Media tips for staff

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| *Media relations are a vital part of any site communications plan before, during, and after a trial’s completion. Typically only a site’s principal investigator(s) (PI) or the designated spokesperson should speak to the media on behalf of the site. However, if you happen to be the person first contacted by a reporter, here are some tips to remember.* |

1. **Thank the reporter** for calling (or dropping by) and tell them you would be happy to set up an interview with your principal investigator or other designated site spokesperson to answer their questions.
2. **Ask the reporter for the following information:**
3. Their name and news organization.
4. What their story is about.
5. Why is this information important.
6. How are they planning to utilize or use that information.
7. Are they on a deadline and if so, when is the story due.
8. A phone number and time that would be convenient for the PI to return their call.
9. **Thank the reporter for calling** and promise a call back as soon as your PI or spokesperson is available.
10. **Contact your PI and give them the information**. Never transfer a reporter directly to the PI or spokesperson without first asking these questions and passing on the information. A story can always wait 10 minutes for you to take down the information and contact your PI.

*On rare occasions you may be contacted by a reporter who wants to speak with a CER or CAB Liaison. In that instance, here are some additional “do’s and don’ts”.*

* **Tell the reporter you are busy** but would like to call them back when you are free later that day. You should always clear interviews with your PI and give yourself time to prepare before speaking to a reporter.
* **Ask the reporter for the following information:**
1. Their name and news organization.
2. What their story is about.
3. Why is this information important.

4. How are they planning to utilize or use that information.

1. Are they on a deadline and if so, when is the story due.
2. A phone number and time that would be convenient for you to return their call.
* **Call reporter back within 24 hours (or sooner if on deadline).**
* **Only answer questions you are qualified to address. *Do not rush to respond to any questions, just take your time before answering any questions.*** Tell the reporter you will write down their question(s) if you cannot answer them, you will speak with your PI, and that you will call them back with the answer(s).
* **Always include one key message during the interview.** Answer the reporter’s questions but find ways of including key messages such as “You cannot get HIV from an HIV vaccine.”
* **Thank the reporter** at the end of the interview and offer to review their story before they file it if they think that would be helpful to them.