

**Policy Memorandum No. 45**

**Subject:** Press Releases and Media Relations

**Departments Affected:** All

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**Original Release Date:** October 2009

**Revision Date:** October 2017

## **PRESS RELEASES AND MEDIA RELATIONS**

SWOG views promotion of its clinical trials and trial results as an important part of its public service mission. Studies, results, projects, or programs deemed of significant news value by the SWOG communications and public relations manager will be summarized in a press release and distributed to the media, posted to SWOG.org, and promoted on social media.

Any press release related to SWOG activities must be coordinated with SWOG'S communications and public relations manager. The communications and public relations manager will communicate with the investigator's home institution and with NCI and/or industry collaborators, as required, to ensure compliance with grant and/or contractual obligations for the public release of SWOG study findings or study information, as well as to ensure that the information presented is accurate and complete.

SWOG welcomes collaboration in media relations, and will work with OHSU Knight, The Hope Foundation, and other members of the National Clinical Trials Network when appropriate to jointly support our people and programs, and to ensure the widest possible audience for our news.

### **Determining News Value**

There are many ways to circulate SWOG news to members and the public, including the SWOG website and its social media channels. Press releases are reserved for the most significant news from the organization – practice-changing trial results, major conference presentations, significant awards and honors, the launch of important new programs, or the appointment of key personnel.

After conferring with the group chair, the SWOG communications and public relations manager decides whether a news item warrants a formal release. For trial results to be presented at conferences or published in journals, the communications and public relations manager works with the publications manager to determine whether to issue a release based on feedback from SWOG committee chairs. Committee chairs are requested to respond to the following:

*In making your assessment as it relates to possible promotional activities, please consider applicability of any of the following:*

- **Impact:** *The likelihood of changing medical practice in the diagnosis and treatment of cancer patients; and significantly influencing cancer research*
- **Novelty:** *Whether results break new ground in medicine, science, or public opinion*
- **Relevance:** *Whether results involve a timely or important topic in cancer research*

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- **Publication:** *Whether results will be published in a journal with a high impact factor, possibly accompanied by an editorial, and/or presented at a major meeting (e.g., especially as an oral or plenary presentation)*

If chairs respond in the affirmative to one or more of these news value benchmarks, the abstract will be considered for a press release.

**Information for Investigators**

SWOG receives the majority of its funding from the National Cancer Institute. As a condition of that federal funding, the NCI award number(s) and SWOG must be identified as the source of funding and/or data in any press release, web copy, or other promotional materials about a SWOG-managed trial

Additionally, in media interviews, investigators should use their SWOG titles, as well as their academic or professional titles, and remind reporters that SWOG is federally funded by NCI. Any press release related to SWOG activities must be coordinated with the group's communications and public relations manager, who will work with NCI to obtain the necessary approvals for the release.

Specifically, for studies for which SWOG is a prime sponsor,

- 1) When a study investigator's home institution wishes to issue a press release on the results of a SWOG study, that release *must* be coordinated with SWOG's communications and public relations manager. In most cases, a *single* press release – either a SWOG release or a joint release - will be developed to ensure accuracy and consistency of message. SWOG will work with the home institution's media officer(s) to collaborate on this release and promote it through social media and other channels. SWOG will distribute the joint release through appropriate channels. Other institutions may distribute the joint release through any additional channels as deemed appropriate.
- 2) Any press release that covers a SWOG study must make mention that SWOG is primarily funded by the NCI. Through the SWOG communications and public relations manager, the NCI reviews and approves all SWOG releases.
- 3) SWOG *must* be cited as the source of the study and data in all media and online interviews given by study investigators. In addition, an investigator's affiliation with SWOG must be cited.

SWOG investigators have an obligation under NCI grant guidelines to conform to the above directives. Failure to comply with these policies by individual investigators and/or their home institutions may result in a loss of funding.

**Speaking on Behalf of the Organization**

Only the SWOG group chair and/or the communications and public relations manager can serve as official spokespersons for the organization. All press queries for formal comment should be directed to one or both of them.