



PLACING Public Service Announcements

covering **kids**™
& families

Covering Kids & Families Guide to Placing Public Service Announcements

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Introduction & Getting Started



Assignment

Throughout this guide, you will find special assignments. These tasks will be important for the success of your PSA pitch. If the assignment box mentions materials that you need to create, check the template chapter for a document that can be customized for your state.

Introduction

The *Covering Kids & Families* Communications Team developed this guide with one purpose in mind—introducing *Covering Kids & Families* grantees, coalitions and organizational partners to the process of developing, pitching, placing and evaluating a Public Service Announcement (PSA) campaign.

This guide is divided into several sections: 1) Steps for Placing PSAs provides readers with an easy-to-follow plan for customizing and pitching announcements; 2) Promising Strategies includes interviews with *Covering Kids & Families* grantees who share their experiences in placing PSAs; 3) Industry Profiles introduces media professionals who offer advice for planning a PSA campaign; and 4) Templates includes pitch letters, sample ads and evaluation tools that you can customize and use.

Getting Started

The *Covering Kids & Families* communications campaign is designed to connect eligible, uninsured children with low-cost or free health care coverage available through Medicaid or the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). To help reach this goal, you need to focus on connecting with members of the media and persuading them to care about this issue. Your conversations with media organizations should begin with a presentation of *the problem...*

**There are more than 8 million
uninsured children in the United States.**

Then, *the solution...*

**MOST uninsured kids are eligible for the low-cost
or free health care coverage available in all
50 states and the District of Columbia, but their
parents may not realize they may be eligible.**

Covering Kids & Families PSAs are available for grantees to use in media outreach to families. Each PSA includes research-based messages that are proven effective with our target audience—families whose children are uninsured. These PSAs make a powerful connection with parents of uninsured children.

This guide provides the tools and techniques needed to manage a successful PSA campaign. If the *Covering Kids & Families* Communications Team can be of assistance, please contact us at (202) 338-7227 or coveringkidsandfamilies@gmmb.com.



Glossary

Ad Slick: Replica of a print advertisement showing text, graphics and photographs as they would appear once published.

Classifieds: The section of the newspaper listing ads for employment, items for sale and situations desired. Pitch short PSAs promoting Medicaid and SCHIP enrollment to fill empty spaces in the classifieds section.

Community Affairs: Activities that media outlets conduct to benefit the community. Also known as public service.

Community Calendar Listing: Announcements in a newspaper or on a radio or television station promoting community events or services. To reach families, place announcements about outreach activities or Medicaid and SCHIP enrollment in these sections.

Media List: A database of the community affairs or public service professionals who you should contact to pitch a PSA. A media list might also include notes on an outlet's PSA submission process.

Pitch: Contact with staff at a media outlet to persuade them to cover an event or use a PSA.

Radio Reader: Scripts that radio announcers read live on the air or record for broadcast. *Covering Kids & Families* offers 10-, 15- and 30-second versions of PSAs that can be used to promote a community activity or Medicaid and SCHIP enrollment. (See the Templates section.) Send at least two to three weeks before outreach activities begin. These PSAs are also known as radio announcements.

Spot: Taped television or radio advertisement.

Tracking: Collecting information to monitor the use of a PSA. Data that will be helpful in tracking a PSA include: 1) date/time/frequency of airings; and 2) number of calls to a hotline during a PSA effort as compared with the period before and after a PSA campaign.

What Is a Public Service Announcement (PSA)?

PSAs are unpaid advertisements or announcements that are designed to inform the public about a specific issue or cause. Whether it is a community calendar listing, newspaper classified, radio announcement or television spot, a PSA provides viewers, listeners or readers with valuable information that could positively affect their lives.

Reaching Families with Uninsured Children through PSAs

Covering Kids & Families PSAs promote the low-cost and free health care coverage that is available for kids through Medicaid and SCHIP. Based on extensive market research, *Covering Kids & Families* PSAs deliver information about the care that is available through these programs in a compelling and effective way.

These PSAs implicitly show families the “peace of mind” that comes from obtaining health care coverage for their children. *Covering Kids & Families* PSAs are designed to motivate parents and caregivers to take an “action step”—calling a national, state or local information hotline to learn more about enrolling their uninsured children in Medicaid or SCHIP.

Why Place PSAs?

Newspaper, television and radio advertisements deliver messages to inform and motivate a target audience to action. *Covering Kids & Families* PSAs promote low-cost and free health care coverage and provide a toll-free number—1(877) KIDS-NOW—or a hotline number operated by your state that families can call to find out about enrollment. 

When Is the Best Time to Place a PSA?

PSAs, including classifieds, community calendar listings and radio readers, can be used year round to promote Medicaid and SCHIP enrollment. These announcements can also publicize updates or changes in Medicaid and SCHIP coverage. For instance, if your state has expanded income eligibility or added new benefits to the program, use a PSA to get the word out.

Each summer, *Covering Kids & Families* plans a Back-to-School Campaign using an integrated communications strategy. **By coordinating media, business and**

organizational outreach efforts with advertising and PSA placements, the message is more likely to reach families with

uninsured children. We encourage you to time the placement of PSAs to appear when you conduct your Back-to-School Campaign activities in order to maximize the impact of your effort.

Pitching and placing PSAs is challenging work. For organizations with limited resources, PSAs can be an effective tool for reaching families through the media sources that parents rely on each day for news and entertainment. However, because media outlets place these announcements free of charge, it is difficult to control when or where your PSAs will run. **If you can afford to place paid advertising, *Covering Kids & Families* encourages you to explore this strategy, along with pitching PSAs, to more effectively reach your target audience. *Covering Kids & Families* can provide guidance on planning the most effective combined paid and PSA advertising strategy for your market.**



Using *Covering Kids & Families* PSAs

Covering Kids & Families has high-quality, research-based broadcast and print public service announcements available. Using these proven spots saves states production costs and eliminates the question, "Will our ads work?"

High-Quality

The high-quality production of the ads rivals that of commercial advertising.

Research-Based

A professional market research firm conducted extensive formative research to develop the messaging and test the effectiveness of the advertisements. This research regimen included more than 100 in-depth interviews, two national surveys, focus groups and dial tests of the ads.

Effective

Covering Kids & Families advertisements have proven effective in numerous markets across the country. Calls to the national hotline during the Back-to-School Campaign period (August and September) over the past six years have increased an average of 203 percent.

Considerable Cost Savings

Producing advertisements can be expensive and time consuming. Steps include hiring an advertising agency to develop the ads; determining filming locations; hiring talent, a film crew and a lighting crew; paying fees and rights; paying for editing and final production costs; and hiring a research firm to test the ads.

Interested in learning more about *Covering Kids & Families* PSAs? Contact the Communications Team at (202) 338-7227 or coveringkidsandfamilies@gmb.com. You can view these spots at www.coveringkidsandfamilies.org.



10 Steps for Placing PSAs



Assignment

Research media outlets to learn more about:

- Who they reach
- Past and current public service commitments

Focus your pitch on media that reach families with children.

10 Steps for Placing PSAs

Begin by selecting the media outlets with which you want to work and building relationships with media contacts. Once you have identified what is important to a media outlet, take some time to inform these media professionals about *the problem* (uninsured children), *the solution* (Medicaid and SCHIP coverage) and *the action* that the media can take to help eligible families (running PSAs). Persuading the media to care about uninsured children is a step-by-step process.

Step 1: Do Your Homework

Before pitching your PSAs to broadcast and print outlets in your area, research these media organizations. Your contacts will appreciate the fact that you took the time to understand their company and the media industry.

Identify media outlets in your area that reach parents. Does this station or newspaper reach families with children? In which language(s) does the station air programming and PSAs? You can find out more about the media outlet's target audience by asking its advertising or sales department. By demonstrating your understanding of a station or publication's target audience, you are showing these media professionals that you care about their business and are giving them a reason to care about your issue, namely, because it is important to their readers and viewers. Eliminate the outlets that do not reach your target audience.

Research their current public service efforts. Does this outlet have an ongoing community or public service campaign that corresponds with the *Covering Kids & Families* mission? Is this outlet promoting a particular community issue on a regular basis—such as children's health? Does this newspaper, radio station or television station already work with any members of your coalition? Can *Covering Kids & Families* work—promoting Medicaid and SCHIP enrollment—add value to their current community affairs work? A “yes” to any of these questions could translate into a valuable opportunity for your coalition to successfully place a *Covering Kids & Families* PSA. Encourage local media outlets to use current and past public service commitments as a springboard for a new partnership with *Covering Kids & Families*.

For example, if a television station sponsors activities about children's health, *Covering Kids & Families* materials and on-the-ground outreach efforts can add value to their community affairs work. If an outlet does not have an existing public service campaign, encourage it to consider working with *Covering Kids & Families*. The outlet's participation would give it the opportunity to provide a tangible service to its readers, viewers or listeners.

Prepare state facts and figures. Before agreeing to run a PSA, public service professionals will want to know why they should promote Medicaid and SCHIP coverage for kids. They will want to understand the scope of the problem of uninsured children in their media market or state and how these programs can help families.

Assignment

Customize template FAQs with local facts and figures. This document is intended *for internal use only*. Tailor these answers with the same information that is used in the State Press Fact Sheet (see the Templates section), which is designed for distribution to the media.

The Templates section has several tools that will help you as you work with the media. The State Press Fact Sheet, which provides state facts and enrollment figures, is a helpful resource for public service professionals and journalists. The Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Spokespersons covers many of the issues that media professionals are likely to ask you including:

1. What is *Covering Kids & Families*?
2. Why is it important that children have health insurance?
3. What other ways is [STATE/CITY/COUNTY] educating the public about available health care coverage for families?
4. By getting parents to enroll more children, aren't you pushing up against tight state budgets, placing your outreach efforts at odds with the fiscal reality in some states?
5. What benefits and services are provided for children by our state's program?
6. What are the income eligibility requirements for our state's program? (i.e., What is the maximum income that a family of four can earn in order to qualify for Medicaid or SCHIP coverage?)
7. How can families find out more about this program?

