

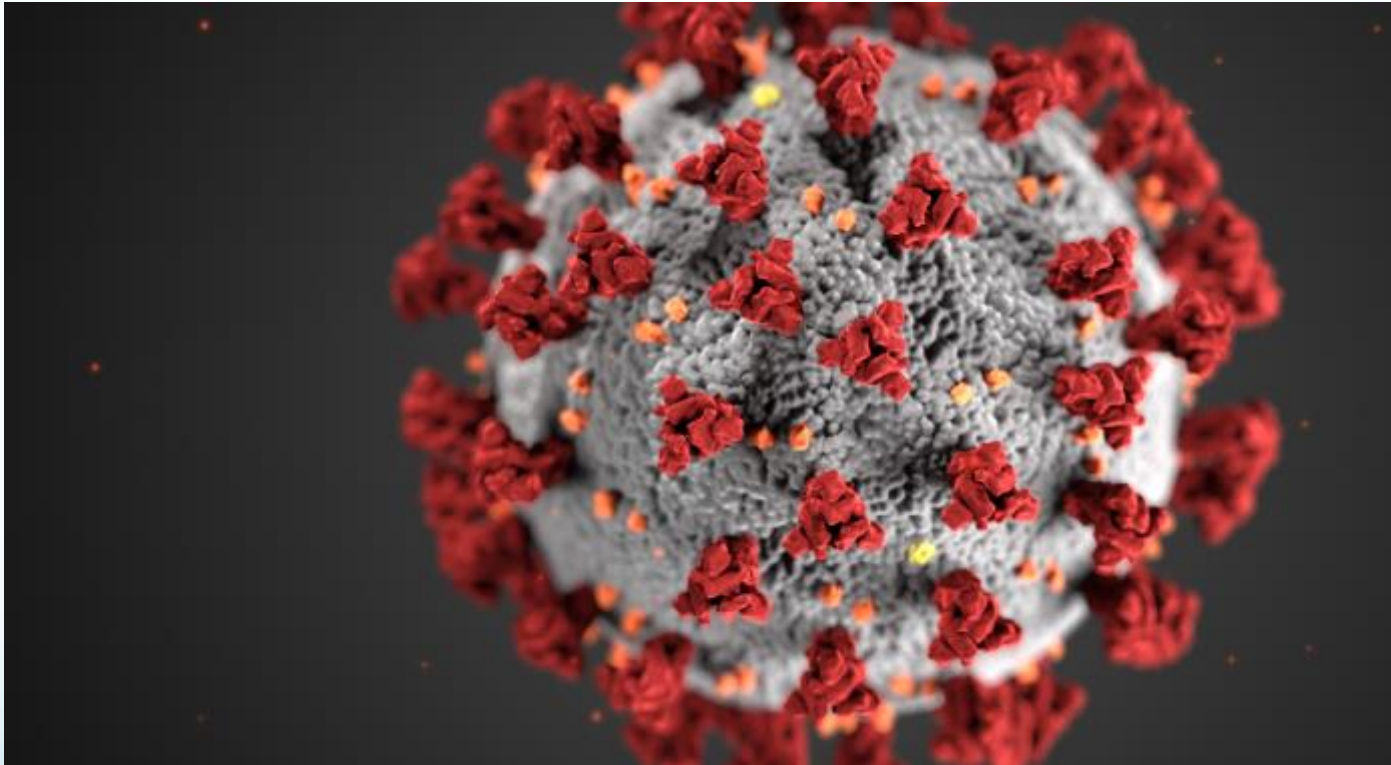
# **Public Health and the Media**

*Kristi Evans, NMU News Director*

# Public Health

- Advocacy
- Proactive
- Publicity
- Reactive

# COVID-19





# Media Coverage Benefits

- Free
- Boosts name recognition
- Expands audience
- Complements ads/self-generated content
- Enhances credibility
- Targets information sources customers rely on
- Maximizes *local* coverage.

# Drawbacks

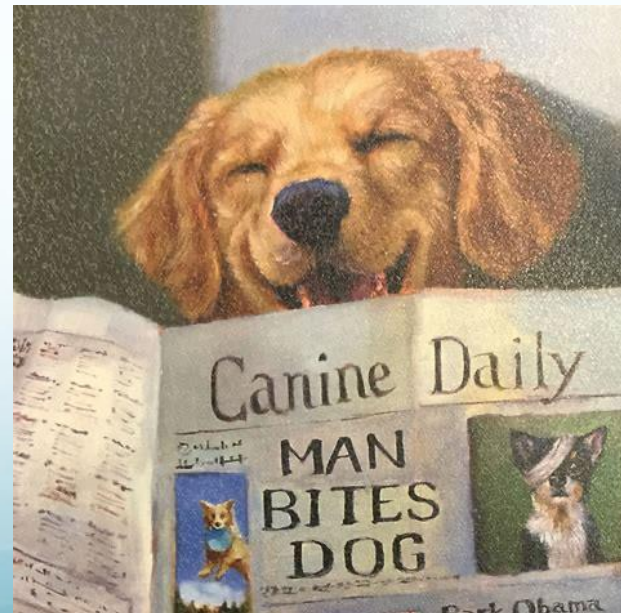
- No control over final product
- No guarantees of coverage (at media's discretion)
- Need to know what's newsworthy and how to frame a pitch.

# Newsworthy Qualities

- Timeliness:
  - Calendar
- Proximity
- Impact
- Human Interest
- Practical Implications
- Localized
- Prominence
- Tragedy
- Controversy
- Shock Value/Off the Wall

## AUDIENCE

- WIIFM (What's In It for Me?)
- Why Should I Care?



