

Tips for Contacting the Print Media

Follow the suggestions below to increase your effectiveness when contacting the media:

- ▶ Print out and read the attached press release and background materials. Become familiar with the main points in the press release. Review the names of the contact persons listed on the press release. **Please note that this press release is intended for the print media and is not particularly suitable for television media coverage. However, the issue is an excellent topic for a talk show appearance, and the press release provides a good introduction. See below for tips on how to contact radio talk show hosts.**
- ▶ Identify the daily and/or weekly newspapers in your area. Make a list that includes:
 - Name of publication
 - Name of health editor or any reporter that you know
 - Fax number
 - E-mail (if available)
 - Phone number

(* If you have never previously contacted anyone at the newspaper, then the appropriate contact is the health editor. If you know someone at the newspaper, even if they are not a health reporter, then send it to both the health editor and the person you know personally.)

- ▶ Fax the press release to the newspapers identified on the above list. On the cover sheet list your name, the name any organizational affiliation, and a phone number where you can be reached.
- ▶ Wait two hours, then phone the person to whom you faxed the press release. **Personal contact with a reporter is the key to getting press coverage.**
Ask the following questions:
 - ◆ Identify yourself – name, organizational affiliation – and state your interest in the issue of home birth
 - ◆ **Thank the reporter for taking your call.**
 - ◆ **If you read articles by this reporter on a regular basis, be sure to let him/her know that, and say how much you enjoy the articles. If this topic relates to a recent article or series of articles that addressed health research issues, point out the similarity between the issue of research and home birth and the health research issues that were the topic of recent articles.**
 - ◆ Ask: “Did you receive the press release I sent this morning?” If the answer is no, tell them you will re-fax it now. If the answer is yes ... Say something similar to: “This press release summarizes my concern with the recent research regarding home birth. It would be great if you would consider writing an article about this topic. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have. I can also fax or mail additional background information as well as provide contact information for the researcher’s representatives from (MANA, CfM, ICAN) ”

- ◆ If the reporter is interested in doing an article and wants detailed statistical information **it is critical that you refer them to Dr. Ken Johnson, Ph.D. and Betty Anne Daviss, MA, CPM, the researchers / epidemiologists, and not try to answer technical questions on your own. The contact information for Ken and Betty Anne is on the press release.**
- ◆ If the reporter tells you he/she is not interested, find out why. Then say something similar to: "Thank you for taking the time to consider a story on this issue. I am sorry that – customize your comment to the reason why the reporter is not interested – but hope that you will consider writing a story on home birth in the future.

- ▶ It would be really helpful if anyone who contacts a newspaper could send an email to info@mana.org and info@cfmidwifery.org with the following information:
 - Name of newspaper, and city and state where it is published
 - Name of reporter you spoke with
 - Remarks from the reporter
 - If the newspaper does run an article, please email that fact, then send a link or fax the article to MANA or CfM.

Tips for Contacting Radio Talk Shows

- ▶ Print out and read the attached press release and background materials. Become familiar with the main points in the press release. Review the names of the contact persons listed on the press release. **Please note that while this press release is intended for the print media, it would also serve as a good introduction for approaching a talk show appearance. The topic is an excellent one for the talk show medium. See below for tips on contact radio talk shows.**
- ▶ Identify the radio talk show hosts for area radio stations. Make a list that includes:
 - Name of radio station
 - Name of talk show host
 - Fax number
 - E-mail (if available)
 - Phone number
- ▶ Fax the press release to the talk show host at the radio stations identified on the above list. On the cover sheet list your name, the name any organizational affiliation, and a phone number where you can be reached.
- ▶ Wait two hours, then phone the person to whom you faxed the press release. **Personal contact with the talk show host is critical.**
Ask the following questions:
 - ◆ Identify yourself – name, organizational affiliation – and state your interest in the issue of home birth.
 - ◆ **Thank the talk show host for taking your call.**
 - ◆ **Tell the talk show host that you listen to his program regularly (only do this if you really do listen to the program) and would like to be a guest to discuss the issue of home birth and problems with current research.**
 - ◆ If the talk show host reacts positively, make arrangements to appear on the show.
 - ◆ If the talk show host declines, thank the person for taking the time to speak to you and suggest that you would be available if he/she decides to do a show on home birth at a later date.
- ▶ It would be really helpful if anyone who appears on a talk show could send an email to info@mana.org and info@cfmidwifery.org with the following information:
 - Name of radio station and talk show host
 - City, state from which talk show is broadcast
 - Time of broadcast so that advocates can be alerted and call in
 - If the talk show is available via web radio, send URL so other may tune in.