

WHEN A REPORTER CALLS

Dealing confidently with news media

PMAANZ Conference Friday 15 September 2023

Stephen Hill

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What to expect from today

We'll cover

- How to plan and prepare for dealing with news media
- How to prepare and use key messages
- How to interview well
- Generating positive news coverage
- Some thoughts on social media

You'll come away with

- **Confidence** to handle news media enquiries
- **Tools** to help you plan and respond proactively
- **Knowledge** to be able to give professional advice and support

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What's your experience?

Have you had experience dealing with news media?

Common types of media contact

- Bad news (eg complaint, mistake)
- Good news (eg new service, innovation)
- Industry comment / Opinion (health workforce, GP shortage)
- Clinical / technical comment (eg flu, whooping cough, trends, data)

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Ruling upheld over medical centre's liability for doctor who prescribed patient drug

Kristie Boland · 18

Medical centre after receptionist breach

By Guy Williams

Regions > Queenstown

A Queenstown woman has after a receptionist breach. However, she remains angry and left the receptionist's visit to the complainant's visit to the Commissioner (OPC) last July.

New Zealand's medical centre because of a lack of evidence. It concluded its investigation against the Health and Disability Commissioner (HDC) doctor and the medical centre were liable.

In what was described as a test case for the profession, the Supreme Court judgment against the Health and Disability Commissioner (HDC) doctor and the medical centre were liable.

RSV outbreak: Hospitals and GPs 'flat' as children hit

Nadine Porter and Ha

while at-capacity close books to

Children's Waimate Centennial School pupils perform a waiata at the opening of the town's new medical centre.

Exactly a year after the first bricks began tumbling from the demolition of an old Waimate building, a new medical centre has been officially opened on the same site.

Medical centre opening secures health care for Waimate

Courtenay Henshaw · 16:53, Jun 07 2019

Waimate Centennial School pupils perform a waiata at the opening of the town's new medical centre.

Children's Waimate Centennial School pupils perform a waiata at the opening of the town's new medical centre.

Exactly a year after the first bricks began tumbling from the demolition of an old Waimate building, a new medical centre has been officially opened on the same site.

Rotatoria GP short while at-capacity close books to

By Laura Smith

28 Feb, 2022 06:00 AM · 7 mins to read

Rotatoria GP Dr John Armstrong retired in 2020

Doctors are battling burnout, GPs are primary health organisation is reporting one doctor per 1700 doctor shortage worsens, and there is...

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When you get the call (or email) ...

Take a breath. Stay calm. Listen and take notes

Don't respond immediately

- Find out what the issue is – what do they know?
- Find out what they want – interview, deadline
- Don't be bullied or rushed into immediate response
- Say thanks – will get back to you

Be polite and professional

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Take time to plan

Plan your response

- Should you respond? Or redirect to another agency, or decline?
- Who will be your spokesperson? Whose area of expertise? You, clinical lead, chairperson
- Are there privacy or other issues to consider
- Who can help? eg PHO, insurers/MAS, professional body

Any other steps?

- Who else needs to know? eg clinicians, staff, Board
- Who should you contact? eg patients, whānau

If you do respond: in person or in writing?

- Consider written response if it's complex or detailed

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Prepare your key messages

Short, simple statements that sum up what you want to say – and what you want people to hear.

- 2 to 5 key points
- Focus on what you want people to know
- Think about public point of view – what matters to them
- Use clear, direct, simple language – and keep it jargon-free
- Anticipate tricky questions (and prepare answers!)
- Provide context if helpful

Use key messages to guide your response – and keep coming back to them

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If it's bad news: front up and be up front

If something bad has happened

- Front up – and be up front. Respond promptly, show leadership and compassion.
- What's happened? Be open and factual.
- What are we doing about it?
- What do people need to know/do?

If someone has stuffed up

- Acknowledge
- Apologise – to those affected
- Reassure – that it's being dealt with
- Act – what are you doing to put things right

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In an interview – some dos and don'ts

- Key messages are your friend – keep coming back to them
- Only answer what you're asked – don't ramble or improvise
- Be truthful
- Don't guess or speculate – stick to known facts and figures
- If you're not sure – say so. Say you'll find out and follow up
- Avoid 'no comment' – say why you can't comment
- Avoid blaming others

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Key messages – examples

- There is no risk of harm to people who have received a vaccine stored at an incorrect temperature.
- While the vaccine remains safe, it may not be as effective at protecting against illness.
- The practice has begun contacting all affected people to offer revaccination.
- There is no harm in being revaccinated.
- This has affected approximately [redacted] people, including [redacted] adults and children for Influenza, and [redacted] for childhood immunisation and other vaccinations.
- The incident does not involve COVID-19 vaccinations.
- These incidents are rare.
- We sincerely apologise to those people who have been impacted by this incident, and also to their whānau.

