

Suggestions for Local Involvement

The ResearchMeansHope.org campaign advertising will run from April 22 through May 31. Here are some suggested ways that your organization can complement and raise awareness of the campaign -- and the need for significant, annual increases in medical research funding -- in your local community.

Reach Out to Local Media

- **Put out your own press release.** In conjunction with the campaign's launch, issue a press release highlighting your organization's NIH-funded discoveries or new awards, the benefits that these projects are providing/will ultimately provide to patients and your local community, and the need for sustained, real growth in the NIH budget. Include a quote from your organization's CEO (or similar official), as well as a physician/researcher about the importance of medical research.
- **Don't forget digital media.** Make sure community news-related blogs and Web sites get the news, and make sure to reach out to those reporters/ bloggers as well as more traditional media.
- **Place an opinion editorial in your local newspaper during the campaign.** A template op-ed is provided that you can tailor. As you will see, we suggest that the op-ed be written from the perspective of a physician, patient, or an NIH-funded scientist, rather than an institutional official. These are the most effective messengers with the public according to our focus group research. Additional copy points for the op-ed may be found in the message map we have also provided.
- **Meet with your local editorial board.** Try to arrange a meeting with your local paper's editorial board. Instead of, or in addition to, including your organization's top official, consider bringing a team that includes a physician, a patient whose treatment is based on NIH-funded research (please be sure to obtain permission under HIPAA), as well as a physician-researcher to discuss the importance of NIH funding. The PowerPoint presentation and the message map may be helpful tools for this visit.

Motivate Internal Audiences

Grassroots support for the campaign begins with you. Use your existing communications vehicles to make sure that your employees/faculty/alumni/students/members know about the campaign and encourage them to let their Members of Congress know that they support significant, annual increases in medical research funding.

- **E-mail the ResearchMeansHope.org press release to your employees,** along with a cover note letting staff know that your organization is a partner in this effort. Encourage them to get involved in the campaign by helping to spread the word about the campaign to their families, friends, and colleagues...

- Send an e-mail action alert to your organization's grassroots networks, urging employees and members to send a message to Congress through ResearchMeansHope.org in support of significant, annual increases in federal funding for medical research.
- Display the **campaign widget** on your organization's Web site, as well as your company/organization intranet site. If you have an organizational presence on **Facebook** or **Twitter**, make sure you link to and regularly talk about ResearchMeansHope.org. Encourage your employees to post the widget on their Facebook and Twitter pages. Directions for linking to these tools can be found at http://www.researchmeanshope.org/spread_the_word.html. Encourage your employees/faculty/alumni/students/members to support the campaign by linking to it on **Facebook** or following on **Twitter** at <http://twitter.com/researchhope>.
- Turn the press release (the national release or your local one) into a **newsletter article**, internal **blog posting**, or create a page or a feature on your institution's **Web site** highlighting why your institution is involved with the coalition and the benefit of your involvement.
- Place campaign advertisements in your organization's alumni/member publications. For a copy of a press-ready advertisement please contact Sallyann Bergh at sbergh@researchmeanshope.org.
- **Talk it up** – Mention the campaign at your organization's meetings, staff briefings or other appropriate events.

Spread the Word in the Community

Your organization and its leaders may already be involved in community groups such as chambers of commerce, rotary clubs or groups supporting community health and wellness. Use these relationships to pursue opportunities such as:

- Briefing local community groups, such as local chambers of commerce, on the importance of NIH funding to your community's economic as well as physical and mental health. The PowerPoint presentation about NIH funding trends and the message maps will be helpful tools.
- Talking about the campaign and the need for sustained, real growth in NIH funding at an organization's meeting.
- Placing articles in a group's newsletter, a feature on a Web site or a posting on a blog.
- Encouraging an organization to link to the campaign via a Web site, **Facebook** or **Twitter**.
- Sending e-mail newsletters/blasts to your organization to encourage people to visit the Web site, link to the Facebook page or follow on Twitter.

General Tips

Make it personal. Whether you are talking to the media, your own members, or community groups, use personal stories whenever possible to give the coalition's efforts a "human face." Try to provide an individual story of a local person whose life has been saved or enhanced as a result of your NIH-funded research. Or highlight an individual researcher and what they are doing (with NIH help) that will help address pressing health issues in the community.

Tell us what you are doing. Be sure to keep the coalition updated on how you are reaching out in your community. As we all work together, we can assist and support each other to make sure the word gets out effectively. Send a quick email to sbergh@researchmeanshope.org to let us know how you are getting the word out about ResearchMeansHope in your community.