

Amplifying Your Message

ADVOCATING THROUGH
TRADITIONAL MEDIA
CHANNELS

MICHAEL HOLTZ, APR, MPRCA

APRIL 18, 2023





Who is this guy?

11-year cancer survivor

Passionate advocate for cancer patients, survivors, caregivers, family members.

NCCS CPAT

ACS CAN National Advocacy Team

Fight CRC 2023 National Ambassador

Public relations/media relations professional with 25+ years experience

Senior Communications Specialist for ORAU, a non-profit federal government contractor based in Oak Ridge, Tenn.

Objectives

1

Understand
what media
advocacy is

2

Understand
how media
advocacy
works

3

Understand
how to
amplify your
message

4

Learn tactics
and tricks to
put into
practice

Why are we talking about media advocacy?

So all advocates can be prepared to amplify their message and share their stories with the media in and around NCCS CPAT Hill Day.

What is media advocacy?

Media advocacy is the strategic use of mass media – television, radio, newspaper and their digital counterparts – to advance public health priorities.

Media advocacy allows groups and individuals to tell their story in their own words to promote social change.



Media advocacy in context

Media advocacy takes individual health crises and translates them into social issues.

Media advocacy allows groups to work constructively through the media to change the context in which the individual health crisis occurs.

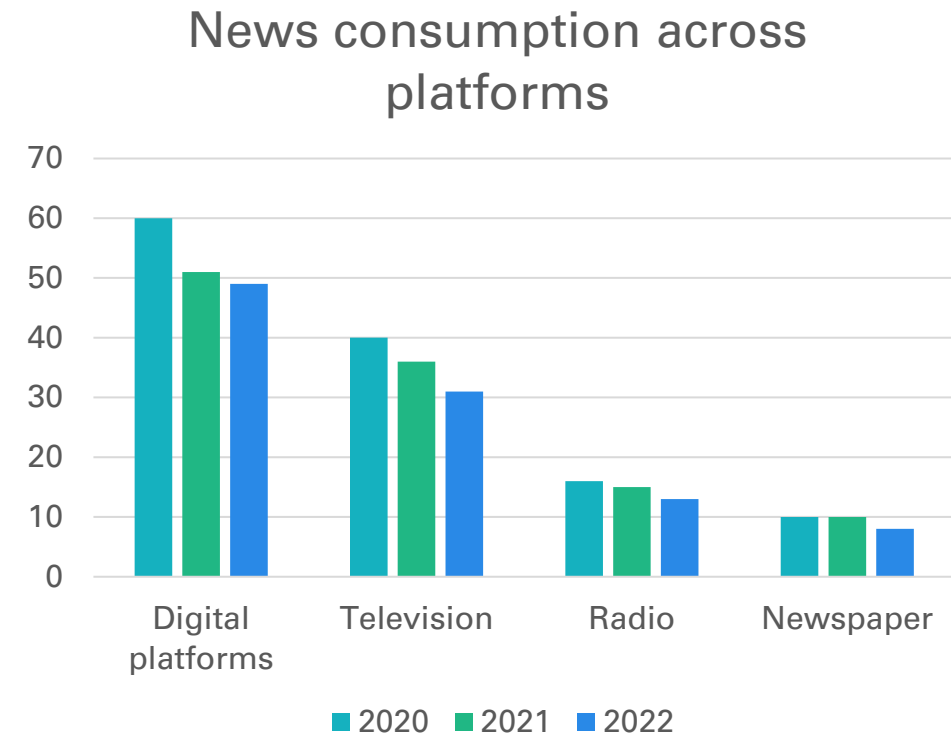


Do people still use mass media?

Americans get their news from a variety of sources, including digital platforms, social media, search and podcasts.