Patient recall following vaccine cold chain failure

flu.
s of flu viruses, although there's still a chance you

- With levels of social interaction back to their normal pre-Covid levels, there is a high risk that the 2023 flu season could be one of the worst experienced in many years.
- Getting immunised now helps to stop the spread of flu around your community.
- The vaccine is free for people at higher risk of getting very sick from the flu including:
 - people aged 65 years and over
 - Māori and Pasifika aged 55 years and over

Practice campaign promoting flu vaccination

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Putting it into practice

At your tables:

Discuss the scenario and write up a quick response outline, including:

- Who is your practice spokesperson?
- How will you respond?
- Is there anybody you should talk to?
- What other questions do you think might get asked?
- Top 3 or 4 key messages

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Thinking positive

What about good news stories?

Look for opportunities in your practice and among your people

- Expansion or new facilities
- Anniversaries/milestones
- Long-standing patients/staff
- Interesting statistics, eg "10,000th consultation"
- Research and innovation

Contact local reporters


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New medical centre

3000 patients

seven months

Te Awamutu Courier
Federico Magrin · 15:00
26 Jul, 2023 12:50 PM · 8 mins to read



West Invercargill Health pr
enrolled more than 3000

Whanganui's Castlecliff Health

marks milestone

of new site

By Emma Russell
23 Feb, 2018 11:00 AM · 3 mins to read



The light shining at the end of the tunnel for Castlecliff Health
Photo/ Bevan Conley

Castleciff's only medical centre closes its doors bu
place.

On World Blood Day in 2012, I wrote a story about Individual acts of heroism th
lives across New Zealand every day. It was a story about blood donors and fea
man Tom Davies who had, at that time, donated more than 300 times.

Pukekohe medical practice

claims award with community-

led health care system

John Boynton · 11:41, May 26 2016



Pukekohe Family Health Care's Navjot Kaur, Karamdeep Kaur, nursing team leader Majella Morgan, Lisa
Harris and chief executive Selina Green celebrate their win.

A Pukekohe health care providers' nursing team has been
rewarded for its holistic approach to healthcare.

A 20-strong team of nurses from Pukekohe
Family Health Care received the award for integrated team of the
year at the Counties Manukau Health nursing and midwifery
awards this month.

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What about social media?

Source for news stories – good and bad

- Reporters watch community channels

Use your own social media channels

- Tell your own good news stories
- Use visuals and video
- Human interest and people stories



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Thanks!

Any questions?

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Top tips for dealing with news media

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WHEN YOU GET THE CALL: TAKE A BREATH. LISTEN.

- Don't respond immediately – get the information YOU need
- Find out what the issue is – what they know, who's said what
- Find out what they want – an interview or a comment? By when?
- Don't be bullied into an immediate response – buy yourself time
- Say thanks – I will get back to you (and make sure you do!)
- Be polite but professional

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TAKE TIME TO PLAN

- Should you respond - or redirect to someone else? Is it your issue?
- Who will be your spokesperson? You as PM, lead doctor, chairperson ...?
- Are there privacy issues involved? You can decline to comment
- Are there formal processes or enquiries already under way?
- Who can help? Contact your PHO, insurers, professional body
- Any other steps: Who needs to know? Who should you contact?

3

PREPARE YOUR KEY MESSAGES

- Simple statements that sum up what you want to say
- Prepare your top 2 to 5 key points – to anchor your response
- Focus on what you want people to know – what matters to them
- Keep it simple, avoid jargon and terminology
- Anticipate tricky questions and criticisms, and prepare answers
- Provide context – are there wider issues or impacts
- Use key messages to anchor your response – keep coming back to them

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IF IT'S BAD NEWS – FRONT UP AND BE UP FRONT

- Respond promptly. Be up front and open.
- Be clear about **what happened** and **what you're doing** about it
- What do people need to know/do? Put yourself in public's position
- **Acknowledge** if a mistake was made – don't try to fudge or evade
- **Apologise** – to those directly/indirectly affected. Focus on people
- **Reassure** – let people know that it's being dealt with
- **Act** – tell people what you are doing now to put things right

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IN AN INTERVIEW – DOS AND DON'TS

- **Key messages** are your friend – keep coming back to them
- Only answer what you're asked – say what you need, and no more
- Be truthful – don't lie, make things up or hide facts
- If you're not sure: find out and follow up. Don't guess or speculate
- Avoid 'no comment' – sounds devious. Say why you can't respond
- Never go "off the record" – there's no such thing
- Avoid blaming others or comment on things outside your area