

## Media Outreach Guidelines – Third-Party Events

The purpose of this document is to provide an outline on how to engage with the media. It will address the difference between a media advisory and a press release, explains the important difference between raising funds for the Arthritis Society and representing the Arthritis Society, and provides tips and best practices on when/how to use these tools to increase visibility of your activity.

### What Is a Media Advisory?

A media advisory alerts the media to upcoming events. It is an invitation to attend an event that may or may not be open to the public. A media advisory answers only the important questions: Who, What, When, Where, and Why.

Key elements:

- Brief and to the point
- Include the five W's
- Use the **Third-Party Event - Advisory Template**

### What Is a Press Release?

A press release reads like a news article, with quotes and facts, to stimulate possible pick-up by small papers and to generate print and broadcast reports at larger outlets. Where a media advisory offers basic information to encourage attendance at an event, a press release creates a complete image and story that journalists can use alone or use as background when writing a story.

Key Elements:

- Written like an actual news story, with a headline and the most important information at the top
- Include quotes from spokespeople\*\*
- Use the **Third-Party Event Press Release template**

## Timing

### Media Advisory

Media advisories need to be sent to media contacts well in advance of the event (min. 3 to 5 working days). This gives recipients plenty of time to add it to the schedule and make the necessary arrangements to ensure they can attend. This also allows time to send subsequent reminders about the event. While you want to give notice, there is such a thing as sending out your advisory too early. Reporters work on tight deadlines and think in terms of days ahead, not months. It is recommended that you do not send your advisory earlier than 4 weeks of your upcoming event. If you need to send it this early, be sure to follow up with a reminder 5 to 10 days before your event.

### Press Release

Press releases are sent at times appropriate to intent. Prior to an event or announcement, the media is given details intended to pique enough interest to feature it (usually 2 to 3 days in advance) They are also sent after an event as confirmation to media outlets that had received a media advisory inviting them to cover the event. A press release should be sent in the immediate day or second day following your event, to provide a recap and detail highlights – to tell the story of the event and its outcomes, and the experience of those who participated.

## Distribution

### Media Advisory

Email the advisory to the appropriate reporter, editor or producer at each news outlet on your media contacts list. Advisories can also be sent out again the morning of an event to remind reporters to attend.

### Press Release

A release is sent to distribution lists that are often generic email inboxes for media organizations – typically a “news desk” or “editor” account that represents the editorial department. This information can usually be found on the “contact us” page of the media outlet’s website.

## Best Practices

### Media Advisory

1. **Be concise:** List the event, its participants, the date and location. Be sure to include the name and phone number of a contact person for the press. Briefly spell out the purpose of the event. Let broadcasters know if you’ll have video, live feed, photo opportunities, interview opportunities, and/or any special guests.
2. **Offer a good preview:** Write a strong headline and lead sentence that will pique a reporter’s interest. Don’t reveal all the details of your event (if embargoed), but do provide a glimpse that gives them a reason to attend. Explain why you think your event is newsworthy\* and how it relates to the public, current trends/events, themes, etc.

\*newsworthy stories include one or more of the following features: change, conflict/controversy, or human interest. Why will this be interesting to their readers/listeners/viewers?

3. **Send to journalists:** Email the advisory to reporters who cover arthritis and/or local events, editors, news directors, bureau chiefs and TV/radio producers, etc.
4. **Follow up:** Give the essential details of your event – make sure your pitch is tight and persuasive. Reporters receive a *lot* of emails. Don’t be afraid to call to follow up. Sometimes a personal phone call/invite seals the deal!

### Press Release

1. **Put the most important information first:** A press release is a news story written in the inverted pyramid style, conveying your most information in the headline and first paragraph.
2. **Include all the facts:** Write in a fluent, newsy style that conveys authority and fully covers the issue, so that reporters rely on your release as they write their stories.
3. **Send it to the journalists who also received the media advisory:** This can also be part of your follow up if the journalist was unable to attend. You can express your wish to attend the next event and share what they missed.
4. **Embargo your release if necessary:** Sometimes there may be a reason why a story can’t be shared publicly before a certain date. If you want to give reporters time to understand the story,

but need to let them know they can't share it before a certain date, make sure to write EMBARGOED at the top of the page (and as a watermark behind the text, if you know how to do that), and be clear in your introductory communication about the embargo and when you expect it to be lifted. Send the final public release once the embargoed time has passed.

### **\*\*Quotes or comments from the Arthritis Society**

We greatly appreciate the support that our engaged community members provide for the work of the Arthritis Society. Unfortunately, we don't have the capacity to provide custom quotes or spokespeople for every event. If you wish to do so, **you may include one (1)** of the following pre-approved quotes in your press release, that you feel best represents the focus and intent of your event. If you choose to include one of these quotes, we ask that you **do not modify the quote**. Thank you for your cooperation!

#### OPTION 1:

"Events like this bring hope to so many people in our community who are living with daily pain and limitations of arthritis," says Arthritis Society Chief Development Officer Laura Syron. "The generosity of the arthritis community is inspiring! We hope those who participated get as much from the experience as the people we serve."

#### OR... OPTION 2

"The only thing standing in the way of a cure for arthritis is the will to find it," says Arthritis Society Chief Development Officer Laura Syron. "Through events like these, Canadians everywhere can make arthritis a priority. Every donation brings us closer to a cure."

#### OR... OPTION 3

"This is a perfect example of the community coming together to support a great cause," says Arthritis Society Chief Development Officer Laura Syron. "Arthritis can leave you feeling isolated, but knowing that there are people who understand what you're going through can make a real difference. You're giving back in more than just donations – you're giving hope and belonging. Thank you!"