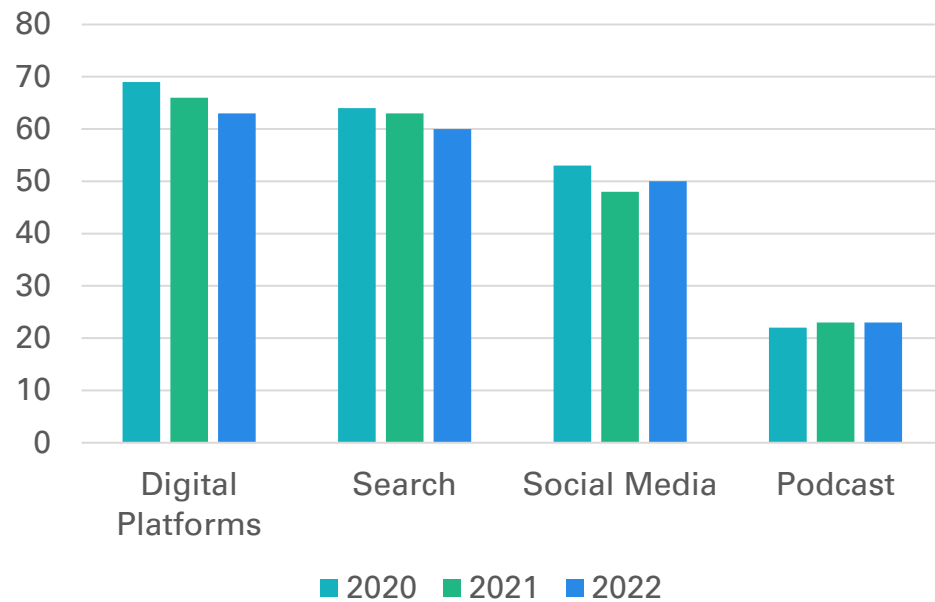
51% of American adults prefer to get their news from digital platforms.

Source: Pew Research Center, 2022



Mass media vs. social media

News consumption across digital platforms



Digital news platforms (websites and apps) outperform search, social media and podcasts in terms of where people sometimes or often get their news.

(Source: Pew Research Center, 2022)

Local advocates hoping to be 'at the table' for national health-care law

KRISTI L NELSON
USA TODAY NETWORK - TENNESSEE

Michael Holtz has been an advocate for cancer patients and survivors for more than 15 years – and one himself for more than five.

He's hoping those experiences will give weight to his words when he talks to Tennessee senators Lamar Alexander and Bob Corker this week in Washington, D.C.



Holtz

As state lead ambassador for the American Cancer Society's Cancer Action Network, which lobbies on behalf of cancer patients and the organizations that support them, Holtz is part of a wider day of lobbying by many of the country's major health organizations — the American Heart Association, the American Lung Association and the Cystic Fibrosis foundation among them — ahead of the senators' vote on the proposed health-care bill.

Holtz is set to meet with Alexander and Corker, or representatives from their staff, on Tuesday, he said. He's met with both several times before, both with the American Cancer Society — for whom he used to work — and

with this law is very important personally."

Holtz is five years out from a diagnosis of Stage 4 colorectal cancer, was treated with surgery, chemotherapy and multiple medical visits.

"If I don't have insurance and cancer recurs, that recurrence could be a death sentence," Holtz said. "We understand the current health-care needs to be improved, but some ideas under consideration in the proposed Senate bill are flawed, and the Cancer Action Network estimates millions of people could lose access to health coverage over the next 10 years."

At issue, especially, is the provision in the House bill that allows states to waive the rules that ensure they sell insurance to people with pre-existing conditions. Eliminating that would let insurers again underwrite policies — and set prices — based on a person's health status.

"I know the ACA wasn't perfect, but a good number of the 23 million people who could be left without insurance are cancer patients or survivors who are at high risk of their cancer coming back," Holtz said. "Hundreds if not thousands of people

Decision-makers pay attention to the media

From local elected officials to members of Congress, all monitor the media.

Staffers collect media clips and circulate to staff on a regular basis.

Like phone calls, emails and meetings with elected, media clips help decision-makers keep abreast of issues being talked about "back home."