Prepare a media list. Once you have determined which media outlets you will target, prepare a media list. The list should include the contact information for the public service director, community affairs director or public affairs department you will pitch to place a PSA. Call the stations and newspapers in your area to prepare the media list. Include:

- Name and title of contact
- Mailing address
- E-mail address
- Fax and phone numbers
- Specific instructions they provide for submitting PSAs

Assignment

Build your media list for pitching PSAs by identifying the following:

TV

- Public service director or community affairs director

Radio

- Public service director

Newspaper

- Community affairs director



Step 2: Tailor Your PSAs

Covering Kids & Families can provide your state with radio and television PSAs, plus some tapes (television) or CDs (radio) for distribution. Community calendar announcements, radio readers and print PSAs that you can customize are available in the Templates section of this guide. Public service directors will want to use local versions of PSAs, so customize these scripts with local information in the template blanks.

To learn more about ordering tapes of television ads, print ads and CDs of radio ads with your Medicaid and SCHIP program name, logo, eligibility figures and hotline number, please contact the *Covering Kids & Families*

 Communications Team at (202) 338-7227 or by e-mail at coveringkidsandfamilies@gmmb.com.

Assignment

Decide what type of PSAs you will use and tailor the templates in this guide.

 Contact the *Covering Kids & Families* Communications Team at (202) 338-7227 for more information on television and radio PSAs

Step 3: Prepare Your Pitch

In addition to the PSAs, there are several documents that you should customize with your Medicaid and SCHIP program names, state eligibility figures and hotline information. The Templates section includes many of the tools you will need for your PSA pitch, including:

Assignment

Before contacting media outlets, customize pitch materials including:

- Pitch memo
- State fact sheet
- Coalition or organizational description
- Mail-in Tracking Card

- **Pitch Memos** — Pitch memos are your first line of communication with a media outlet. They outline the problem, identify the solution, and suggest how the station or newspaper can reach eligible families. These memos, when written persuasively using state data, will be the key to capturing the attention of a public service director.

- **Pitch Kit** — Along with a pitch memo, a pitch kit is designed to inform media professionals about your cause quickly. A standard kit contains fact sheets about *Covering Kids & Families*, your coalition, and uninsured children, as well as information about Medicaid and SCHIP coverage (templates are available in the Templates section of the guide). If you have attractive outreach materials designed for families, include samples. Don't forget to insert the tapes, CDs (radio) and/or scripts for the PSAs—including television and radio scripts for taped spots. (Reminder: Only send radio scripts to radio stations and television scripts to television stations.)

- **PSA Tracking Postcard** — This short response postcard is designed to help you track which media outlets are running your PSAs. These postcards will help you gather feedback that can help you plan a future PSA campaign. While there is no guarantee that the public affairs director will return this postcard, you increase your chances of response by: 1) keeping your questions brief; and 2) addressing and affixing the correct postage to the postcard for easy mailing.

Step 4: Prepare a Coalition Spokesperson

Once you begin pitching your PSAs, some media contacts may request interviews about the issue of uninsured children and your organization's outreach work. In the Promising Strategies section, you will see that some organizations have found that PSAs can be the impetus for news coverage of Medicaid and SCHIP outreach. These interviews offer the opportunity to talk about your outreach activities and promote enrollment in Medicaid and SCHIP. Your organization should be ready to handle these interview requests. The Talking Points for Spokespersons and PSA Pitching template is a good tool for preparing a spokesperson in case there are requests for media interviews. Use the materials that you prepared for your pitch kit to customize these message points.

Assignment

Before you begin pitching your PSAs, prepare your spokesperson to give media interviews. As you contact media outlets, interview requests might come your way. Use the Talking Points for Spokespersons and PSA Pitching in the Templates section.

The Power of a Coalition

If you are working as a member of a coalition, use this to your advantage. Pitching PSAs with the support of a broad-based coalition gives your effort credibility with the media. When your coalition is comprehensive—involving education, health, faith and business organizations—it shows the media that children's health care coverage is important to the whole community.

Step 5: Make Preliminary Calls

Make introductory pitch calls before sending your PSAs to media outlets. These initial calls give you a chance to double-check your contact information and build a rapport with public service and community affairs professionals. *If there is one piece of advice universally provided by media professionals to groups pitching PSAs, it is: keep these conversations short and to the point!*

It is important to remember that *practice makes perfect*. Rehearse your pitch before contacting the media. The Talking Points for Spokespersons and PSA Pitching template provides some general messages that you can use during these conversations. Begin by introducing your organization or coalition. Use these first few moments to *briefly* explain the purpose of your call—to learn more about the outlet’s policy for placing public service or community announcements. Your contact will probably either explain the procedure for submitting a PSA or refer you to the person who can.

Once you have identified the appropriate contact person and understand the submission process, you can either: 1) let your contact know that you will follow up by sending or delivering an information package including the PSAs; or 2) ask if they have a minute to discuss your effort.

Before proceeding to this *succinct* explanation, consider the tone of the conversation up until this point. If your contact seems rushed or uninterested, simply thank them for their time and promise to follow up by providing a PSA kit. However, if the public affairs representative seems to want to know more about *Covering Kids & Families*, take a few moments to brief them on three important points:

The problem

- The number of uninsured children in your state.

The solution

- Low-cost and free health care coverage is available for most uninsured children.

The need for their involvement in your outreach campaign

- Most uninsured children are eligible for this coverage right now; we just need to tell parents that their children may be eligible.

Follow up on this conversation and e-mail or fax a fact sheet to your contact before mailing or delivering by hand the full PSA kit. To ensure that this issue is still fresh in their minds, be sure that your PSA kit reaches your contact within a few days of this conversation.

Through the PSA pitching process you will want to build a relationship with your media contacts. These early conversations could be the start of an ongoing discussion and future media partnerships. In the Promising Strategies section, you will see how *Covering Kids & Families* grantees have built relationships with media professionals that resulted in widespread community outreach efforts.

Assignment

Use the template Media Contact Log to keep a record of your correspondence and conversations with media outlets.

Step 6: Distribute and Follow Up on Your PSA Kits

Consider personally delivering your PSAs and pitch kits to the media contacts with whom you have spoken. If you have not established this relationship yet, mail your materials. Follow up with everyone who received a PSA kit about one week later.

Use the follow-up call to pick up where you left off in your first conversation. Take a few moments to run through the *problem*, *solution* and *need* for this PSA effort. This follow-up call is an opportunity to begin helping your contact care about the issue of uninsured children. Keep a log of your conversations with media contacts, especially if there are questions that you need to answer. Use the Media Contact Log (see the Templates section) to track your progress in pitching your PSAs.

Step 7: Respond to Requests from Your Contact

As you pitch your PSAs, your contact may ask for information that might not be at your fingertips. If you need to follow up on a request, be sure to do so quickly.

Step 8: Nail Down a PSA Placement Commitment

You have informed your media contacts about the issue of uninsured children in your state and pitched your PSA aimed at reaching families. Now it is time to close the deal! Often the public service or community affairs director will not be able to commit right away on the placement of your PSA. They might have to send it through a committee or wait for space to open up in their rotation. You may need to continue placing follow-up calls for several weeks to find out if your announcement will run.

Assignment

Plan to track the placement of your PSAs. This is important information to share with your coalition.

Based on the relationship you have built with your media contacts, you will know how much follow-up is required in the future. If your contact cannot provide concrete information about the timing or duration of the PSA placement, tell them you will check back with them in a few weeks.

Track your PSAs once they begin airing. If you have a general idea when the spots will be used, consider assigning one or more people the task of monitoring specific media outlets to know when your PSAs are running.

Step 9: Evaluate the Impact of Your PSA Campaign

If your contact is able to provide you with specific placement information, like a television or radio time slot when the PSA will air (e.g., the day of the week and hour of placement), encourage the public service or community affairs director to return the PSA Tracking Postcard in the pitch kit. Also ask for information about its audience during that period.

Tracking PSAs can be challenging. Media outlets often use PSAs as “filler,” running them when a paid spot is unexpectedly cancelled or during time periods that have not been claimed by advertisers. And because it is impossible to control the time or frequency of your PSA placements, as you can with paid spots, the number of families who will see and respond to your announcements will not be as large as with a paid advertising effort.

Assignment

Consider monitoring the effect these announcements have on public awareness of Medicaid and SCHIP coverage.

PSAs Should Inspire Action

- You can find out more about the media outlet's target audience by contacting its advertising or sales department.
- Each PSA you place should include an *action step*—an activity for readers, listeners or viewers to do after being exposed to the message.
- *Covering Kids & Families* PSAs can be tailored to include a state or local hotline number. Families can call this hotline to learn more about Medicaid and SCHIP coverage.
- Once your PSAs begin running, tabulate the number of phone calls that come into this hotline. You can use this information to evaluate the impact your announcement is having on your target audience.

Do your best to keep track of where and when your PSAs are running to help plan for future campaigns. There are two ways you can track the success of your effort. First, you can identify any increase in the number of calls the hotline receives during the period when the PSAs run. Second, you can try to discern the number of media impressions the PSA received (see Media Impressions below).

Hotline Calls: Tracking the change in the number of calls to your state hotline is the simplest and most direct measure of the results of your PSA campaign. Since the hotline number is promoted in your PSAs, there may be an increase in the number of families that call this number for information about Medicaid and SCHIP enrollment during the time period the PSAs air. Compare the number of calls received during this period with the call volume in the weeks before and after the effort.

Media Impressions: The number of people who potentially saw or will see the PSA is measured through media impressions. You can try to collect this information by asking the stations that aired the PSAs what the audience size was during the times that the spots aired. While some stations may not have this information readily available, it is useful when you are able to collect it. You can find out more about the media impressions for the time period when your PSAs run by contacting the outlet's advertising or sales department.

For more information on evaluating your efforts, download the *Covering Kids & Families* Evaluating Communications and Outreach guide at www.coveringkidsandfamilies.org or contact the *Covering Kids & Families* Communications Team at (202) 338-7227 or via e-mail at coveringkidsandfamilies@gmb.com.



Step 10: Share and Build on the Results

Your coalition will be interested in learning about the impact of your PSA effort. Compile your evaluation findings into a memo or presentation. If your campaign was particularly effective, you should share this information with the media outlets that aired or printed your PSA. Be sure to thank the community affairs and public service directors at the media outlets that used your PSAs.

Based on the success of your PSA campaign, you may want to consider taking this media relationship to a new level—a media partnership.

Timeline for Planning a PSA Campaign

Ideally, begin your PSA distribution effort at least three months before your outreach activities begin. If your timeline is shorter, consider customizing and pitching PSAs that require less lead time, like newspaper classifieds, community calendar listings and radio readers.

