

COVID-19 Vaccine Media Plan

A toolkit to get you started

Today, we are filled with hope as the first doses of COVID-19 vaccine are being administered in skilled nursing facilities around the nation. This is the first step on the road to recovery. This is the vaccine campaign of our lifetime and media is eager to cover the story, causing frequent media inquiries. If a reporter is interested in your facility, the next goal is to elevate the inquiry, identify the best response strategy and process, and respond in a timely manner. In an ideal world, the responsibility of managing media could be centralized, when possible, so facility management can stay focused on staff and resident safety. Like you, we've been faced with countless inquiries and we're sharing the toolkit and plan we implemented to navigate these times.

Phase One: Preparing for Media

- 1 – Designate** a person in your organization to serve as a central point of contact for receiving all inquiries. Or, secure a retainer with a reputable PR firm that has a deep knowledge of your organization and can serve as an expert within your organization and unemotional third party, and ensure opt in practices are in place.
- 2 – Designate** a spokesperson that will publicly respond to media inquiries if asked for an in-person interview. This could be your CEO to represent the company policies and practices or it could be your Clinical Director to speak to the infection control protocols.
- 3 – Create** a company fact sheet that provides an overview of your organization and service offerings. Then, pair this with general talking points about how you are managing the COVID-19 vaccine and the steps you are taking to keep staff and residents safe.
- 4 – Identify** your market media list for proactive outreach. If you choose to proactively approach media, be sure to evaluate the pros and cons and understand that positive press will still come with a reporting of all public statistics and facts.
- 5 – Create** an email alias to funnel media inquiries. All inquiries should be sent to this email and the person or team from step 1 should be the recipient(s) of the email. This takes the responsibility of managing and responding to inquiries off facility staff so they can focus on facility operations.
- 6 – Post** signage on facility exterior, directing media to email alias. Additionally, train staff who answer phones to redirect media inquiries to the designated email alias.

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Phase Two: Reacting to Media

1 – Uncover reason for the media inquiry and ask for the details of what they are working on and what their deadline is. Determine the best way to get the reporter the information they need in the timeline provided. That may include a statement, written answers to questions, or an interview.

2 – Research the reporter to understand how they've covered similar topics in the past to inform how they may approach this story. Reporters generally follow a style and you can gain insight into their approach by reading past articles.

3 – Respond directly, honestly, and timely. Reporters are often on a tight deadline and will want to hear from you immediately. Gather your prepared statement and fact sheet from phase one, focus on authenticity and compassion while avoiding defensiveness. Remember not to share anything that you haven't already shared with facility staff and responsible parties. You want facility staff to hear information and updates directly from you first.

4 – Monitor for media coverage. This can be done by routinely checking common media outlets and/or by using [Google Alerts](#).

Phase Three: Proactively Pitching Positive Media

1 – Create a media alert when you have a positive story.

2 – Share the media alert with the fact sheet or to the media list you created.

3 – Monitor for media coverage. See step 4 above.

4 – Utilize existing channels to share the story, including your website, social media channels, and email platforms.

If your company has a media policy, refer to that first, and use these steps as a guide to reinforce or enhance your policy.

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Sample Talking Points

In the event you are approached by media, it's important to be prepared with general talking points based on possible Q/A. These talking points have been prepared to answer common questions.

First of all, tell us about your involvement in the vaccine rollout?

- Consonus Healthcare is one of seven, non-retail pharmacies in the nation chosen by the CDC to distribute the vaccine to long-term care facilities.

How have you prepared for the rollout?

- Consonus has mobilized its team of industry leaders to safely store, transport and administer what could be the most important vaccine in history. We already service long-term facilities every day to distribute medications so we are uniquely positioned for the vaccine rollout.

Why is this important for your company and how does it feel to be helping in the fight against COVID?

- It really is an honor to be recognized by the CDC -- but most important, this is a pivotal moment in the long-term care facility community. Most of us can go to a retail pharmacy or even to our physicians. Residents can't. They rely on LTC pharmacies to bring them medication. This is an incredible opportunity to vaccinate residents and staff, quickly.

What are some of the challenges you've run into?

- Consent forms
- Logistics around storage and distribution
- Automating data exports
- Coordinating vaccine delivery per dosing schedules
- Getting allocations from states

What about the safety fears surrounding the vaccine?

- Our regulating bodies are the CDC and their Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, (ACIP) and the FDA. The FDA is the vetting agency and will-evaluate for the efficacy of the vaccine. The FDA's findings will also be reviewed by the Western State's Safety Review Workgroup.
- At this point we know that both the first and second round of the Pfizer vaccine has been shown to have 95% efficacy.

COVID-19 Vaccine Media Plan A Sample Press Release

If you choose the proactive media approach, you may want to prepare a press release. Below, is a sample press released prepared for Marquis Companies and Consonus Pharmacy. Use this as a guide for preparing your press release and see Consonus approved quotes for use.

“The Vaccine Campaign of Our Lifetime” Oregon’s Governor And The Oregon Health Care Association Partner With Consonus Pharmacy To Bring The First COVID-19 Vaccines To Seniors And Staff In Senior Care Facilities

Oregon’s Consonus Pharmacy is One of Only Seven Independent Pharmacies—Apart From Retail Giants Walgreens and CVC—to Make the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention List of “Approved and Trusted” Providers of the Vaccine; Governor Brown is One of the First Governors to Adopt CDC Recommendations to Include Seniors in Phase 1

PORTLAND, Ore. (December 14, 2020) — In what Oregon Governor Kate Brown calls “the vaccine campaign of our lifetime,” seniors and their frontline care givers in long-term care facilities will be the first to receive the life-saving COVID-19 Vaccine in Oregon, beginning the week of December 21.

