



PATH

Tips for engaging traditional and social media for advocacy on subcutaneous DMPA



How to use this tool: This tool presents general guidelines for leveraging traditional and social media to achieve your advocacy goals—including guidance on when this is appropriate, tips for how to do it, and examples of messages you can use. It is important to keep in mind that media approaches and social media use varies from country to country, and you should confirm the norms in your setting.

Traditional media

Whether newspapers, radio, television, or digital outlets, in many settings, the media are well-respected influencers of public debates. That is why media engagement can be an effective tool for advocacy. You can engage the media to inform policymakers and health decision-makers about the potential for new products, like the easy-to-use subcutaneous DMPA (DMPA-SC, or Sayana® Press*), to expand contraceptive access and increase choice. At the same time, the media can help you inform women about contraception and encourage them to speak out about the need for greater access to a broad range of quality methods.

When and why to engage the media

Engaging the media can be intimidating, but you do not need to fear it. At the same time, you should be smart. Before engaging the media you should be clear on what your goal is and what messages you want to communicate. You should be prepared to answer tough questions, and

*DMPA stands for depot medroxyprogesterone acetate. Sayana Press is a registered trademark of Pfizer Inc.

you should assess whether decision-makers would react positively or negatively to the issue being raised in such a public forum.

Just like any communications activity, you should always approach media engagement with a specific objective in mind. In general, we engage the media to:

- **Educate:** This could include raising awareness of a health problem, such as unmet need for contraception, or of the solution, such as the availability of new contraceptive options.
- **Motivate:** Often we use the media to call decision-makers to take action by drawing public attention to a problem that is within their control to address. This is most effective if you can outline both the problem and the solution and then make a specific ask to decision-makers to take action. An “ask,” for example, might relate to approving policies or mobilizing resources to expand access to contraception.
- **Gain visibility:** A third, complementary objective for engaging the media is to gain visibility of an organization or an individual. While not your primary goal, it can be an added benefit.

How to engage the media

There are a variety of ways to engage the media. Here are a few of the most common:

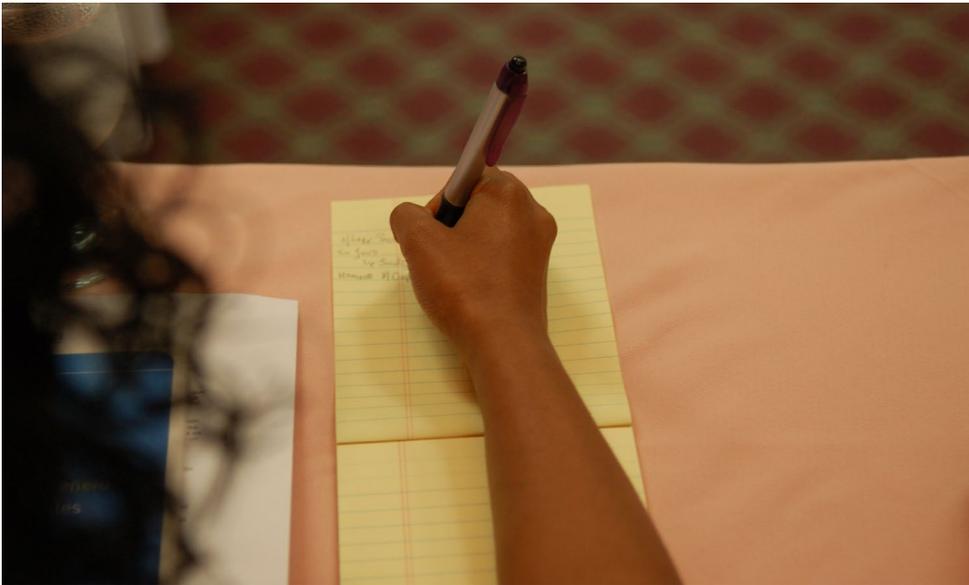
- **Announce news:** If you have something newsworthy to announce, such as a new report or a new government policy that you have supported, this can be a great opportunity to engage the media. In many settings this is done through a press release. A press release is a short, compelling news story that your organization prepares and sends, generally to a targeted but fairly wide group of media representatives with hopes of encouraging them to contact your organization for an interview and/or write about the topic based on the press release. Press releases typically follow a standard format that is respected by editors and journalists in your setting. Be sure your release is engaging and timely, has a catchy title, and is relevant to the media outlets you are targeting (and their audiences).
- **Invite media to attend an event:** Whether it is a report launch, a high-level dialogue, or a community rally, an event can be an effective way to engage media. Be sure to have a designated spokesperson to talk with media at the event. And you might want to have printed materials to provide background information.
- **Offer a written piece:** You can also write an article and invite a media outlet to publish it. Submitted articles generally include:
 - ▶ An opinion editorial (op-ed), which is a short article with a very specific point-of-view or call-to-action.
 - ▶ A letter to the editor, which is an even shorter piece, often written in response to an article the outlet has already published.

Be sure to research the guidelines of your target outlet before writing, and think carefully about the message and the messenger. Your chances of being published may increase if you have a high-profile author.