We encourage you to place PSAs in advance, to appear around the same time that you conduct your Back-to-School Campaign activities or other community-wide activities. By coordinating media, business and organizational outreach efforts with advertising and PSA placements, your message is more likely to reach families with uninsured children.

The following are some key activities and benchmarks in an effective PSA distribution effort.



12 weeks before outreach activities

- Research television, radio and newspaper outlets in your area. Learn about the audiences they reach and their community affairs work.
- Customize the template Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Spokespersons to help your coalition and media spokesperson throughout the campaign.
- Compile a media list of the television, radio and newspaper community affairs professionals you will contact to pitch your PSAs.
- Customize all television, radio and print PSAs. Classifieds, community calendar listings and radio readers should be customized three to four weeks before outreach activities begin.
- Customize the template pitch materials, including the pitch memo, the fact sheet on your coalition, and the fact sheet on the children's health care coverage programs in your state.
- Begin making preliminary calls to media outlets to confirm your contacts and lay the groundwork for your PSA pitch.
- Determine whether you will evaluate your PSA effort by collecting hotline data or media impressions. Download the *Covering Kids & Families* Evaluating Communications and Outreach guide at www.coveringkidsandfamilies.org or contact the *Covering Kids & Families* Communications Team at (202) 338-7227 or via e-mail at coveringkidsandfamilies@gmmb.com.





10 weeks before outreach activities

- Train a spokesperson to respond to media questions using the Talking Points for Spokespersons and PSA Pitching and FAQs (see Templates section).
- Tailor templates and collate your PSA pitch kits, including the pitch letter, fact sheets, tapes (television), CDs (radio), scripts or print ads, and the PSA Tracking Postcard.
- Complete your media list and call all contacts.



9 weeks before outreach activities

- Distribute PSA pitch kits, tapes and/or CDs.
- Confirm arrangements with the hotline manager to collect information before, during and after the PSA campaign.



8 weeks before outreach activities

- Make pitch calls! Follow up with the media contacts you spoke with before sending your PSA kit, as well as new contacts.
- Begin to secure PSA placements.
- Send additional PSAs to contacts as needed.
- Respond to requests from media contacts for additional information about your coalition or Medicaid and SCHIP enrollment, as well as requests for media interviews.



6-7 weeks before outreach activities

- Continue to call and confirm PSA placement commitments.



3-4 weeks before outreach activities

- Customize and distribute radio scripts, community calendar listings and classifieds.
- Pitch these PSAs and confirm placements with radio stations, newspapers and television stations if they have a community calendar segment.

During the PSA campaign

- Monitor local media outlets for PSA use.

Weeks following your PSA campaign

- Monitor the impact of your PSAs. Count the number of hotline calls and compare totals from the weeks before and after the campaign.
- Share the results of your effort with your coalition and media contacts.
- Send thank you notes to the community affairs and public service directors at the media outlets that ran your PSAs.
- Explore future partnerships with media outlets that used your PSAs.

Go to the Next Level: Building a Media Partnership

If you have developed a positive rapport with a media outlet, you might want to consider broadening this relationship into a media partnership.

Besides placing PSAs, there are lots of ways to include local newspaper, television and radio outlets in your Medicaid and SCHIP outreach. Consider pitching the following ideas to the public service or community affairs directors:

- **Web site content** – More families are relying on the Internet for health information. Provide media outlets with content or links to sites about Medicaid and SCHIP enrollment, as well as links to your state’s program site.
- **Spokespersons** – A television or radio station might provide a media personality to participate in your outreach events, or the community affairs staff might include your spokesperson on a public affairs program to discuss Medicaid and SCHIP enrollment.
- **Community activities** – A media outlet might participate in your outreach events as a sponsor (by offering free publicity) or with their own information booth. A radio or television station might set up live “remotes” or reports from the event.
- **Media advisory committee** – Recruit the experts on media outreach. Representatives from media outlets and/or marketing companies might donate their time and expertise as you plan your media outreach strategy.



Promising Strategies



State-tailored *Covering Kids & Families* PSAs Prove Marketable in Statewide Distribution

Connecticut Blankets Radio, Television and Cable Access Channels to Get Kids Covered!

In August 2001, the Covering Connecticut's Kids & Families Coalition participated in the Back-to-School Campaign as a target market. Coalition members planned a large media kick-off event and worked with the state, as well as the *Covering Kids & Families* Communications Team, to approve and place paid television and radio advertising in the Hartford media market.

With TV and radio spots already customized for Connecticut—including the *HUSKY* logo, state income eligibility figures and the local toll-free information hotline—the coalition was ready to hit the ground running for a post-Back-to-School Campaign PSA blitz. Its well-written pitch materials, organized approach and aggressive follow-up strategy all but ensured the coalition's success.

A Great First Impression: The Pitch Kit

Before distributing its PSAs to television and radio outlets throughout the state, the Connecticut Children's Health Project (part of the Children's Health Council, the lead organization in the Covering Connecticut's Kids & Families Coalition) mobilized its team to collate nearly 150 information packets.

Each kit was customized for the type of media outlet the coalition was aiming to reach. The kits contained:

- ✓ A pitch memo explaining what *Covering Kids & Families* is all about, outlining the number of uninsured children in Connecticut and describing the *HUSKY* program
- ✓ TV or radio scripts, including PSAs that a radio announcer could read live on the air or a text message that a cable access channel could use for a video community calendar
- ✓ *HUSKY* pamphlets describing the health care coverage program
- ✓ A coalition fact sheet detailing the members of the Covering Connecticut's Kids & Families Coalition
- ✓ A postage-paid PSA Tracking Postcard allowing the coalition to gauge the rate of PSA placements when community affairs professionals answered the short survey and mailed back the pre-stamped postcard

Bring the Connecticut Model to Your Community

- **How long did it take to distribute and pitch the PSAs?** The coalition already had its PSAs, so it began planning the campaign just after the Back-to-School Campaign in late August. It took about two months to plan, including collating the packets, collecting contact information for the pitch list and mailing the kits. After waiting a couple of weeks, the staff began pitching and then spent three to four weeks placing follow-up calls in November and December.
- **What was the total budget for the PSA distribution effort?** The project required a total of three to four staff members dedicating varying amounts of time. While some concentrated on organizing the pitch kits, others focused on the phone calls to get commitments on running the PSAs from media outlets. Overall, the coalition spent about \$1,000 on tapes and CDs of the spots, printed materials, and personnel hours.

► **Who was contacted?** Because the coalition had just pitched Back-to-School Campaign radio PSA scripts and community calendar listings a few weeks earlier, it had a solid media list that only needed a few updates. The staff contacted:

- ▣ Community affairs or PSA directors at television outlets
- ▣ Public service directors at radio stations

With the help of a Connecticut Department of Public Utility Control directory, coalition members were also able to get the names of the station directors at cable access stations throughout the state.

► **What was the result of the campaign?** The coalition mailed kits and PSAs to 123 media outlets statewide. Of those stations, 45 of them (37%) agreed to run an announcement. While some television outlets committed to running the spots a set number of times each week, others promised to insert the PSA into a rotation as space became available. One cable operator indicated it would run the PSA on ESPN and Lifetime, two networks that reach the *Covering Kids & Families* target audience. Nearly all of the broadcast TV stations said they would put it in their PSA library for future use. Cable access stations used the *HUSKY* PSA more than any other medium. The community calendar text promoting the program ran constantly on several cable access stations.

The coalition also received several interview requests once it began pitching the PSAs. Many news organizations sought to cover *HUSKY* enrollment and the PSA effort through live and taped interviews. One of these interviews was broadcast to a statewide audience. Fortunately, the coalition had media spokespersons that were prepared with *Covering Kids & Families* messages from the Back-to-School Campaign.

During the three months when *HUSKY* PSAs aired statewide (December 2001 – February 2002), the coalition saw a 60 percent jump in calls to the *HUSKY* Health Infoline compared with the same period during the previous year (December 2000 – February 2001). The number of callers who indicated television was the source of their information about *HUSKY* increased by 58 percent.

► **What would you do differently in the future?** Coalition members learned that there is a lot of competition for PSA time during the holidays and that the back-to-school season is an optimal time of year to promote children's health care coverage because there is more airtime available for nonprofit organizations. A future PSA blitz might be planned for another season.

In hindsight, coalition members thought it might have been better to place introductory calls to media outlets before sending the pitch kits. They thought it was also effective to spend time explaining the program and building a relationship with the station staff before pitching their PSAs.

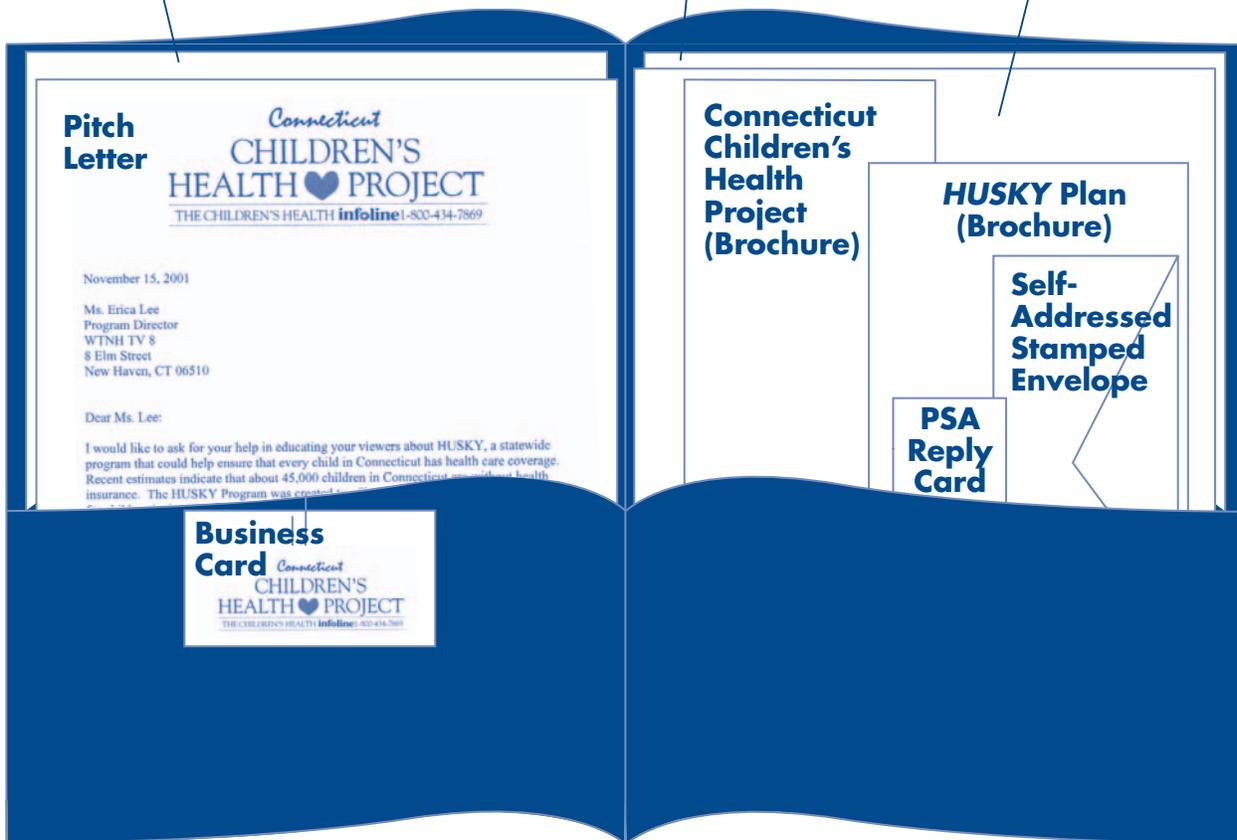
Community access stations were particularly receptive, given their public service orientation. These station directors also received copies of a nine-minute *HUSKY* video in the pitch kit. While many cable access stations found the video useful, some said it was too short to run as a separate program.