What media advocacy can & cannot do

Media advocacy does

- Help you gain access to the media
- Allow you to frame the debate on your terms
- Help you get the attention of decision makers
- Help you raise public awareness of your issue

Media advocacy does not

- Make lawmakers vote your way
- Make the public understand or appreciate your issue

Planning your messaging strategy

- ❑ What's the problem, issue or policy you are highlighting
- ❑ Is there a solution? What is it?
- ❑ Who can make the solution possible? Whose support do you need to gain in order the make the solution happen?
- ❑ What do you need to do or say to get the attention of those who can make the solution happen?

Cancer survivor, advocate spreads awareness about colorectal cancer



Getting ready for NCCS CPAT Hill Day

What's the policy, issue or problem we are highlighting?

The Comprehensive Cancer Survivorship Act

What's the solution?

Legislation that focuses on coverage of cancer care planning and coordination; cancer survivor employment assistance grants; and adult cancer survivorship study.

Who can make the solution possible?

Every member of Congress

What do you need to do or say to get the attention of those who can make the solution possible?

Potentially, all the things we've talked about so far in your communities.

Planning to tell your story

- When advancing specific issues, policies or legislation, it's important to talk about why it matters to you personally,



"I am an 11-year rectal cancer survivor. I am grateful for the care and treatment I received, but I know there is still much to be learned about late and long-term effects. An adult cancer survivorship study would provide important data and insights to help survivors and their health care providers make informed decisions about their care. By supporting this study, we can help ensure that future survivors have access to the best possible care."



Tell your story quickly and concisely

- ❑ 30-SECOND SOUNDBITE (70 WORDS)
- ❑ 60-SECOND SOUNDBITE (140 WORDS)
- ❑ 3-MINUTE INTERVIEW (320 WORDS)

Storytelling worksheet

  <p>Comprehensive Cancer Survivorship Act Telling Your Story: A Step-by-Step Worksheet</p> <p>People have been telling stories since human beings first sat around campfires. We are hard-wired to take in new information through stories.</p> <p>Statistics reach people in the head. Stories hit people in the heart. Sharing your personal experience is a powerful way to establish a connection and drive your listener to action. Your audience (e.g. elected officials, donors, the media, other volunteers) may disagree with your facts or arguments, but they cannot argue with your unique personal experience.</p> <p>The steps below are based on research in effective storytelling, but you should tailor them to your own circumstances.</p> <p>1. Hi, I'm [name] from [place]. If meeting with a Congress Member, identify yourself as living in their district.</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <p>2. My life changed when [describe your diagnosis or a loved one's]. <i>Example:</i> I had to undergo multiple surgeries and rounds of chemotherapy, which took a physical and mental toll on me. Despite having a good relationship with my doctors, it was difficult to coordinate my care between them, leading to confusion and frustration. <i>Example:</i> As my father's primary caregiver when he was diagnosed with cancer, I had to navigate a complex health care system that I knew little about. I was constantly worried about whether I was making the right decisions for his care and felt like I had to advocate for him at every turn.</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>3. Fortunately, [describe the intervention you received]. <i>Example:</i> I had a supportive workplace that allowed me to take some off for treatment, but times many cancer survivors struggle with maintaining employment during and after treatment. The bill's employment assistance grants will help survivors and their families receive assistance necessary to continue working and remain financially stable. <i>Example:</i> I had a supportive network of friends and family who helped me through the process. They helped by driving me to appointments and taking care of my kids while I was in treatment. Without their help, I don't know how I would have managed.</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <p>4. It would have been easier if [describe the obstacle to quality care you faced, preferably one addressed by the Comprehensive Cancer Survivorship Act]. <i>Example:</i> My cancer care experience could have been better if I had access to cancer care planning and coordination services. Without these services, I struggled to coordinate my care between multiple doctors and after felt lost in the process. <i>Example:</i> It would have been easier if we had access to transportation and financial assistance. Instead, we had to rely on neighbors and friends to drive us to treatments. Sometimes, that meant we had to miss appointments and delay treatment because no one was available to help.</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <p>5. I am not alone. There are 18.1 million Americans just like me. <i>Example:</i> Today, I am a cancer survivor who is passionate about helping other survivors across the care and support they need. Others, just like me, would benefit from the bill's employment assistance grants. This targeted assistance can help survivors facing employment challenges remain employed and financially stable. <i>Example:</i> Today, I am a cancer survivor who is grateful for the care and treatment I received, but I know there is still much to be learned about late and long-term effects. An active cancer survivorship study would provide important data and insights to help survivors and their health care providers make informed decisions about their care. By supporting this study, we can help ensure that future survivors have access to the best possible care.</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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Examples from Veronika and Haley