Examples of media engagement on DMPA-SC

- **Press release:** [Injectable contraceptive launched in Burkina Faso to expand choice and address unmet need](#)
- **Op-ed:** [Self-injection: A revolution in family planning](#)

PATH/Mike Wang



Tips for success

- **Remember your goal.** Members of the media will have their own objectives, but you should stick to yours. In interviews, always go back to the top two or three messages you want to communicate, and do not be tempted to get off-topic or comment on topics you are not sure about. Do not be afraid to say “I don’t know” or “I will have to get back to you on that.”
- **Make sure your messages are simple, relevant, and timely.** The media are generally not experts on your topic. Use simple language. Make sure the information you are sharing is timely—for example, an event that has just happened. Ensure it is relevant to the target outlet or reporter. Remember, stories about people are always more effective. Bring your issue to life by sharing a story of someone who has been impacted by the health issue in some way.
- **Be targeted.** Do not reach out blindly to every media outlet. Read, watch, or listen to the outlets and take note of what they are covering and which reporters generally cover which topics, so you can target the information most effectively.
- **Practice, practice, practice.** Speaking with the media requires practice. You should always take time to prepare your key messages or talking points and practice saying them. If you have time, role play with a colleague and have them ask you tough questions so you can practice responding. Even if you do not anticipate any tough questions, it will help you feel more confident in an interview. If you are being interviewed on radio or television, keep in mind the format as you practice.
- **Prepare for the unexpected.** You should always have guidelines in place for when things don’t go quite as planned. These guidelines, sometimes known as crisis communication plans, should cover how to prepare for, act on, and recover from a situation or event that threatens or impacts the project’s operations or perceptions of the project, such as rumors or false information being spread about a specific health intervention.

If you are successful in engaging with the media, please share it with us either by tweeting a link to [@PATHadvocacy](https://twitter.com/PATHadvocacy) or emailing us at advocacyandpolicy@path.org.



Helpful Hint:

To help you communicate effectively and accurately with the media, see “Messaging points on subcutaneous DMPA.”



Helpful Hint:

To help you address misinformation, see “Subcutaneous DMPA key facts: Answering questions and dispelling common myths about a new type of injectable contraception.”



PATH/Will Boase



PATH/Gabe Bienczycki



PATH/Will Boase

Social media

Social media, which includes all forms of communications on social media platforms like [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [WhatsApp](#), can be a powerful tool for advancing your advocacy efforts to increase contraceptive choice and access. It can enable you to reach a broad audience and amplify your messages quickly.

When and why to use social media

Social media is a great way to:

- **Share your key messages** with a wide number and diversity of target audiences.
- **Create a dynamic dialogue** and engaged community on issues related to contraception.
- **Reach decision-makers directly**, as many policymakers and government officials have social media accounts.

PATH/Gabe Bienczycki



How to use social media

- **Get online:** If your organization has social media accounts, use them to share the messages below. If your organization does not have a social media account, feel free to use your personal accounts (but make sure your settings are on “public” so your tweets can be widely seen and shared)!
- **Start tweeting/posting:** Use the sample messages below exactly as they are, or modify them to fit your needs and context. Messages can be used on platforms other than Twitter and Facebook—just be sure to adapt them as appropriate. You can also use social media to share other content you have created, such as blogs, media placements, photos, and videos.

Tips for success

- **Find your audience:** Talk to communication experts in your country to see what platforms are most commonly used. In some countries, Twitter might be the primary social media platform for online engagement. In other countries, a different platform, like Facebook, might be more popular.
- **Engage in conversation:** Don't just send out your own messages and content. Social media—especially Twitter—is an effective way to engage in conversation. Follow influencers and share their content. Tag them in your messages. Monitor relevant hashtags and use them when appropriate. Try to post something at least once per week.
- **Time your messages for impact:** As much as possible, tie your messages to major moments related to family planning or women's health for maximum visibility. This could include key relevant national moments—like commemoration days or conferences on family planning, reproductive health, or women's rights—or global moments.
- **Add a link:** Social media content is an effective way to drive content to other sites, such as your organization's web page, a blog, or a media article. Try to include a link whenever possible.
- **Include visuals:** Social media content is more effective if you add a photo. Use the social media images in the Advocacy Pack for Subcutaneous DMPA, or see our photo bank.



Major global moments

- International Women's Day on March 8th
- World Health Day on April 7th
- World Population Day on July 11th
- World Contraception Day on September 26th

Sample social media messages

Hashtags

#familyplanning
 #contraception
 #reprohealth
 #FP2020progress
 #FPVoices
 #DMPA-SC
 #SayanaPress

Tweets



Women who have more control over their fertility have greater opportunities for education, training, and employment #familyplanning #DMPA-SC

Decision-makers, donors, implementing orgs, & advocates must work together to ensure a wide mix of #familyplanning options including #DMPA-SC

#Contraceptives like #DMPA-SC can have great impact on the health & lives of women but only with political commitment and funding

#DMPA-SC can help us meet our #FP2020 commitments by increasing access to new users and women in rural areas

#DMPA-SC has many benefits for women: it's discreet, small and light, and easy-to-use #contraception

Q: Can most women use #DMPA-SC? A: YES. It is a safe and easy-to-use contraceptive option for most women.

#DMPA-SC can expand access to #familyplanning through community-based distribution and pharmacies

Self-injection puts the power of #contraception in women's hands to manage their lives & have greater opportunity #DMPA-SC #familyplanning

#Familyplanning providers & clients like #DMPA-SC "It was easy to use. I like the size, and also it has a good needle."- Young woman client

Facebook posts



Having a wide range of contraceptive options available to women is crucial. Women who are able to prevent unintended pregnancy have greater opportunities for education, training, and employment. A new type of injectable called subcutaneous DMPA is an important contraceptive choice for many women. It is safe, effective, small, and easy to use—especially for community health workers and for women to self-inject. *Learn more:* <http://sites.path.org/rh/recent-reproductive-health-projects/sayanapress/>.

We're excited about the difference that injectable contraception, including subcutaneous DMPA, can make in the health and lives of women and adolescent girls. Today is World Contraception Day, and we're committed to work with our many partners to ensure injectables, as part of a broad method mix, are widely accessible.