

**Policy Memorandum No. 45**

**Subject:** Press Releases and Media Relations

**Departments Affected:** All

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**Original Release Date:** October 2009

**Revision Date:** April 2019

## **PRESS RELEASES AND TRIAL PUBLICITY**

### **Our Philosophy**

SWOG Cancer Research Network 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, in consultation with committee chairs, will be summarized in a press release and distributed to the media, posted to SWOG.org, and promoted on social media. Our trials are, by and large, publicly funded and the results of those trials should be shared with the public.

SWOG welcomes collaboration in trial promotion, and will work with The Hope Foundation for Cancer Research, member groups in the National Clinical Trials Network and the NCI Community Oncology Research Program, pharmaceutical partners, and academic and community hospital partners when appropriate to jointly support our people and programs, and to ensure the widest possible audience for our news. We name partner organizations, and use our member's home institution titles, in our press releases and promotional materials. We tag partners in our social media posts. We share credit – and expect the same from our partners.

SWOG takes the lead in promotion its trials, and any research that receives primary funding under any of its federal grants. In nearly every case, a single press release – either a SWOG release or a joint release – will be written to ensure accuracy and consistency of message. SWOG will work with the home institution's media officer(s) to collaborate on this release and jointly promote it through social media and other channels. SWOG will distribute the joint release online and directly to reporters, unless it deems it appropriate for a partner to release the news through additional channels.

In certain cases, SWOG may choose to partner with another organization to produce a joint press release or otherwise collaboratively promote its research. Any press release, or online or print materials, including pitch notes to reporters and editors, related to SWOG research must be coordinated with and approved by SWOG's communications and public relations manager to ensure that the information about SWOG and its research is accurate and complete. The communications and public relations manager will communicate with the NCI and/or industry collaborators, as required, to ensure compliance with grant and/or contractual obligations.

SWOG receives the majority of its funding from the National Institutes of Health through the NCI. In addition, SWOG study chairs receive NCI funding for leading a SWOG trial. As a condition of that federal funding, the NCI award number(s) and SWOG Cancer Research Network must be cited in any press release, and NCI and SWOG should be credited in web copy, social media posts, or other promotional materials and SWOG funded research.

### **Determining News Value**

There are many ways to share SWOG news with members and the public, including SWOG.org 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 programs, or the appointment of key personnel.

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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 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*
- **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.

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

**Investigator Responsibilities**

For SWOG-funded studies:

- Investigators must use their SWOG titles, as well as their academic or professional titles, in all print, audio, or broadcast interviews and remind news outlets that SWOG is federally funded by NCI.
- 1) When a study investigator's home institution issues a SWOG-approved press release on the results of a SWOG study, that release *must* be approved by, and coordinated with, SWOG's communications and public relations manager.

SWOG investigators have an obligation under NCI grant guidelines to conform to the above directives. SWOG investigator are also obligated to follow this and all SWOG policies under certifications they sign as SWOG members. Failure to comply with these policies by individual investigators and/or their home institutions may result in a loss of funding.

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**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 requesting formal comment from SWOG should be directed to one or both of them.