

Media Outreach 101: Getting Started

There are several steps you can take to help increase awareness of the treatment of non-valvular atrial fibrillation and use of the WATCHMAN FLX™ Left Atrial Appendage Closure Device at your facility. Below are some tips for contacting reporters who may be interested in writing about the hospital, patients and treatment options.

When to Reach Out to Reporters

- When your practice has news such as a new procedure or product you offer to patients
 - Reporters are often most interested in a story when you can put them in contact with local patients who can make the story come alive by providing interesting or unique perspectives. (*Please consult with your privacy team about obtaining patient consent before sharing the patient's name with a reporter.*)
- To build upon or piggy-back on national news or other trends receiving media coverage, such as the trend of transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR) as a minimally invasive option for those with severe aortic stenosis.
 - If a story is popular in the national news, local reporters are often looking to cover how the news affects people in the local area.

How to Identify the Right Reporters

- Target a list of media contacts at your local print and online newspapers, TV and radio stations and update it periodically.
 - Include such information as the reporter's beat (i.e., topics he/she typically covers). Medical, health and science editors/reporters and feature editors/reporters are typically most interested in healthcare stories.
 - If you cannot reach the editor or reporter, call the general number and ask for the assignment editor who will direct you to the best contact for the story angle.
- The best way to identify local reporters is to follow the news. Watch local TV, listen to the radio and read the local newspaper to identify the reporters who cover the kind of medical stories most relevant to your practice and your patients.
- Do online research. Nearly all newspapers, television and radio stations have a website with general contact information.
- Twitter can also be a great resource. Many journalists will either have an e-mail listed or a link to a website where their contact information can be found.

Tools You Can Use to Contact Reporters

- Press Release
 - Press releases can be sent to local media contacts or distributed via a news service, also known as a wire, to a wider list of reporters who review them to obtain story ideas.
 - To reach a specific reporter directly, the best way to distribute a press release is via email so you can reach the reporter as quickly as possible.
- Pitch Email
 - A pitch email is targeted to a specific media contact and offers news or a story idea tailored to the reporter's interests, media outlet and its audience.

Additional Tips

- Call the reporter within a day of sending the press release or pitch email to gauge their interest level.
- If you email information to a reporter, don't send an attachment unless the reporter has requested it.
- Be persistent, but polite. If a reporter declines your story, ask them if it's okay for you to stay in touch in case anything changes.
- Consider timing media outreach until after first patient is discharged, to ensure positive clinical outcomes.