

## **Working with the Media**

This section provides guidance on how to pitch story ideas involving P.A.D. to the media, including strategies for securing coverage/promotion around your P.A.D.-related activities and events. Other important factors and considerations discussed in this section include the suggested timelines for reaching different media; the importance of meeting deadlines; and tips for how to deliver thorough, yet concise, information to the media.

### **Included in this Chapter**

- Tips for Working with the Media
- Media Outreach Checklist and Timeline
- Sample Pitch Letter and Script
- Customizable Press Release
- Customizable Media Alert
- Customizable Newsletter Articles
- Customizable Radio Script
- Customizable Eblasts, Facebook Posts and Twitter Tweets
- Campaign Backgrounder
- Talking Points for Media Interviews

## **General Tips for Working with the Media**

Media outreach, or media relations, is an ongoing process. Building a relationship with the media can be an important component of your hospital's community outreach efforts. The media can help spread your message effectively and widely. When you work with the media, keep in mind that their job is to draw readers, viewers, or listeners to their outlet by running relevant, compelling, and localized stories. Following are some basic considerations for building effective relationships with the media:

- **Consider lead times.** Each media outlet will likely have its own preference for how far in advance it would like to receive information for a potential story. For example, most monthly magazines prefer to receive materials for consideration 3 to 5 months in advance, newsletters often require receipt of information 4 to 6 weeks before printing, and daily newspapers may only need 1 week to develop and run a story. By securing editorial calendars for print publications or by contacting editors/producers at individual outlets you can get a good sense of how early they need to receive information.
- **Know the reporter.** Reporters typically have a "beat" or issue they cover. For example, your local newspaper may have a reporter who covers issues related to Medicare, or retirement, or women's health. Consider monitoring the coverage of reporters who seem to consistently cover issues that could connect to P.A.D. Knowing a reporter's work before you contact them will help you gauge their interest in P.A.D. and tailor your conversations to their interests and areas of expertise. Being able to reference or cite recent coverage back to the reporter who wrote it can be a sign to a journalist that you take their work seriously, making the connection more meaningful.
- **Return calls or e-mails promptly.** If a reporter or editor shows interest in your pitch by calling you back or responding to your e-mail, aim to follow up with them as quickly as possible, particularly if they have an impending deadline. Demonstrating your responsiveness is an effective way to build your credibility and to position yourself as a reliable source, making reporters more likely to consider you as a source for future related stories.
- **Be sensitive to deadlines.** Reporters usually work under tight deadlines and often need information quickly. For example, it's ideal to begin your outreach to newspaper reporters early in the morning between 8 a.m. and 11 a.m. You're more likely to get voice mail if you try and pitch a reporter after 12 p.m., when they're working to meet their daily deadlines. Be proactive about asking reporters for their deadlines so you're aware of them in the future.
- **Be accommodating but do not over promise.** Reporters who express interest in your story may want to interview more than one expert or may ask for additional information about P.A.D. Try to be as accommodating as you can, but also try and manage their expectations. Before you begin reaching out to the media, you should identify your local spokespeople, including health care providers, patients, and community partners, as well as their willingness to talk to the media about P.A.D.

## How to Pitch a Story

A media pitch is a suggested news story idea or a proposed article you provide to a reporter or editor. Pitches can be made via telephone, or in written correspondence. Each reporter or editor will likely have his or her own preference for how she or he wants to be contacted, and you can find out by simply asking.