Sample PSA Kit: Connecticut Children's Health Project

**Husky
TV & Radio
PSA
Transcripts**

**Husky PSA Reader
or Announcer Copy**

**Husky
Community
Announcement**



Coalition Members Use Community Connections to Place PSAs

Media Advisory Committee Helps Make Hoosier Healthwise Outreach a Slam Dunk

Who could pass up *free* Back-to-School Campaign advertising in the Sunday comics section of a newspaper? Or donated billboard space promoting Medicaid and SCHIP enrollment on one of the busiest roads in the area? When the St. Joseph’s County *Covering Kids & Families* Initiative in Indiana brought media professionals into its coalition, it found it had partners who were ready and willing to contribute the high-visibility outreach they oversee—free of charge.

In 1999, the coalition formed a media and marketing committee. It started by inviting representatives from television, radio, advertising and marketing organizations to a meeting to brainstorm on the most effective ways to reach area families with uninsured children. Within a few months, these new committee members were offering to design and use a *Hoosier Healthwise* PSA campaign featuring *Covering Kids & Families* messages. In subsequent years, committee members contributed:

- ✓ Marketing expertise, including art and design concepts for print PSAs and an outreach campaign with McDonald’s
- ✓ Broadcast television airtime for *Covering Kids & Families* PSAs
- ✓ At least eight weeks of announcements in the *South Bend Tribune* Sunday comics section
- ✓ At least 18 *Tribune* placements of a PSA called, “Did You Know?,” which included state income eligibility figures for *Hoosier Healthwise*
- ✓ Community announcements in the *Tribune*’s classified section
- ✓ A billboard space for one month, valued at \$750

Committed Media Advisors Can Lead to Investments in Your Community

While the majority of *Covering Kids & Families* coalitions brought together representatives from the health, education, faith and business communities, the relationships that came from a media and marketing committee proved to be invaluable in Indiana. This model can be replicated in your area.

- **Who is on the committee?** It was important to bring the right people to the table. There were seven members on the media and marketing committee, including the advertising sales manager from the *South Bend Tribune*, a newscaster from an area television station, a public relations expert from a local marketing firm, and marketing representatives from a few medical practices and hospitals in the area.
- **How often does the media and marketing committee meet? What is discussed at your meetings?** The committee met quarterly but communicated regularly through e-mail. It was important to schedule meetings on a regular basis; this encouraged the members to make this appointment a routine part of their schedule. During the meetings, the group brainstormed how the coalition could integrate *Hoosier Healthwise* outreach into seasonal events or promote the program at high-profile regional activities throughout the year.
- **Who does the work ... the coalition or the committee members?** It’s a combination. The coalition’s project director or marketing committee members drafted the initial materials. Once the entire group approved the PSA, the project director worked directly with the marketing committee

members and their staffs to get the announcement placed with a particular media outlet.

For instance, when the project director wanted to develop a print PSA for the *South Bend Tribune*, the marketing committee developed the copy, finalized the design and submitted it to its contact at the newspaper. Then, the committee's representative from the *Tribune* (the advertising sales manager) did the leg work to get it placed in the classified section. The project director found it easier to work through one central person at the media outlet, rather than contacting individual staffers for each section of the newspaper.

► **How long did it take to get the PSAs placed in the newspaper comics section?** The project took about three weeks from start to finish. The media and marketing committee came up with the idea in December 2000. After the holidays, the project director and her team started to design the PSA. Two weeks later, they presented a draft to the committee for its suggestions. With a near-final version in hand, the group's marketing representative brought the draft back to his company to produce the final high-quality print PSA. The *Tribune* ran the announcement for five weeks in January and February 2001 and a similar ad for three weeks in August and September 2001. The second PSA took less than two weeks to develop.

► **What was the result of this PSA effort?** After seeing the PSA in the comics section in January 2001, more than 40 families called the community hotline to learn more about *Hoosier Healthwise* or request an enrollment application. When the coalition ran a similar PSA in August 2001, 33 families called for information about the program. *Call volume increased by 69 percent over the previous month!*

► **How did you convince committee members to promote *Hoosier Healthwise*?** When it started the committee, the coalition concentrated on building a rapport with committee members. First, the coalition's project director presented the group with statistics about Indiana's uninsured children and explained the consequences that kids and families face when they have no health care coverage. Then, when they learned that many eligible families did not realize that their children might qualify for the program, the committee members became committed to helping with outreach.

► **How do you keep the committee involved?** Throughout the process, the coalition has made a point of sharing its outreach successes and failures with committee members. When committee members find weaknesses in the publicity strategy, they are motivated to help improve the plan. They have a passion for marketing *Hoosier Healthwise* and their enthusiasm intensifies when they see that their work is making a difference in the community.

Indiana PSA Example

PEANUTS
featuring
"Good ol' Charlie Brown"
by Schulz

Their Love Was Not in the Cards

"You've always ignored me," she said. "And now you say you want to marry me."

"Every night you play cards."

"I'm really afraid," she said, "that you love cards more than you love me."

"If you could say something nice to me just once, perhaps I'd marry you."

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

"You blew it!" she said, and walked out of his life forever.

DO YOUR CHILDREN NEED HEALTH INSURANCE?
Questions you might have about Hoosier Healthwise for Children

Q What is Hoosier Healthwise for Children?
A It is a health insurance program offered by the State of Indiana for children from birth through age 18. It covers check-ups, well-child visits, doctor visits, hospital stays, prescription drugs, vision and dental care and other important health care benefits.

Q How do I apply for Hoosier Healthwise for Children?
A It's easy! The application is simple and short - just fill out two sides of one page. You can apply at hospitals, community health centers, or other enrollment centers in your community, or by mail. To find an enrollment center near you, or to have an application sent to you, call the hotline.

Q How long does enrollment last?
A Your child will stay a member of Hoosier Healthwise for 12 months as long as you are living in Indiana and the child hasn't reached age 19. At the end of 12 months, membership will need to be renewed. Watch for your renewal notice in the mail. Renewing is easy!

In St. Joseph County call
219-236-1049
Call 1-800-895-3949
HOOSIER HEALTHWISE for Children

NOW COVERS MORE KIDS!

Indiana Billboard PSA Example

HOOSIER HEALTHWISE

FREE OR LOW-COST HEALTHCARE FOR KIDS AND TEENS.

236-1049 **AREN'T THEY WORTH IT?**

PSA Uses Football Celebrity to Focus Attention on Uninsured Kids

Arkansas Coaches Campaign Drives Enrollment up 46 Percent

A public service announcement can be a powerful outreach tool in your community. It is an essential part of a communications effort, and can potentially reach a very large audience with your message.

How do you successfully produce and distribute a PSA? A campaign developed by Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families called the Arkansas Coaches Campaign serves as a “how-to” model for public service outreach, offering strategies and ideas for other states and grantees to consider.

In a Nutshell: How the Campaign Worked

In 1999, Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families chose an outreach strategy with great potential: reaching out to children with an interest in sports. Given that some 100,000 kids participate in statewide amateur athletics, the idea made sense. But what was the best way to reach these kids and their families? Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families decided to produce a PSA for TV.

Coalition members decided to utilize a sports theme, enlisting the help of state celebrity Houston Nutt, head coach of the popular Arkansas Razorbacks football team. Their thinking? If sports are popular in Arkansas, then football will get families’ attention. Coach Nutt became the star of a 30-second PSA called, “Competition is a Good Thing. An Uninsured Child is Not.”

The PSA aired during football season in 1999. From there, the campaign grew into a statewide outreach effort that culminated in subsequent years with the distribution of more than 52,000 Coaches Campaign brochures and a meeting of 2,500 athletic coaches—all agreeing to actively spread the word about *ARKids First* and the availability of low-cost or free health insurance for kids.

The result? Between 1999 and 2001, enrollment of children in Medicaid grew by 78,296 kids, or 46 percent overall. Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families credits the PSA, related activities and a simplified enrollment process for the increase.

Nuts and Bolts of the Coaches Campaign

► **Where did the idea come from?** Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families joined forces with the largest school district in the state to brainstorm ideas. The Coaches Campaign concept came up during a creative meeting with the district’s superintendent.

► **What was the budget?** Believe it or not, this campaign was produced for \$18, the cost of duplicating the PSA tapes. This was possible because Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families worked hard to find a production house that was willing to donate its time. The coalition found a vendor by tapping into its partners and asking for ideas and contacts.

The production facility agreed to donate its time because it cared about the issue. But the company also agreed to help *ARKids First* because it thought the opportunity might bring future business. Also, to keep hours at a minimum, Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families wrote the script, relying on the production house to handle the shoot, editing and production of the spot.