Oregon’s Consonus Pharmacy, A CDC “Trusted and Approved Provider” of COVID-19 Vaccine

The CDC added [Consonus Pharmacy](#) to its short list of “[trusted and approved providers](#)” after learning about the Oregon Company’s expertise in geriatric pharmacy, record of flawlessly delivering high-touch pharmaceutical services, and its ability to operate with the logistical precision that’s critical for safe, effective distribution. Consonus Pharmacy will first launch the FDA emergency approved Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine to seniors and staff at Consonus Pharmacy customers, including [Marquis](#) facilities in Oregon. Marquis, a fifth generation Company operates 23 senior care facilities across the country, is the largest provider of senior care facilities in Oregon, and owns Consonus Pharmacy.

“We applaud Oregon Governor Kate Brown for being the first Governor to officially recognize the urgent need to prioritize our state’s seniors and their health care workers,” says [Phil Fogg](#), president and CEO of Marquis Companies and the vice-chair of the American Health Care Association. “Governor Brown’s decision allows Marquis Companies and Consonus Pharmacy to combine and mobilize our 30 years of expertise caring for seniors, delivering high touch pharmaceutical services and our ability to operate with critical precision needed to provide these life-saving vaccinations. We’re humbled to be part of this historic campaign of delivering what we believe is one of the greatest scientific achievements in history.”

Oregon’s Governor calls it the “light at the end of the tunnel.”

“We have an excellent vaccine distribution program and we’re working with our partners, including pharmacies, hospitals and our health care providers across the state,” said Governor Kate Brown in a recent [COVID-19 briefing](#). “The vaccine won’t help us from the pandemic, the vaccinations will. I’m hopeful we can celebrate next year’s holidays with our families and friends.”

Forecast for Early Spring

“We’re hopeful that most of the long term care workforce and residents will be vaccinated by March 1,” says Rosie Ward, senior vice-president of strategy with the Oregon Health Care Association, which advocates for Oregon seniors. “We want to applaud Consonus Pharmacy for their quick and professional work with distribution efforts in this monumental and life-saving campaign.”

Marquis Companies & Consonus Pharmacy’s Rollout

After nine months of coordinating with state and federal health agencies, Consonus Pharmacy teams in geriatric pharmacy and on-site care, software technology, data analytics, and logistical operations are ready to roll. They are responsible for: safely storing the COVID-19 vaccines in Consonus Pharmacy’s ultra-cold storage facilities; reporting required vaccination data to local, state, territorial and federal jurisdictions within 72 hours of administering each dose; and following all Centers for Medicare and Medicaid COVID- 19 operational standards. To administer the required two doses, Consonus has coordinated three, on-site clinic visits with each federally matched customer in December and January.

“We want to stress the vaccinations are just the first step in our nation’s road to recovery,” says Fogg. “All of our facilities will continue stringent infection prevention protocols. We can’t wait for the day we can reunite residents with their loved ones and the COVID-19 vaccine is going to make that happen much sooner.”

How Long Term Care Pharmacies (LTCP) Differ From Retail and Hospital Pharmacies

Long term care pharmacies go far beyond just dispensing medications. Consonus Pharmacy, for instance, has a layered system of safeguards in place to validate each medication and monitor each recipient’s medication profiles. Specially trained [Board Certified Geriatric Pharmacists](#) continually review for possible drug interactions, appropriate dosing for the senior population and can recommend changes to regimens, and Nurse Consultants develop and monitor [medication management systems](#).

Consonus Pharmacy has existing, trusted relationships inside the facilities, is quick to adapt to changing government rules, has an already established infrastructure for distribution, and access to health records and workflows to monitor and respond to any possible adverse event.

About Consonus Pharmacy Consonus Pharmacy is part of [Consonus Healthcare](#), a fifth generation Company that for 30 years has provided rehab, pharmacy and consulting services designed specifically for the long term care industry. Consonus Pharmacies provides services to 50,000 seniors in 600 skilled nursing and senior living communities, in eight states. The Company is led by fifth generation [Marquis](#) which owns and operates 23 post-acute and assisted living services and an I-SNP, [AgeRight Care Management Services](#).

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COVID-19 Vaccine Media Plan Consonus Pharmacy Approved Quotes

The following quotes are approved to share with media.

*If you are approached by media and choose to use these quotes, please contact
Angie Latta, VP of Marketing for Consonus Healthcare at alatta@consonushealth.com*

“We applaud Oregon Governor Kate Brown for being the first Governor to officially recognize the urgent need to prioritize our state’s seniors and their health care workers.”

- Phil Fogg, CEO of Consonus Healthcare

“Governor Brown’s decision allows Consonus Pharmacy to combine and mobilize 30 years of expertise caring for seniors, delivering high touch pharmaceutical services and our ability to operate with critical precision needed to provide these life-saving vaccinations. We’re humbled to be part of this historic campaign of delivering what we believe is one of the greatest scientific achievements in history.”

- Phil Fogg, CEO of Consonus Healthcare

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- Phil Fogg, CEO of Consonus Healthcare

“Consonus is honored to be part of this life-saving mission. We’ve made additional investments in cold storage facilities, transportation and technology, and our CEO is committed to providing any additional resources needed. This is our world—partnering with the people who live and work at our nation’s long term care facilities.”

- Neil Marshall, President of Consonus Pharmacy

“Along with Consonus Pharmacy’s expertise in storing, tracking, handling and dispensing complex drugs and vaccines, we have what’s most important—the trusted relationships earned only after years of advocating for the senior care community. Safely and effectively administering the COVID 19 Vaccine is just a natural extension of what we do and spotlights the importance of facilities partnering with trusted advisors and pharmacists.”

- Neil Marshall, President of Consonus Pharmacy