The goal of your pitch is to engage a reporter and give them the tools and resources to develop a compelling story about P.A.D. Included in this chapter are a sample pitch letter and script that can be tailored to fit the different media outlets in your community and customized to suit your organization's events and activities. Below are tips to consider when you call a reporter:

- **Create and practice your pitch.** Before picking up the phone, practice verbalizing your talking points. Make sure your pitch answers: Who? What? Where? When? Why? and How?
- **If at first you don't succeed, try again.** When targeting a particular publication, radio station, or TV affiliate, consider identifying several reporters or editors at that same outlet who might be interested in your story. For example, if you find that the health reporter at your local newspaper is unlikely to cover your story, try reaching out to the lifestyle reporter with a slightly different angle, or the columnist who covers retirement issues. There are usually multiple angles you can put on any issue. In other words, before you start picking up the phone, identify how many ways you can tell the story of P.A.D. and who it impacts.
- **Make it relevant.** Make sure the story idea you are proposing is suitable for the reporter you are calling. For example, if you're trying to engage a reporter who typically covers the baby boomer generation in your community, consider positioning P.A.D. as a disease that anyone over the age of 50 needs to know about. Make it locally relevant by finding local patients who identify with the baby boomer generation who can talk about how P.A.D. affected their lifestyle and overall health. If you can, localize it even further by providing statistics on the number of people in your community who are likely to be diagnosed with P.A.D.
- **Be concise and respect deadlines.** You should start your call by asking, "Is this a good time to talk?" Ask the reporter about his or her deadline or when their editorial meetings take place. This will help inform your pitches in the future. Reporters may not have time to listen to or read long-winded pitches if they are on deadline.
- **Be clear, concise, and convincing.** If you need to leave a message, speak clearly and be sure to provide your contact information early in the message, because reporters may not choose to or have time to listen to your entire message. Avoid providing too many details or talking points in a voice message. This can also be unappealing to a reporter, who may determine they are not interested based on your message. Aim to tease a reporter with language that may pique their interest. For instance, "I want to talk to you about a widely unknown disease that raises your risk of heart attack and stroke."
- **Follow-up.** Always provide a reporter with follow-up communication. For example, if you had a conversation with a reporter who seemed interested, you should aim to follow-up that same day with an e-mail containing supporting, value-added information. This can help build your relationship and credibility with the media.

## Tips for Getting Media Coverage for Your Event

For September screening activities, your pitch can focus on encouraging the media to cover your event.

- **Invite a local media outlet to cosponsor the event.** This can give the outlet an opportunity to be part of a public service event and may even get your organization some free publicity through the outlet's promotion of their involvement prior to the event.
- **Invite reporters to participate in the event.** This gives them an opportunity to be part of the event and experience it, which increases the likelihood that they will do a media story about it. Consider contacting a local news anchor to be a team captain or an honorary emcee.
- **Paint a visual picture.** If you are talking to a television producer, try to highlight aspects of your event that would make for good television. Give the editor an idea of the visual. Without an appealing visual or footage (b-roll), it is unlikely a television station will send a camera crew to cover your event. If a station is unable to commit a crew to your event right away, don't give up. Follow-up with the station the day before and the morning of your event. If there are no competing stories that day, the station may send a crew to cover your event.
- **Follow-up after the event.** After your event, write a summary report and distribute it to the reporters you invited. Include key numbers (e.g., number of attendees, number of people screened) and highlight any unique event features. If there are photographs available from the event, include one or more of them with a caption including names and titles of those in the photograph that really illustrates the success of the event.
- **Let them know how they helped.** If a local reporter covered or participated in your event, and their participation led to success (such as increased number of attendees at future events), let them know. They may be interested in doing a follow-up story.

## Media outreach checklist and timeline

The key to media outreach success is to plan ahead and be flexible. Generally, the more time you have to pitch your story and build a relationship with a reporter, the better. However, that may not always be possible. The following is a sample checklist and timeline for alerting the media about your event or activity:

- **Four weeks before the event**
  - Send a pitch letter or e-mail to print and broadcast journalists to invite them to participate in the event.
- **Three weeks before the event**
  - Send a pitch letter or e-mail to reporters, editors, and producers encouraging them to cover or attend your event.
- **One week before the event**
  - Send a media advisory to local television stations and newspapers via email or fax.
  - Start calling reporters once the media advisory has been distributed.
  - Based on the nature of your event, contact television producers to discuss the best times for shooting.
- **Day before the event**
  - Resend the media advisory and continue to follow-up with reporters.
  - Check in with reporters who expressed reporters to schedule onsite interviews.
  - Follow-up with television stations to assess camera crew availability.
- **Day of the event**
  - **Pre-Event**
    - Distribute press release announcing the event to all media outlets. Bring copies to have on hand at the event and to provide to any attending reporters.
    - Continue to make follow-up calls the morning of your event.
    - Follow-up with television stations again to determine if any will be sending camera crews.
  - **At the Event**
    - Have all members of the media sign in with their contact information for tracking and follow-up purposes.
    - Introduce yourself to all media who attend the event. Provide them with your contact information and introduce them to local physician experts or patients attending the event.
  - **Following the event**
    - Follow-up with members of the media who attended your event to make sure they received all of the information they need to complete their story.
    - Monitor the media outlets that attended your event for media coverage.

## Sample Pitch Letter and Script

In this section, a sample pitch letter and pitch script are included. These are guidelines to help you refine your media outreach efforts. Wherever possible, try to localize and customize these materials to best suit the media outlets you are targeting and the event/information you are promoting.

### Sample Pitch Letter

**[Print on Organization letterhead]**

Dear [insert name of reporter],

**In the United States, approximately nine million Americans suffer from peripheral arterial disease (P.A.D.)—hardening of the arteries (also known as “atherosclerosis”) in the limbs, often the legs. One in 20 Americans over the age of 50 has P.A.D., and many of those with P.A.D. do not experience any symptoms. P.A.D. can reduce mobility, increase the risk for heart attack and stroke, and be fatal if left untreated.**

This is an important public health issue for your readers—adults over 50 are especially at risk for P.A.D. and they may not know about it. In our area, **XX percent [If possible, insert statistic about the over age 50 population in your area.]** of adults are over the age of 50.

September is P.A.D. Awareness Month, and (Hospital/Health System) is working to inform Americans about the risk factors, warning signs and consequences of P.A.D. To help raise awareness about P.A.D. in our community, **[insert Organization name]** is planning **[Describe activity or event here. Include when, where, and why.]**

P.A.D. is caused by the same risk factors that lead to heart disease. Those at risk include anyone over the age of 50, especially African Americans; those who smoke or have smoked; and those who have diabetes, high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol or a personal or family history of vascular disease, heart attack, or stroke. P.A.D. is a common and treatable disease. However, it is still largely unknown, often unrecognized, and regarded by many as an inevitable consequence of aging. With your help, we can change that.

We urge you to embrace this important issue and help us raise awareness about P.A.D. by covering this topic in your publication.

If you would like to speak to a local physician who can provide you with additional clinical information about P.A.D., or interview patients with P.A.D. from our community, please feel free to call me at **[insert Organization contact]**. Enclosed are additional resources on PAD, including information about detection, treatment, and lowering your risk for P.A.D. and background on our nationwide campaign.

**[Insert Organization boilerplate.]**

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

## **Sample Pitch Script**

I'm calling to talk to you about a disease that is widely unknown, but affects one in 20 Americans over the age of 50. It's peripheral arterial disease, or P-A-D. It develops when arteries in the legs become clogged with plaque. P.A.D. raises the risk of heart attack, stroke, and can be fatal if left untreated.

This is an important public health issue for your readers and we would like you to consider covering this story. Though P.A.D. is common, it is also a preventable and treatable disease. However, because P.A.D. often does not have symptoms, many people do not realize they have it. People who do experience symptoms often disregard their symptoms and believe them to be a natural part of growing older.

Adults over 50 are especially at risk for P.A.D. In our area, **XX percent [If possible, insert statistic about the over 50 population in your area.]** of adults are over the age of 50.

To help raise awareness about P.A.D. in our community, **[insert Organization name]** is planning **[Describe activity or event here. Include when, where, and why.]**. If you are interested in attending, there will be local physicians who can talk about risk reduction and treatment options. We can also arrange interviews with P.A.D. patients who would be happy to share their personal stories. We can set up some interviews for you, if you'd like.