► **How did you recruit the celebrity spokesperson?** Using a celebrity can work. However, it is important to be strategic about whom you approach because the process can be time and labor intensive. *ARKids First* had good visibility and credibility statewide because, among other things, the

governor had appeared in previous PSAs. With this well-established foundation, the group was confident that if it approached Coach Nutt, he would be receptive to the idea.

► **How did you approach the TV stations?** Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families sent copies of the PSA and a letter to the manager of each local TV station asking them to use the spot. The pitch letter was persuasively written and appealed to managers' interest in helping the children of Arkansas. The coalition also sent the PSA to pilot sites and encouraged them to pitch the spot to the TV stations in their area. Coalition members followed up each mailing by calling the stations to encourage their use of the PSA.

► **Where did the PSA air?** The spot was unveiled at the State Athletic Association Convention. It aired for several months on the local cable station during sports talk shows—the perfect demographic for the campaign—and area public broadcasting stations.

► **How long did the process take?** The process took about five months, from beginning to end.

► **What impact did the PSA have?** Interest in *ARKids First* spread after the spot began to air. School districts and coaches began calling, and it was clear the message was getting out. The coalition quickly learned that it needed more promotional materials about the health care coverage program, so it developed a brochure and began to market the materials statewide. In 2000, Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families sent a mass-mailing to coaches and held an informational meeting with 2,500 athletic coaches.

The PSA campaign was also the inspiration behind a national *Covering Kids & Families* partnership with the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU). Now, AAU coaches in all 50 states can get information about Medicaid and SCHIP enrollment in their state.

► **How did you measure the success of the PSA?** The ultimate achievement with any effort of this kind is increased enrollment. With the Coaches Campaign, enrollment grew by 46 percent over two years. Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families attributes this success to outreach activities, partnerships and enrollment simplification. *ARKids First* normally asks callers to its consumer hotline how they heard about the program. Many said that coaches, school nurses, teachers or parents had suggested they call. This indicated to Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families that the PSA and brochures were effective, since callers learned about the program by word of mouth.

Getting Results: Arkansas Coaches Campaign

Year	Covered Kids
Dec 1999	170,196
Dec 2000	209,992
Dec 2001	248,492

After launching an aggressive outreach campaign that included a high-visibility PSA featuring Arkansas Razorbacks Coach Houston Nutt, the number of children enrolled in *ARKids First* increased by 46 percent statewide. That's 78,296 more kids who have health care coverage!

Industry Profiles



David Ysais, President, Former National Broadcast Association for Community Affairs



David Ysais was the president of the National Broadcast Association for Community Affairs, a group representing 90 television and radio public service professionals and 60 national nonprofit partners.

In the media industry, it is almost unheard of to spend an entire career with one station. But from his first day on the job as a news writer back in 1979, Ysais worked for only one outlet—KNX Radio in Los Angeles. In this position, Ysais oversaw all of the station's community affairs work, including PSA clearance, production and placement, as well as the development of editorials and social marketing campaigns. In this interview, Ysais offered the following advice:

► **Are television and radio stations cutting back on their community affairs work?**

It is hard for community affairs professionals to quantify their departments as profit centers for a media outlet. They are often the people within a radio or TV station who are giving things away for free. Unfortunately, too many station managers are not making the connection that the relationships an outlet fosters in the community translate into increased listenership and viewership. So, they are folding these departments into sales or creative services. If a community does not complain, then media management will continue operating this way.

► **So, in today's economy, can groups like *Covering Kids & Families* get PSAs placed?**

Yes, although it has become more challenging in the last decade. There are opportunities, because many media outlets still want to do some good in the community, so you should take advantage of them. Realistically, though, a station is more likely to respond to a group that can partner with a client who can pay for some advertising. Without funds to purchase advertising, organizations like *Covering Kids & Families* need to be creative and make their PSAs user-friendly. By that I mean, present PSAs and materials that are straightforward and easy to understand.

► **How important is it to “build a relationship” with your media contact?**

It is extremely important! Personally speaking, when a community group is easy to work with, I often turn to them when I am looking for a guest on our station's public affairs shows or a spokesperson for news coverage on a particular issue. These relationships are valuable for us. I would advise your coalitions: if your PSA does not get placed right away, keep checking with your contact. There may be space in the rotation or other media outreach opportunities.

► **Should *Covering Kids & Families* coalitions look beyond placing PSAs and pursue forming media partnerships with television and radio stations in their regions?**

Cause-related marketing is the future of the media's work in community affairs. There are lots of companies and national organizations that are looking for community issues to work on. If you have funds to dedicate to a media partnership, then a television or radio station is more likely to get involved in your work on a larger scale. Begin investigating possible partners by talking with your coalition to get a sense of their community connections.

Harvey C. Dzodin, Former Vice President of Commercial Standards, ABC, Inc.



Harvey Dzodin worked for the ABC Television Network for nearly 20 years. He was responsible for reviewing all of the commercials broadcast on the network, as well as the placement of several hundred PSAs each year. These included *Covering Kids & Families* spots during the 2001 Back-to-School Campaign. In this interview, Dzodin offered valuable insight to *Covering Kids & Families* coalitions that are producing and pitching PSAs to community affairs directors in their communities.

► **Why does ABC run public service announcements?** In order for our owned stations and affiliates to keep their FCC licenses, the network and every broadcast media outlet must serve the public interest. PSAs are one way to fulfill this responsibility. Many media outlets also see public service work as a way to build good will with the community at large.

► **What issues do you consider before agreeing to place a PSA into the network's rotation?** A PSA must be produced by a nonprofit organization with 501(c)(3) tax status to be eligible for free broadcast time. It must also pass the rigorous financial standards of the Better Business Bureau. If a PSA focuses on an issue that is relevant to our viewers nationwide and is not controversial, we will consider airing the spot. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation meets those requirements and that is why ABC placed *Covering Kids & Families* PSAs into our fall 2001 rotation.

Our media outlets will not air PSAs that promote a commercial product that is tied to a for-profit company. While many stations scrutinize the content of the PSA, we also review the finances of the sponsoring organization to ensure that their funding is used to benefit the community program and not cover overhead costs.

► **What are the key components of an effective PSA pitch?** The most successful presentations all follow the same rule: they *keep it simple*. By keeping your pitch to the point—and presenting the problem and solution in a succinct format—a group is more likely to catch and hold my attention. Brochures and fact sheets are helpful, but try not to overwhelm your contact with books of information. Simply outline the issue and identify the service you can provide to our viewers.

► **Are PSAs featuring a celebrity spokesperson more likely to get placed or air more often?** There are positives and negatives to a celebrity's involvement. Personally, I do not think that having a celebrity spokesperson matters. I have seen many well-crafted PSAs that do not have a celebrity component. With a public figure, your organization and issue are tied to their public persona.

► **Do you advise groups to request a face-to-face meeting with a media outlet in order to pitch their PSAs?** It can never hurt to ask. Often, those meetings can help your organization build a relationship with a media outlet. My advice is to be practical and use good judgment. If you are feeling like your contact is interested in learning more about this issue, then suggest a sit-down meeting to discuss how your organizations can work together in the future. Face-to-face meetings are also effective if your organization has a business partner willing to allocate funds to sponsor media outreach.

Polly Sherard, Former Special Projects Director, WJLA-TV (Washington, D.C.)



Over the many years that Polly Sherard worked in television, she saw a lot of changes in the industry. The introduction of cable, the Internet and the 24-hour news cycle increased the competition for viewers and advertising revenue. As a result, many local television stations cut back or eliminated their community affairs departments. In this interview, Sherard offered advice to *Covering Kids & Families* coalitions looking to place PSAs: think more broadly and think about building media partnerships.

► **Are local stations scaling back their community affairs departments?** Today's economy is unkind to public service announcements.

Despite the economic downturn this past year, most television stations sell all of their available advertising time, leaving little room for free public service advertising. Now, many stations are reporting that advertising is on the upswing again, which will further limit public service advertising. Rather than devote significant time to free advertising and public service announcements, many stations are instead opting to cover community affairs during regular newscasts—if these topics are considered newsworthy. With the expansion of local news programming during the early morning, late afternoon and weekends, this is a boon for news producers who are often looking for local stories to help fill their program.

Station sales departments are also taking on community issues and finding corporations—and even nonprofits—that are willing to partner and sponsor advertising with a social message by purchasing airtime. Those partnerships sometimes come with discounted advertising rates, but still ensure the station will see some revenue for their work. Paying for PSAs guarantees that the spot will actually air when there is an audience. Many sales departments are also including space on station Web sites in these partnership packages—to address and build on their coverage of community issues.

► **Does this mean that television stations are no longer placing free PSAs for nonprofit organizations?** No. It's just much harder to get free placements today. TV stations in large and small media markets still run PSAs from community groups that are working on important issues, like getting uninsured kids covered. *Covering Kids & Families* can reach uninsured families through no-cost PSAs, but it is more difficult to get your announcements placed, and it's hard to get a commitment to air the advertising during a daypart with a large audience. That's why you often see PSAs in the middle of the night! For a station to give serious consideration to placing your spots during programming that reaches your target audience, you will need to convince a station of a few things: 1) your coalition is not only wide, but deep, with recognized community leaders and influential groups, and 2) a significant portion of their viewers can benefit from information about low-cost and free health care coverage for kids.

There are many other ways that a television station can promote affordable health care coverage for kids; PSAs are just one option. *Covering Kids & Families* coalitions should think more broadly and try to build a media partnership that may help you reach more families over a longer period of time.

► **How can a coalition form a media partnership?** Building a successful media partnership takes a little homework. When television stations evaluate potential partners, they want to know what is in it for them—for both the news *and* sales departments. For a station in a top-10 media market to seriously consider a proposal for a media partnership, your coalition should identify potential sponsorship opportunities.

What does that mean? A coalition can either pool the resources that the member organizations bring to the table or identify new groups that might be able to subsidize a sponsorship effort. The business community can bring something unique to your coalition—funds that may serve as the foundation for a media partnership. Local companies known for their focus on children and health are a potential source for this funding. These partnerships can provide the seed money for subsidized or paid PSAs. Once a funding source is in place, it's time to pitch the partnership.

► **Is there value for a coalition to arrange a face-to-face meeting to pitch a PSA or media partnership?** Absolutely! The media constantly need to be reminded of the number of uninsured children in the nation and the impact that having no health insurance has on families. I recommend that coalitions be persistent in trying to arrange an in-person meeting. And once it is set, arrive prepared.