# Making “*the Pitch*”

- Right timing
- Right medium/media
- Right person at each outlet
- Right contact method
- Brief: start with most newsworthy aspect
- Make sure others at dept. aware/on same page

# Press Releases

- Start Strong: Grab Attention
- Stick to the facts
- Concise
- Illustrate with examples, if possible
- Answer 5 Ws: who, what, when, where, why (perhaps how, if appropriate)

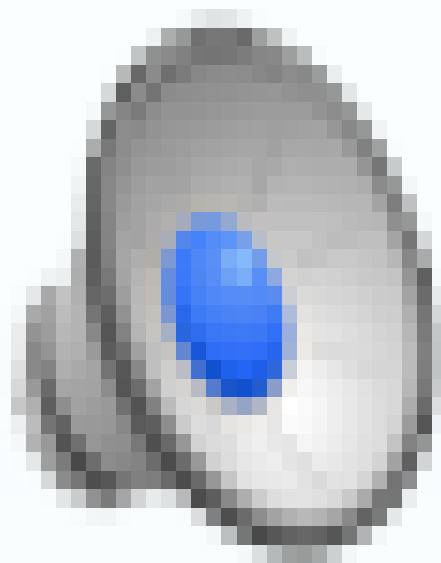


# When the Media Call

- Respond ASAP
- Verify story “angle”
- If localizing a national story/outside report, ask to see it
- Develop key messages
- Anticipate some likely questions (5Ws and beyond)



# THE INTERVIEW



- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5DIPpi0yuqI>

# Key Messages

- Consider the audience (WIIFM)
- Short and specific (10-15-second sound bite)
- Positive and impactful
- Substance to back them up (stats, etc.)

# The **Real** Interview

- Concise, conversational
- Stay within area of expertise
- It's okay to not know
- Be truthful at all costs...even if it hurts.
- Key messages: bridging, repetition, summary statement
- Use caution with comments outside “formal” interview
- Don't feel pressured to fill “dead air”
- Avoid “No comment” or “Off the record”
- Clarify questions, if necessary
- Don't lose cool
- Don't request or expect a review
- If complicated, fact/background sheet?

# Medium-Specific Tips



# Negative News



There's no such thing as bad publicity.

~ P. T. Barnum

# The tragedy of Johnson & Johnson's Covid vaccine



By [Matthew Herper](#)  Dec, 17, 2021



# Negative News

- Planning/preparation
- Open/honest
- Know the facts and stick to them
- Prompt/frequent updates
- If you can't share information, say why and assure media you will at first opportunity
- Listen to the public
- Express Concern/Caring; Don't be Defensive

# Crisis Communications Bad Examples

- 4 Ds: denial, defensive, deflect, disconnect
- BP: Deepwater Horizon oil spill in Gulf of Mexico
- Boeing: 737 Max



# Crisis Communications Best Practices



# Social Media

Facebook is letting COVID-19 vaccine misinformation flourish in its comment sections

Users are exploiting the platform's lax moderation by posting anti-vaccine information there, often encouraged by group administrators

WRITTEN BY [RHEA BHATNAGAR & CLARA MARTINY](#)  
RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM [KAYLA GOGARTY](#)  
PUBLISHED: 09/28/21 11:33 AM EDT  
SHARE: COMMENT

Facebook's comment sections are poorly moderated, allowing users to spread dangerous misinformation through the use of public and private groups during the pandemic. Now, Media Matters has identified comments pushing scare tactics and conspiracy theories to encourage vaccine hesitancy, often in violation of Facebook's stated policies.

TV6 & FOX UP  
November 20, 2021

The Marquette County Health Department (MCHD) issued a community health recommendation on Friday based on Michigan's current Covid-19 status, the worst in the country.



UPPERMICHIGANSSOURCE.COM  
Marquette County Health Department responds to current Michigan Covid-19 situation

# Social Media

- Timely updates
- Provides unfiltered, accurate information
- Engages the public with your organization
- Gauges awareness and reactions to official health communications
- Counters misinformation on social media and traditional media

# Advocacy

Covid challenging, but shows importance/value of public health agencies

- Identify opportunity or challenge
- Determine audiences and what they perceive/know
- Map out objectives
- Define/refine message points
- Determine best communication pathway(s)
- Timeline and responsible personnel
- Evaluate: objectives achieved?

# Mock Interview Subjects

- Covid/children's vaccines (Beyond MI)
- Youth suicide
- Formula Shortage

## Michigan store owner says baby formula shortage getting worse: 'Nonexistent right now'

 Fox News on MSN.com | 1 hour ago

Borchardt Brothers Market owner Andrew Borchardt discusses the 'crippling' effects the baby formula **shortage** has had on his Michigan store as well as his local community.



## A desperate search: Crossing the border to find baby formula

 CNN | 47 minutes ago

Maria is struggling to feed her sons, who need specialized lactose-free formula because of digestive issues that prevent them from getting the nutrients they need from cow's milk. "Both of them throw up a lot because of this problem,



## Baby formula shortage getting worse despite Biden airlifts

 New York Post | 2 days ago

The ongoing **shortage** of baby formula across the United States has become more acute in recent weeks, despite the Biden administration flying in millions of bottles worth of formula from across the world over the past two months.



## Moms still stressed about shortage despite more baby formula shipping to U.S.

 YAHOO!News | 4 hours ago

Tri-State mothers are still struggling to find baby formula at various grocery stores. The constant stress remains despite the U.S. receiving another shipment of formula from a foreign country.