Planning your messaging tactics

- ❑ News release
- ❑ Letter to the editor
- ❑ Op-ed
- ❑ Editorial board meeting
- ❑ Interviews (TV, radio, podcast)
- ❑ Media event / news conference



News release

- ❑ Powerful first paragraph
- ❑ Keep sentences and paragraphs short and use plain language
- ❑ Use quotes where possible – especially from you as an advocate. Again, why is this important to you
- ❑ Finish with a “tag” or boilerplate – “For more information about ... visit ... “
- ❑ End with ###, -30- or END

Example Advocate Press Release for CPAT 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
[DATE]

National Cancer Advocate Joins National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship's (NCCS) Cancer Advocacy Team (CPAT) for Hill Day to Advocate for Comprehensive Cancer Survivorship Act

[City, State] – [Advocate Name] was chosen by the National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship to participate in their annual Hill Day on June 22, 2023. During this important event, [Advocate Name] and other cancer survivors and advocates from across the country will come together to meet with members of Congress to share their lived experience with cancer and advocate for the Comprehensive Cancer Survivorship Act.

The Comprehensive Cancer Survivorship Act is an essential piece of legislation that focuses on the needs of cancer survivors and their families. This bi-partisan led legislation was introduced by Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL), Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), Mark DeSaulnier (D-CA) and Sen. John Boebinger (D-MN) and Ben Cardin (D-MD).

During the Hill Day event, advocates will discuss the importance of the following three priority legislation:

- **Coverage of cancer care planning and coordination services:** Creates a Medicare payment for cancer care planning and coordination services to help improve cancer care coordination of care and transition to primary care.
- **Cancer survivor employment assistance grants:** Establishes a grant program to provide education and targeted assistance, such as transportation, nutritional, and financial counseling.

Letter to the editor

- ❑ Simplest and easiest way to communicate your opinion to the general public and decision makers.
- ❑ NCCS will have a “Swiss Cheese” LTE for you to use after CPAT Hill Day
- ❑ Check your local newspaper for submission guidelines
 - ❑ Only submit to one publication
 - ❑ Word count is generally 250-300 words or less
 - ❑ The editorial page editor will likely verify that you sent the letter (even if NCCS wrote it), so you’ll be required to include phone number, email address, home address, etc.

Op-ed

- ❑ Another relatively simple way to get your opinion in front of the general public and decision-makers.
 - ❑ Obtain guidelines (newspaper website, or reach out to editorial page editor)
 - ❑ Ask the editorial page editor if they would be interested in publishing an op-ed on your topic
 - ❑ Word count is longer than an op-ed – 700-800 words, but your newspaper may have different guidelines.
 - ❑ Localize. Why is this important to you? Use key statistics from your state, region, county, etc.



Editorial board meetings

Call the editorial page editor and ask for a meeting, explaining your issue and why it's important.

Prepare for the meeting: come armed with key facts, strong stories, etc. Is your member of Congress a co-sponsor, adamantly opposed, etc?

Present your issue. Typically, an editorial board meeting will involve the editorial page editor, the news editor and a reporter, but who and how many people is at the discretion of your contact.

Follow up. Send a thank you note to everyone who attended. If you do not see an editorial in a few days, call the editorial page editor to ask if they need additional information.