Keep your pitch *succinct*, but be sure to cover the key points: 1) the scope of this problem; 2) what the problem means to the station's viewers; 3) the solution that your program provides; 4) if possible, the sponsorship opportunities you can bring to a partnership; and 5) concrete ideas of what you want the media outlet to do. Some ideas for working with a station include planning community events, placing Web content, producing 10- to 15-second announcements that will promote Web content on the station, airing your PSAs and co-branding outreach materials.

When all is said and done, coalitions need to sell the idea of a partnership to a station. Local statistics will help your cause immensely. Most important, avoid pitching a partnership with the attitude that, "*our issue is the most important and should be at the top of your priority list.*" Television stations hear this from every group supporting an important issue. Approach an outlet by positioning your initiative as one that will be a win-win for everyone involved.

Templates

PSAs & Pitch Materials



Using *Covering Kids & Families* Template Materials and PSAs

This section includes examples of the following templates, which are available for download from the *Covering Kids & Families* Web site (see instructions below):

PSA Scripts and Cover Memos

- ▶ Radio Reader Cover Letter and Scripts
- ▶ Radio PSA Script: "Hard Choices" (English)
- ▶ Radio PSA Script: "Cash Register" (Spanish)
- ▶ Television PSA Script: "Hard Choices" (English)
- ▶ Television PSA Script: "Cash Register" (Spanish)
- ▶ Community Calendar/Classifieds Cover Letter & Listing
- ▶ Print PSA Sample #1
- ▶ Print PSA Sample #2

Pitch Kit Materials

- ▶ Pitch Memo
- ▶ Coalition or Organizational Description
- ▶ Mail-In PSA Tracking Card

Tools and Background Materials for Your Coalition

- ▶ Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Spokespersons
- ▶ Talking Points for Spokespersons and PSA Pitching
- ▶ State Press Fact Sheet
- ▶ Media Contact Log

Instructions for Downloading and Customizing Template Materials:

These templates are available to download from the *Covering Kids & Families* Web site at www.coveringkidsandfamilies.org and they should be customized to fit your needs. They are in a Microsoft Word format and they provide places to fill in your local or state information, which are indicated with [XX]s. In addition, all of these materials carry a consistent message. Materials that combine a compelling and uniform message with specific local information will help.

Radio Reader Cover Letter & Scripts

TO: Public Affairs Director
FROM: [NAME and ORGANIZATION]
RE: [CITY/STATE]'s Uninsured Children and [MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM]
DATE: [DATE]

[AT LEAST/MORE THAN] [# OF UNINSURED CHILDREN] children are uninsured in [STATE]. This is tragic when you consider that [MOST/# OF ELIGIBLE CHILDREN] of these kids are eligible for low-cost or free health care coverage through [MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM]. These programs exist to help families keep their children healthy. The problem is that many parents may not believe that their kids are eligible for this affordable health care coverage.

[MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM] provides [LOW-COST OR FREE] health care coverage to eligible uninsured children, and includes [BENEFITS LIKE DOCTOR VISITS, IMMUNIZATIONS, DENTAL CARE AND HOSPITALIZATION.]

With your help, we have the opportunity to let more parents know about [MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM] so they can give their children the health care coverage they need.

Below are scripts for PSAs designed to inform your listeners about [MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM]. We hope that you will agree to read these announcements as often as possible [DURING MONTH/BEFORE OUR BACK-TO-SCHOOL CAMPAIGN EVENT ON DATE]. Thank you in advance for helping connect uninsured children to the health care coverage they need and deserve!

RADIO (10 seconds)

Do your children need health care coverage? Many working families earning [\$XX,XXX] a year or more can get a [MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM] card for their kids. [On DAY, DATE, LOCATION, TIME, learn more about MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM] or [CALL TOLL-FREE LOCAL NUMBER TO LEARN MORE].

RADIO (15 seconds)

[NEARLY/MORE THAN] [# OF UNINSURED CHILDREN] of [STATE] kids are eligible for [LOW-COST OR FREE] health care coverage through [MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM]. Your child could be one of them, even if you work! If your kids don't have health insurance, [call toll-free LOCAL NUMBER] or [stop by LOCATION on DATE at TIME] to learn more about [MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM]!

RADIO (30 seconds)

[NEARLY/MORE THAN] [# OF UNINSURED CHILDREN] [STATE] kids are eligible for [LOW-COST OR FREE] health care coverage through [MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM]. Your child could be one of them, even if you work! In fact, many working families earning [\$XX,XXX] a year or more can get a health care card for their kids.

[MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM] information is a toll-free call away—[LOCAL NUMBER]. The program covers [BENEFITS LIKE DOCTOR VISITS, IMMUNIZATIONS, DENTAL CARE AND HOSPITALIZATIONS]. Learn more about [MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM] enrollment on [DATE AT LOCATION FROM TIME] or call [LOCAL NUMBER] for more information!

Radio PSA Script: “Hard Choices” (English)

RADIO :60

(Music)

ANNCR V/O: Today, parents have a lot of hard choices.

DAD: Pay the phone bill...

MOM: or pay the doctor.

DAD: Fill the fridge...

MOM: or fill a prescription.

ANNCR: But there’s a choice that can make life easier. Calling [TOLL-FREE NUMBER].

Because thousands of [STATE] kids are eligible for low-cost and free health care coverage, and your child could be one of them—even if you work. Many families earning up to [INCOME ELIGIBILITY] a year or more can get an insurance card for their kids. Income eligibility varies by family size, so you’ve got to call [TOLL-FREE NUMBER].

MOM: We both work, so I didn’t think our kids would be eligible. But then I called, and now we have an insurance card for them that covers doctor visits, prescriptions...It’s great!

ANNCR: If your children don’t have health insurance, call [MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM] toll-free at [TOLL-FREE NUMBER]. Write it down. [TOLL-FREE NUMBER]. Because you’ve got enough to worry about.

ANNCR: A message from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and [COALITION]



Radio PSA Script: “Cash Register” (Spanish)

RADIO :60

(Music)

ANNCR: Cuando sus hijos están enfermos, es preocupante.

When your child is sick, it’s scary.

Sin seguro, las facturas también son preocupantes.

Without insurance, the bills can be scary, too.

Consultas

Doctor Visits (SFX: electronic cash register sound)

Medicinas

Prescriptions (SFX: electronic cash register sound)

Ahora hay ayuda llame al [TOLL-FREE NUMBER].

Now there’s help. Call [MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM] at [TOLL-FREE NUMBER].

Porque miles de niños en [STATE] califican para recibir seguro médico a bajo costo o gratis, y su hijo puede ser uno de ellos - aunque usted trabaje.

Because thousands of [STATE] kids are eligible for low cost or free health care coverage and your child could be one of them—even if you work.

Muchas familias que ganan hasta [INCOME ELIGIBILITY] mil dólares al año o más pueden recibir una tarjeta de seguro médico para sus hijos. [MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM] cubre consultas, medicinas y más. La elegibilidad de ingresos varía por el tamaño de familia, por eso llame al [TOLL-FREE NUMBER].

Many families earning up to [STATE ELIGIBILITY] thousand dollars a year or more can get a health card for their kids. [MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM] covers doctor visits, prescriptions and more. Income eligibility varies by family size, so call [TOLL-FREE NUMBER].

Escriba este numero: [TOLL-FREE NUMBER] y haga la llamada.

Write down this number: [TOLL-FREE NUMBER] and make the call.

Un mensaje del Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

A message from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Television PSA Script: “Hard Choices” (English)

TV :30

VIDEO

Mother bustling around the kitchen, getting dinner together.

Mother gestures to teenage daughter to get off the phone. Doctor examines patient.

Mom takes milk out of fridge. Doctor hands prescription to parent.

Dad and Mom put toddler into high chair.

Letterbox frame:

CG: [TOLL-FREE NUMBER] toll-free

Series of health care shots, starts w/ parent handing over insurance card

CG: Low-Cost/Free Coverage for Kids

CG: Income Eligibility Varies by Family Size

Letterbox frame:

CG: (TOLL-FREE NUMBER) toll-free

Cut back to dinner table, Dad gestures to daughter, girl pulls off cap, releasing bright pink hair. Show Dad’s “unbelievable” reaction.

PROGRAM LOGOS

[STATE-PROGRAM]

Letterbox frame:

CG: [TOLL-FREE NUMBER]

This English television PSA has been produced and is available for you to order. Contact the *Covering Kids & Families* Communications Team at (202) 338-7227 or via e-mail at coveringkidsandfamilies@gmmb.com to order your copies today.

AUDIO

ANNCR: Today, parents have a lot of hard choices.

Pay the phone bill...or pay the doctor.

Fill the fridge...or fill a prescription.

But there’s a choice that can make life easier...calling [TOLL-FREE NUMBER]

That’s because [STATE] now offers low-cost and free health coverage for kids. Even families earning up to [INCOME ELIGIBILITY] a year or more can get the card.

So, if your kids aren’t insured, call [TOLL-FREE NUMBER]. Write it down... because you’ve got enough to worry about.



Television PSA Script: “Cash Register” (Spanish)

TV :30

VIDEO

Young boy in bed, looking sick. Mom feels his forehead.

Doctor examines child.

Freeze frame as doctor looks in child’s ear. **CG:** Consultas médicas: \$185

Mom at prescription counter,
CG: Medicinas: \$287

Mom hands insurance card to receptionist.

Letterbox frame:

CG: Llame gratis al [TOLL-FREE NUMBER]

Mom walking out of office with child, feeling better.

CG: Bajo costo o Gratis

CG: La elegibilidad de ingresos varía por el tamaño de familia

Letterbox frame:

CG: Llame gratis al [TOLL-FREE NUMBER]

Mom plays with child.

PROGRAM LOGOS [PROGRAM NAME]

Letterbox frame:

CG: Llame gratis al [TOLL-FREE NUMBER]
[DATE]

AUDIO

SPANISH LANGUAGE VO ANNCR1: Cuando sus hijos están enfermos, es preocupante.

When your child is sick, it’s scary.

Sin seguro, las facturas también son preocupantes.

Without insurance, the bills can be scary, too.

Consultas

Doctor Visits (SFX: electronic cash register sound)

Medicinas

Prescriptions (SFX: electronic cash register sound)

ANNCR2: Ahora hay ayuda. Llame al (TOLL-FREE NUMBER).

Now there’s help. Call [TOLL-FREE NUMBER].