Can I e-mail/fax you some additional information about P.A.D.?

Thank you for your time.

## Customizable Press Release

**[Print on Organization letterhead]**

**For Immediate Release**

|        |          |                |
|--------|----------|----------------|
| (Date) | Contact: | (Name)         |
|        |          | (Organization) |
|        |          | (Telephone)    |
|        |          | (Email)        |

**(Hospital/Health System) Urges Area Residents to  
Get a Leg Up on Vascular Health  
*Free screenings for Peripheral Arterial Disease offered during  
September's P.A.D. Awareness Month***

**(City)** — (Name of Hospital/Health System) will conduct free screenings for peripheral arterial disease on (date/time) at (place) during September's P.A.D. Awareness Month campaign.

Approximately 9 million Americans have P.A.D., a common and dangerous vascular disease that can lead to heart attack, stroke, amputation and death. P.A.D. occurs when arteries in the legs become narrowed or clogged with fatty deposits, reducing blood flow to the legs. This can result in leg muscle pain when walking, disability, amputation, and poor quality of life. Blocked arteries found in people with P.A.D. can be a red flag that other arteries, including those in the heart and brain, may also be blocked – increasing the risk of a heart attack or stroke.

Everyone over age 50 is at risk for P.A.D. Risk increases if a person:

- Smokes, or used to smoke
- Has diabetes
- Has high blood pressure
- Has abnormal blood cholesterol
- Is African American
- Has a personal history of coronary heart disease or stroke

In many, P.A.D. is a silent disease, causing no recognizable symptoms. People with P.A.D. may have one or more of the following symptoms:

- “Claudication” – fatigue, heaviness, tiredness or cramping in the leg muscles (calf, thigh or buttocks) that occurs during activity such as walking and goes away with rest.
- Foot or toe pain at rest that often disturbs sleep
- Skin wounds or ulcers on the feet or toes that are slow to heal (or that do not heal for 8 to 12 weeks).

“P.A.D. is a devastating disease that is often undiagnosed,” stated [insert hospital spokesperson name and title]. “By teaming up with the P.A.D. Coalition, [Name of hospital/health system] is working to increase awareness of P.A.D. and improve our community's vascular health.”

The screening test for P.A.D. is called the ankle-brachial index, a painless, non-invasive test that compares the blood pressure in the ankles with the blood pressure in the arms.

View the boxed information to find out if you should be screened for P.A.D. To schedule an appointment, call [insert hospital phone number].

For more information on P.A.D., visit [www.padcoalition.org](http://www.padcoalition.org).

### **Who Should be Tested for P.A.D.?**

National medical guidelines recommend that certain individuals be tested for P.A.D. Review the following sentences and place a check in any box that applies to you.

- I am under 50 years of age, have diabetes and at least one other risk factor:
  - History of smoking
  - Abnormal cholesterol
  - High blood pressure
- I am aged 50 years or older and have diabetes.
- I am aged 50 years or older and am a former or current smoker.
- I am aged 70 years or older.
- I have one or more symptoms of P.A.D.
  - Fatigue, heaviness, tiredness or cramping in the leg muscles (calf, thigh or buttocks) that occurs during activity such as walking and goes away with rest.
  - Foot or toe pain at rest that often disturbs sleep
  - Skin wounds or ulcers on the feet or toes that are slow to heal (or that do not heal for 8 to 12 weeks).

If you checked one or more boxes, call [hospital phone number] to schedule an appointment.

**[Insert Hospital/Health System boilerplate]**

## Customizable Media Alert

[Print on Organization letterhead]

### For Immediate Release

(Date)

Contact: (Name)  
(Organization)  
(Telephone)  
(Email)

**(Hospital/Health System) Urges Area Residents to  
Get a Leg Up on Vascular Health  
*Free screenings for Peripheral Arterial Disease offered during  
September's P.A.D. Awareness Month***

**WHAT:** [Insert Organization name] is hosting a free screening event for peripheral arterial disease (P.A.D.) as part of a national effort to spread the word about this common, dangerous vascular disease. P.A.D., a condition that develops when arteries in the legs become clogged with plaque, limits the flow of blood to the legs.