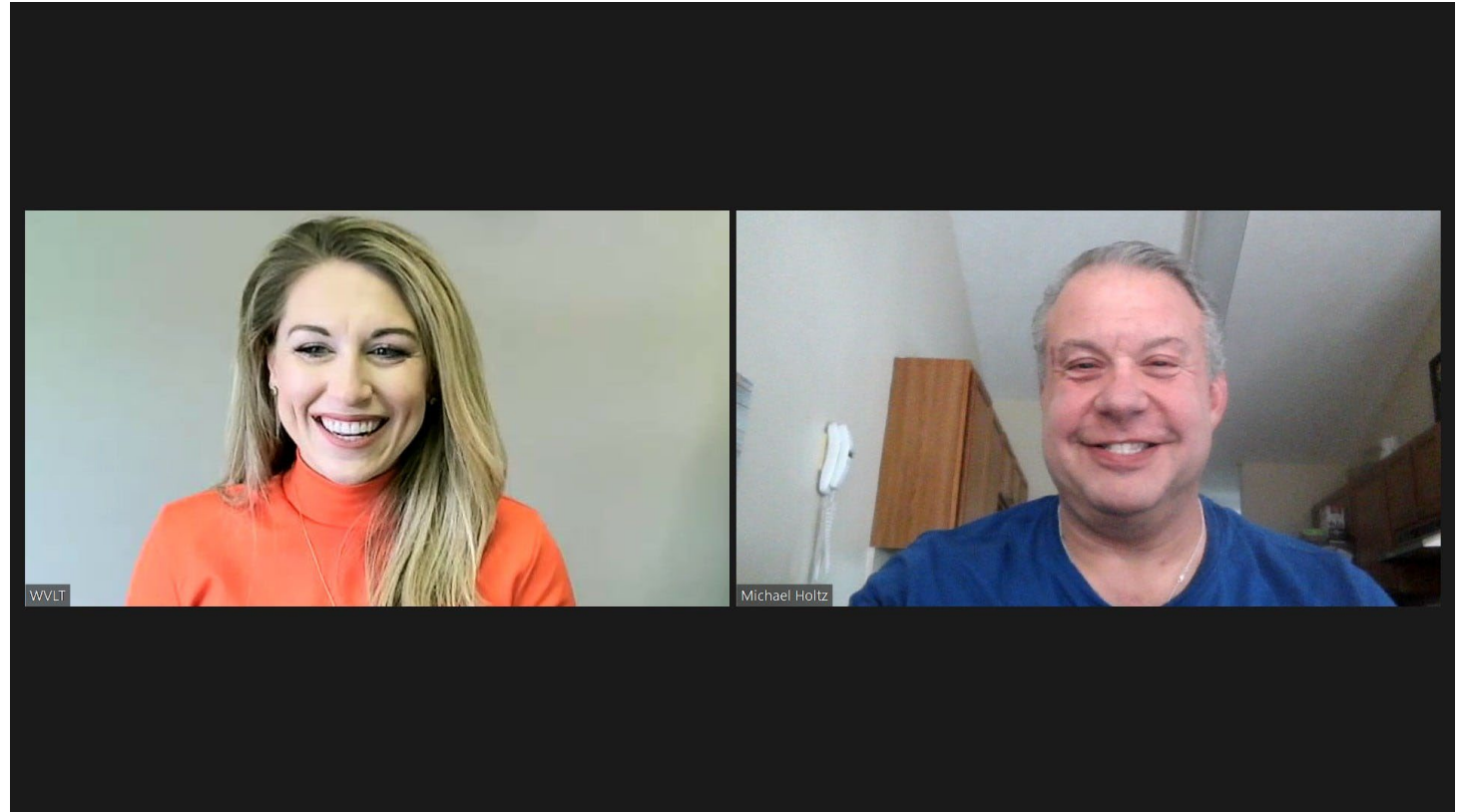
TV, radio, podcast interview

Arrange an appearance – call or email the TV station’s assignment editor, the producer of your favorite news or radio program, etc.

- ❑ TIP: most TV stations have a general news email box (i.e., newstips@wbir.com; newsroom@wate.com, etc.) that you can find on the station website. EVERYONE in the newsroom gets your email if you use this email box. Doesn’t guarantee you will get a response, but gives you something to follow up on.
- ❑ Be familiar with the show you want to appear on – hard news, lifestyle, etc. and prepare accordingly.
- ❑ Prepare for the interview – write out the most important things you want to get across. Feel free to hold your notes during the interview. No one expects you to memorize

More interview tips

- q Speak in a natural, audible tone
- q Avoid jargon and acronyms
- q State your message
- q Be concise
- q Practice beforehand (record yourself)
- q Avoid wearing solid black, white or anything with small patterns
- q Look at the interviewer
- q Sit up straight
- q Remember you are always “on”



Shoutout to Sharon Rivera-Sanchez!!