ANNCR1: [STATE] ahora ofrece seguro de bajo costo o gratis para niños, aún para familias ganando hasta (INCOME ELIGIBILITY) al año o más.

Because [STATE] now offers low-cost and free health coverage for kids, even for families earning up to [INCOME ELIGIBILITY] a year or more.

ANNCR2: [TOLL-FREE NUMBER]. Haga la llamada.

[TOLL-FREE NUMBER]. Make the call.

This Spanish television PSA has been produced and is available for you to order. Contact the *Covering Kids & Families* Communications Team at (202) 338-7227 or via e-mail at coveringkidsandfamilies@gmb.com to order your copies today.

Community Calendar/Classifieds Cover Letter & Listing (Choose the appropriate listings for your activities.)

[DATE]

Dear Community Calendar/Classifieds Editor,

[AT LEAST/MORE THAN] [# OF UNINSURED CHILDREN] children are uninsured in [STATE]. This is tragic when you consider that [MOST/# OF ELIGIBLE CHILDREN] of these kids are eligible for low-cost or free health care coverage through [MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM]. These programs exist to help families keep their children healthy. The problem is that many parents, especially in working families, may not realize that their children are eligible for this health care coverage.

Together, we can spread the word and help keep children healthy. Please include the following listing in your community calendar or classified advertising section. If you have any questions about our program, please call me at [LOCAL NUMBER].

Thank you for your consideration.

[CONTACT]

[ORGANIZATION NAME]

Event-Specific Community Calendar Listing

LOW-COST AND FREE HEALTH CARE COVERAGE FOR KIDS!

Thousands of [STATE/CITY] kids are eligible for [MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM]. Your child could be one of them, even if you work! Learn more about [MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM] on [DATE] at [LOCATION] from [TIME]. Families earning [\$XX,XXX] a year or more could be eligible to get a [MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM] card for their kids.

General Classifieds Listing

LOW-COST AND FREE HEALTH CARE COVERAGE FOR KIDS!

Thousands of [STATE/CITY] kids are eligible for [MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM]. Your child could be one of them, even if you work! Many working families earning [\$XX,XXX] a year or more can get a [MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM] card for their kids. If your kids don't have health insurance, call toll-free [STATE HOTLINE NUMBER] to learn more.

You work hard to take
care of your kids...

Now there's help.

**YOUR CHILD MAY
BE ELIGIBLE FOR
LOW-COST OR FREE:**

- ◆ DOCTOR VISITS
- ◆ HOSPITALIZATION
- ◆ PRESCRIPTIONS
- ◆ OTHER BENEFITS

CALL 1 (877) KIDS-NOW
TOLL-FREE

Ask about low-cost or free health care coverage.

2

Usted trabaja mucho para
cuidar de sus hijos...

Ahora
hay ayuda.

SU HIJO PUEDE SER
ELEGIBLE PARA
OBTENER A BAJO COSTO
O GRATUITAMENTE:

- ◆ VISITAS MÉDICAS
- ◆ HOSPITALIZACIÓN
- ◆ RECETAS
- ◆ OTROS BENEFICIOS

LLAME GRATIS AL 1 (877) 543-7669

Pregunte por los seguros médicos a bajo costo o gratis disponibles.

CS

Pitch Memo

(Not for use with Radio Reader Scripts or Community Calendar Listings.)

Memorandum

TO:

FROM:

DATE:

RE: [MEDIA OUTLET] and [Covering Kids & Families COALITION] Reaching [STATE/CITY]'s Families with Uninsured Kids

Did you know there are more than [# OF UNINSURED CHILDREN] uninsured children in [STATE/CITY]? These kids do not have access to annual checkups or eye exams; they are less likely to receive proper medical care for common childhood illnesses like sore throats, earaches and asthma; and they are often excluded from after-school activities and athletics.

Tragically, while [# OF ELIGIBLE CHILDREN/MOST OF THESE] kids are eligible for [LOW-COST OR FREE] health care coverage right now through [MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM], many of their parents may not believe they qualify.

Covering Kids & Families [COALITION] is striving to change that. Our coalition is a part of *Covering Kids & Families*, a national initiative of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. We work to inform parents about affordable coverage available through Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). From coast to coast, community coalitions like ours plan outreach and enrollment activities to connect eligible children with these programs. [MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM] offers comprehensive health care coverage for [CITY/STATE]'s children, including doctor visits, prescriptions, immunizations and hospitalization.

Parents throughout [STATE/CITY] trust [MEDIA OUTLET] as a source for valuable [HEALTH NEWS/NEWS AND INFORMATION]. I am writing with the hope that [MEDIA OUTLET] will consider running public service announcements alerting families to the [LOW-COST AND FREE] coverage available through [MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM].

Enclosed you will find [LIST TYPE OF PSAs ENCLOSED]. These PSAs include information specific to [STATE/CITY] families, including:

- [MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM] benefits
- Income eligibility levels for [STATE] families
- A toll-free hotline that [STATE/CITY] parents can call for more information

These days, parents have enough worries about raising their kids. They wonder: If my uninsured child gets sick or injured, will I be able to afford needed medical care? Without insurance, can I pay for prescriptions ... or must I delay the purchase?

Covering Kids & Families research shows that there are real consequences for parents with uninsured children. I would like the opportunity to discuss these consequences and how [MEDIA OUTLET] can get involved in outreach activities throughout [STATE/CITY]. Enclosed you will find additional information about our efforts. I will follow up with you in the next few days. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [PHONE] or via e-mail at [E-MAIL ADDRESS].

Coalition or Organizational Description

(Include this fact sheet on your coalition or organization with your pitch memo.)

[Covering Kids & Families COALITION or YOUR ORGANIZATION'S NAME]

Create descriptions for each of the organizations in your coalition and compile them into one fact sheet. Each description should be three to five sentences. Unless you have designated one spokesperson for the entire coalition, be sure to include a media contact for each organization. Include this fact sheet in your PSA pitch kit.

Here are some examples of organizational descriptions without press contacts:

The **Human Services Coalition of Dade County, Inc.** (HSC) is a nonprofit membership coalition composed of over 4,500 individuals and organizations representing health providers, faith-based groups, unions, consumers and concerned individuals. HSC's mission is to support the effective and efficient delivery of health and social services in this community. This is accomplished through providing forums for information exchange, education and joint action. At the heart of these efforts is a belief that families and communities will be strengthened through increased public awareness and citizen involvement in improving systems of health care.

Campus Care Centers is a collaborative project of the Brownsville Community Health Center and the Brownsville Independent School District (BISD). Campus Care offers comprehensive health services to all students of BISD in order to improve academic performance by minimizing school absences.

Here is a sample coalition description with coalition and organizational media spokespersons:

Covering Connecticut's Kids is a broad statewide coalition, with the Children's Health Council serving as the lead agency and the Connecticut Department of Social Services providing strong support. The coalition was awarded funding under the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's *Covering Kids & Families* Initiative. As a *Covering Kids & Families* coalition, Covering Connecticut's Kids leads efforts in Connecticut to find and enroll eligible uninsured children, make enrolling in health coverage programs simpler by streamlining the application process, and encourage the state to coordinate between the health care coverage programs that are available to children. The *Covering Kids & Families* grant supports statewide interventions and pilot interventions in Bridgeport and Stratford, as well as a five-town area that includes Manchester, East Hartford, Vernon, Hebron and Glastonbury. Press contact information: [NAME OF CONTACT, TITLE], (XXX) XXX-XXXX. 

Coalition members include:

The **Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition** (BCAC) is a coalition of 76 member organizations in Bridgeport and surrounding towns. Since 1995, BCAC has worked with its member organizations, parents, community leaders, providers and government officials to improve life outcomes for 37,000 children in the area. The BCAC HUSKY Outreach Initiative works with parents, especially immigrants, who need application assistance, as well as community organizations that are involved with families whose children need coverage. Press contact information: [NAME OF CONTACT, TITLE], (XXX) XXX-XXXX. 

The **Bristol Community Organization, Inc. (BCO)** is a private, nonprofit community action agency serving the elderly, the handicapped and economically disadvantaged individuals and families in the greater Bristol region. In its mission to help eliminate or alleviate the causes and effects of poverty, BCO works with other agencies and organizations to provide services and information. BCO programs and services include HUSKY outreach, Healthy Start, transportation, energy assistance, Head Start/School Readiness, RSVP, homemaking, WIA Youth Program, summer lunch and other social services. Press contact information: [NAME OF CONTACT, TITLE], (XXX) XXX-XXXX.



The Power of a Coalition

If you are working as a member of a coalition, use this to your advantage. Pitching PSAs with the support of a broad-based coalition gives your effort credibility with the media. When your coalition is comprehensive—involving education, health, faith and business organizations—it shows the media that children’s health care coverage is important to the whole community.

Talking Points for Spokespersons and PSA Pitching

(For Spokespersons during media interviews or during your PSA pitch.)

If you have identified an effective spokesperson for the *Covering Kids & Families* effort in your state or community, provide them with the following talking points to reinforce the core messages of your outreach effort and PSA campaign. Customize these talking points with state-specific program information, local statistics and anecdotes.

- ✓ Why are we doing this? Because when a child is healthy, there are fewer obstacles to success in school and greater promise for a bright future. With health care coverage, children have a better opportunity for academic and personal success.
- ✓ On the flip side, children without health care coverage are less likely to receive proper medical care for common childhood illnesses like sore throats, earaches and asthma. According to research from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, half (52%) of low-income uninsured children have not had a well-child visit in the past year. And almost one-third of these children do not have a pediatrician or other regular source of care.
- ✓ What these data tell us is what many working parents across this nation already know—that not having health insurance is bad for our nation’s children. Without insurance, too many children are missing the regular checkups and preventive care that will prepare them to do their best in school. In the richest nation in the world, no child should be without the health care they need...no child should be without health care coverage.
- ✓ Unfortunately, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, more than 8 million children in America are uninsured. Here in [STATE], [# OF UNINSURED CHILDREN] children are uninsured.
- ✓ [MANY/MOST/# OF ELIGIBLE CHILDREN] of these children are in fact eligible for low-cost or free health care coverage, either through Medicaid or SCHIP...and they are eligible RIGHT NOW. Unfortunately, their parents may not know about this opportunity to get health care coverage for their children.
- ✓ Children in a family of [# IN FAMILY] earning up to [\$ STATE INCOME ELIGIBILITY LIMIT] a year or more may qualify for [MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM]. Eligibility is based on family size and income. Larger families with higher incomes may also be eligible for [LOW-COST OR FREE] health care coverage. [MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM] is designed to provide medical coverage similar to private health insurance programs.
- ✓ Children enrolled in [MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM] will receive coverage for [TYPES OF BENEFITS, ESPECIALLY THINGS LIKE REGULAR CHECK-UPS, PRESCRIPTIONS, HOSPITALIZATION, IMMUNIZATIONS AND VISION CARE].
- ✓ With this nationwide campaign, we hope to reach families who are eligible but don’t realize it. It’s hard enough on families when a child is sick. Parents don’t need the added worry of not being able to afford the medical bills that follow.
- ✓ To find out if their uninsured children are eligible for [MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM], families can call toll-free [STATE NUMBER] or 1(877) KIDS-NOW.

