers feel the same thing.

You can also create responses to other videos, invitations to events and interviews with industry professionals. If you use the NABIP logo or name on your video, make sure to receive prior approval and send the PR department a copy or link to your video. NABIP reserves the right to ask you to remove any video content that is not in accordance with the NABIP message.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE



K. NABIP WEBSITE

NABIP's website (<http://www.NABIP.org>) is an additional resource for tools and training materials. Tools for chapters can be found on the Media Kits section on our Media Tools webpage under the Leadership Tools tab. This section contains sample letters to the editor, brochure information, media training web seminars and press release templates, in addition to numerous other resources designed to make your media relations campaign as effective as possible.

The NABIP communications team is also available should you need additional information, or have any questions. Contact Kelly Loussedes, senior vice president of public relations, at 202-595-3074 or kloussedes@NABIP.org.

CONCLUSION



A. BUILDING UPON AND MAINTAINING THE MEDIA RELATIONSHIP

After introducing yourself to the key reporters it will be up to you to cultivate the relationship by identifying and utilizing opportunities for continued contact. Some of these opportunities will evolve naturally; others will require a bit of “manufacturing.” Your objective is to keep your name and messages in the forefront of the public eye through the media, both for the marketing potential as well as for support on issues that are critical to the well-being of the health insurance industry.

In addition to keeping reporters apprised of news development (within your agency and the industry as it relates locally), you should seek opportunities that will provide you with additional “fodder” to share with the media. Agree to speak before business and service groups to share your message, addressing topical and newsworthy issues whenever possible. If appropriate, invite reporters to attend and be available for interviews. At a minimum, make certain they receive a copy of your remarks along with a cover note inviting reporters to contact you as they are developing stories in the future on these topics.

Get more mileage out of your speech by turning it into a bylined article or an op-ed piece and offer it to local newspapers or trade publications as appropriate. Periodically send notes to reporters that include information on industry developments, explaining the ripple effect they may have on your local community. Continually look at national news developments concerning healthcare policy and the insurance industry and contact your media to comment on how the news relates to your local area.

And remember in all your media efforts, follow-up and a simple thank-you are two essential ingredients to the success of your outreach.

CONCLUSION



B. CONTACT INFORMATION

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