HEALTH > BUDDY CHECK 6



How this cancer survivor is helping others battling the disease



Through her non-profit, Sharon Rivera-Sanchez and her volunteers create care baskets for cancer patients going through treatment in Richmond. The hope is that with the baskets, the patients don't have to choose between paying for groceries or a co-pay.



Watch CBS 6 This Morning from 4:30 to 7 a.m.

ADVERTISEMENT



Media events

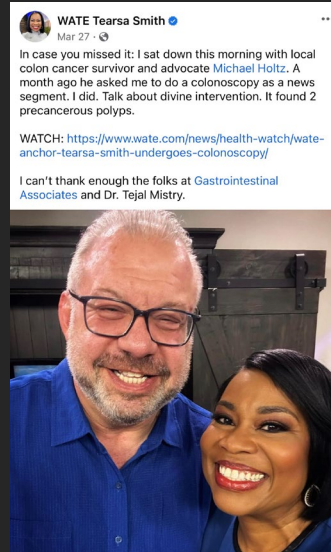
- q Prepare your agenda – who is speaking about what, when
- q Location should be convenient for media
- q Timing should be convenient for media (10 a.m. to 2 p.m. is best timeframe)
- q Send media advisory several days to a week in advance; send again the day before; call the morning of.
- q Have media materials (news release, fact sheet, etc.) ready for media who attend.
- q Allow time for interviews following prepared remarks.
- q Ask reporters if they need more information.
- q Send thank you notes afterward!!

Rules of the road for working with media

- ❑ Just because you're doing something, doesn't mean they have to care (or give you part of their news hole or put you on air).
- ❑ Be kind to members of the media, always.
- ❑ Members of the media are busy. They may tell you "no." That's okay. You'll get them next time.
- ❑ There's always a next time.

Leverage your media clips

- ❑ Share them on social media
- ❑ Tag the media outlet and reporter
- ❑ Tag lawmakers



Forthcoming documents for advocates

❑ Storytelling worksheet

- ❑ Designed to help you tell your story in the context of the Comprehensive Cancer Survivorship Act
- ❑ Use it to tell your story in short sound bites (30 seconds, 60 seconds, etc.)

❑ “Swiss Cheese” news release

- ❑ Fill in the blanks with your information and a quote you created on the Storytelling Worksheet

❑ “Swiss Cheese” letter to the editor

- ❑ Fill in the blanks
- ❑ Be sure to include the names of your lawmakers -- “I met with *(staff in the offices of)* Sens. Marsha Blackburn and Bill Hagerty and Rep. Tim Burchett.”

Your media plan for NCCS CPAT Hill Day

Before Hill Day

- Send the NCCS-prepared “Swiss Cheese” news release to your news outlets two weeks to 10 days before you leave for DC.
- Pitch the idea of an interview with media outlets about your role at Hill Day and why the Comprehensive Cancer Survivorship Act is important to you.
- Use the Storytelling Worksheet to prepare for interviews
- Be open to the idea of being interviewed before you go, while you’re in DC, or when you get back – all are acceptable and effective.

After Hill Day

- Send letter to the editor discussing your trip to DC and that you met with your lawmakers to discuss the Comprehensive Cancer Survivorship Act.

Thank you!

Michael Holtz, APR, MPRCA

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Sources

APHA Media Advocacy Manual

News for a Change: An Advocates Guide to Working with the Media; by Lawrence Wallack, Iris Diaz, Lori Dorfman, and Katie Woodruff; Sage Publications, Inc. 1999.

* The sources cited above are great but also very dated. Podcasts, digital outlets/apps, and the current state of play in the newspaper business did not exist when these publications were created.