Mail-In PSA Tracking Card

Create this self-addressed, mail-in tracking card in postcard size (6 x 4.25”).

[MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM] Public Service Announcement Reply Card

Media Organization _____

Contact Name _____

Will you [air/print] the [MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM] PSA? YES NO

If yes, when and how often? _____

If not, why? _____

If you have any questions about these PSAs or [MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM], please call [COALITION PHONE NUMBER].

Thank you for your assistance!

[Return address: COALITION ADDRESS]

[add postage here]

[COALITION ADDRESS]

Frequently Asked Questions for Spokepersons

(Not for release to press.)

1. What is *Covering Kids & Families*?

In 2002, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) launched *Covering Kids & Families*, a \$55 million national initiative that offers grants to statewide coalitions to increase the number of children and adults who benefit from federal and state health care coverage programs. *Covering Kids & Families* builds on the work of *Covering Kids*, another RWJF national program active from 1997 to 2003. Working with broad statewide and local coalitions, *Covering Kids & Families* facilitates efforts to: 1) conduct and coordinate outreach programs; 2) simplify enrollment and renewal processes; and 3) coordinate existing coverage programs.

2. Why is it important that children have health insurance?

Health care coverage helps keep children healthy, and healthy children are better prepared to learn. According to the Urban Institute's analysis of the National Health Interview Survey, nearly half of all uninsured children (48%) have not had a well-child visit in the past year. Illnesses that are left untreated and result in missed days of school can lead to poor performance in the classroom. That's why it is so important that we enroll the millions of children who are needlessly going without health insurance into available low-cost or free health care coverage programs. Parents can call 1(877) KIDS-NOW to find out if they are eligible.

3. What is the most a family can earn in order to be eligible for these programs?

Eligibility varies by state. Here in [STATE], a family of four can earn up to [\$XX,XXX] a year. Since eligibility does vary by state and family size, it is important for all families to call 1(877) KIDS-NOW to learn if their children are in fact eligible for low-cost or free health care coverage.

4. Are adults eligible for coverage through Medicaid or SCHIP?

In our state, adults earning [\$XX,XXX] or more per year may be eligible for [MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM]. Eligibility is based on several factors, including family size and income.

5. If SCHIP began in 1997 and Medicaid has been with us for more than 35 years, why are there still millions of eligible children who are not enrolled in either program?

Over the past five years, we have made tremendous gains enrolling eligible children in Medicaid and SCHIP. According to the Urban Institute's National Survey of America's Families, an additional 4.8 million children were enrolled in Medicaid or SCHIP from 1999 to 2002. We need to reach the parents of the millions of children who are eligible for these programs but may not be aware of their availability.

6. What other ways is [STATE/CITY/COUNTY] educating the public about available health care coverage for families?

A sampling of [STATE/CITY/COUNTY] outreach activities includes:

- [XXX]
- [XXX]

However, we still have a lot of work to do to reach the [# OF UNINSURED CHILDREN] uninsured children who could be eligible in our state. That's why *Covering Kids & Families* is aimed at informing families that their children may qualify.

7. What role does the stigma of being enrolled in a public health program play in the decision of parents of uninsured children not to sign up for Medicaid or SCHIP?

Research shows that stigma is not the primary deterrent to enrollment in Medicaid and SCHIP. The primary reason why most working parents do not enroll their children is because they do not realize their children are eligible. This is why we are launching the annual *Covering Kids & Families* Back-to-School Campaign.

8. Are children of immigrant families that meet the income requirements eligible?

All children who are citizens of the United States are eligible, even if their parents are immigrants and not citizens. All documented immigrant children who entered the country before August 22, 1996 may be eligible for Medicaid or SCHIP. For those children who entered the country after August 22, 1996, eligibility for health care coverage programs varies by state.

9. Do you support any particular proposal on expanding health coverage to all of the uninsured?

Neither the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation nor *Covering Kids & Families* take a specific policy position on how to solve the problem of the uninsured, and we never endorse legislation. However, we believe solving this problem needs to be the nation's highest health priority. The Foundation sponsored *Cover the Uninsured Week* the past four years to urge the nation to cover all uninsured Americans.

10. By getting parents to enroll more children, aren't you pushing up against tight state budgets, placing your outreach efforts at odds with the fiscal reality in some states?

Covering Kids & Families works within current state guidelines to get uninsured kids enrolled in Medicaid and SCHIP, and we work closely with state governments to coordinate our efforts. The fact is, there are millions of children who are needlessly going without health care coverage in the United States, but we can do something about it.

11. Despite the economic turnaround, many states still have serious fiscal problems, with Medicaid being a major contributing factor. Won't adding new children to Medicaid and SCHIP only make this problem more severe?

This poses a difficult challenge—how to balance the budget while maintaining Medicaid and SCHIP coverage. States need to make careful choices, but it is clear that Medicaid and SCHIP have made a tremendous difference in the lives of millions of America's families by providing health care coverage to children who would otherwise be uninsured.

12. I've heard that in some states, SCHIP enrollment has been capped. What does that mean? What is the *Covering Kids & Families* position on these caps? Do you have one here in [STATE]?

As a 501 (c) (3) *Covering Kids & Families* does not take a specific position on legislative issues. It is important to note that regardless of the enrollment status of SCHIP, children can still enroll in Medicaid. *Covering Kids & Families* works closely with state governments to coordinate outreach efforts that are suitable for each state.

State Press Fact Sheet

[AT LEAST/MORE THAN NUMBER ELIGIBLE CHILDREN] in [STATE] children are eligible for [LOW-COST OR FREE] health care coverage!

[STATE]’s working families with annual incomes of up to [INCOME LEVEL FOR YOUR STATE] or more may be eligible to receive health care coverage for their children through the [MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM NAME] program.

What is [MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM]?

[MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM] is a state/federal program that provides health care coverage for uninsured children in moderate to low-income working families.

Who is eligible for [MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM]?

- Children who live in families with annual incomes at or below [PERCENTAGE] of the federal poverty level ([INCOME LEVEL FOR YOUR STATE] for a family of four).
- [MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM] covers most children under age [MAXIMUM ELIGIBLE AGE PLUS ONE], including children with working parents.
- [MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM] pays for [LIST OF BENEFITS, E.G., REGULAR CHECKUPS AND PRESCRIPTIONS].

Children’s Health Care Coverage in [State]:

Estimated Number of Uninsured Children [0-18 years old]	Number of Children Enrolled in [State] (Title XXI) as of [DATE]	Number of Uninsured Children at or below [XX%] FPL (Potentially Eligible for Coverage)	Percentage of Uninsured, Eligible Children in [STATE]
[Number]	[Number]	[Number]	[Number]

- For more information on [MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM], visit the [MEDICAID/SCHIP PROGRAM] Web site at [PROGRAM’S WEB SITE ADDRESS].
- For more information on *Covering Kids & Families* in [STATE], contact [NAME], [TITLE], at [PHONE NUMBER].
- For more information on the *Covering Kids & Families* Initiative, contact the *Covering Kids & Families* Communications Team at (202) 338-7227 or visit www.coveringkidsandfamilies.org.

Note on Statistics for Uninsured Children: For current statistics on uninsured children, visit the *Covering Kids & Families* Web site at www.coveringkidsandfamilies.org. For state-specific statistics, you can download the State-by-State Comparison of Children’s Health Coverage chart in the *Covering Kids & Families* Back-to-School Campaign Action Kit at www.coveringkidsandfamilies.org or visit the Kaiser Family Foundation State Health Facts Web site at www.statehealthfacts.org. Remember to footnote and provide sources for all numbers and facts that are included in this document.

Support Available from the *Covering Kids & Families* Communications Team

This guide is one part of the *Covering Kids & Families* campaign to connect eligible, uninsured children to low-cost and free health care coverage programs. A wide array of communications materials are available to order or download on the *Covering Kids & Families* Web site at www.coveringkidsandfamilies.org, such as:

Covering Kids & Families Toolkits and Guides

- Back-to-School Campaign Action Kit
- Engaging the Business Community Toolkit
- Evaluating Communications and Outreach
- Guide to Placing Public Service Announcements
- Guide to Working with the Faith Community
- Interfaith Toolkit
- Meeting the Match: A Guide to Fundraising
- Message Strategy Toolkit
- Reaching American Indian and Alaska Native Families Toolkit
- Reaching Latino Families Toolkit
- Health and Enrollment Fair Planning Guide
- State Guides to Finding Health Insurance Coverage

Covering Kids & Families Outreach Materials

- Children's Health Coverage Bookmark
- Children's Health Coverage Flier
- Children's Health Coverage Lapel Sticker
- Children's Health Coverage Poster
- Online Photo Library

Covering Kids & Families Videos and Public Service Announcements

- Public Service Announcements (available in English and Spanish)
- Back-to-School 2005 Spanish Language Music Video
- Outreach Videos (available in English and Spanish)
- Accomplishments Video

Reports

- Communications Strategies for SCHIP and Medicaid Retention
- Reaching Uninsured Parents: Insights About Enrolling Uninsured, Low-Income Parents in Medicaid and SCHIP
- Addressing the Barriers to *Covering Kids & Families*: A Values-Based Strategic Framework Research Report
- Retention Literature Review: Retaining Eligible Children in SCHIP and Medicaid

For more information about this guide or for more tips on placing public service announcements, contact the *Covering Kids & Families* Communications Team by phone at (202) 338-7227 or via e-mail at coveringkidsandfamilies@gmb.com.



A National Program of
the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

covering kids[™]
& families