**WHO:** [Insert any local dignitaries, celebrities, or prominent figures, including titles, or a short description of the Organization.]

**WHEN:** [Insert date and time of the event.]

**WHERE:** [Insert address (and telephone number, if applicable) where the event will take place.]

**WHY:** In the United States, approximately 9 million Americans suffer from P.A.D.—hardening of the arteries (also known as “atherosclerosis”) in the limbs, often the legs. P.A.D. is caused by the same risk factors that lead to heart disease. People who are at risk for P.A.D. include anyone over the age of 50, especially African Americans; those who smoke or have smoked; and those who have diabetes, high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, or a personal or family history of vascular disease, heart attack, or stroke. P.A.D. is a common and treatable disease that is on the rise among midlife and older Americans. However, it is still largely unknown, often unrecognized, and regarded by many as an inevitable consequence of aging. Without timely detection and treatment, P.A.D. increases the risk of heart attack, stroke, leg amputation, and even death.

**CONTACT:** [Insert local media contact name, phone number, and/or Organization Web site.]

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## Customizable Newsletter Articles

Below are sample newsletter articles for use in your publications. Consider sending articles to local employers for inclusion in employee newsletters and to any other community partners with whom you work.

You may want to modify the content to include an anecdotal story about a local patient with P.A.D., if available. For example, you may want to interview a few local patients with P.A.D. to find a compelling personal story. Some questions you may want to ask include:

- How did they find out they have P.A.D.?
- What risk factors (if any) did they have?
- What course of treatment did they take?
- Have they been able to resume normal activities since being diagnosed and treated?

You can use this information as a short lead-in to the newsletter article. A personal story can help illustrate how the disease can impact one's life. It can also explain that P.A.D. is treatable, and if diagnosed in time, those with P.A.D. can continue to lead healthy and productive lives. Personal experiences can also help localize the story, making it very real for those reading it.

### Article #1

#### **Is It Age – or P.A.D. – That's Slowing You Down?**

You're out walking, or you're climbing the stairs. Your legs or feet ache. Maybe they start to cramp. You're relieved when you stop moving because the pain goes away.

It's just part of getting older, right? Not necessarily.

Discomfort in your legs or feet while exercising could indicate something serious: Peripheral Arterial Disease, or P.A.D. – and an increased risk for a heart attack or stroke.

What could pain in your legs have to do with your heart?

You'll have a chance to learn more about the connection during P.A.D. Awareness Month. Mark your calendar to attend a P.A.D. awareness session (INSERT TITLE OF EVENT IF THERE IS ONE) on \_\_\_\_\_ (date) at \_\_\_\_\_ (location). [Newsletter editors could end the article here, with the addition of the last paragraph about how to sign up. Or they could run a longer piece by using the sections below.]

#### **Blockages in arteries in the legs: Red flag for blockages in the heart**

In both P.A.D. and heart disease, blockages in the vessels restrict blood flow – and the delivery of oxygen and nutrients – to the muscles. Blockages are caused by the build up of fatty deposits, or plaque, inside the vessels.

With P.A.D., you may have no symptoms, or you may feel pain, especially during exercise when the muscles need more oxygen. If a blockage in a vessel in your leg goes untreated, walking and other exercise may become increasingly painful – and your quality of life may be greatly diminished. Ultimately, untreated blockages can cut off blood flow entirely and lead to the loss of a leg or foot to amputation.

“Blockages in the vessels of the legs indicate that there may be other blockages in the body, including the heart,” said \_\_\_\_\_ (local doctor). “That’s why people with P.A.D. are at higher risk for heart disease, heart attack and stroke, “ said \_\_\_\_\_ (local physician).

Doctors can determine if you have P.A.D. with a simple, painless test called an Ankle Brachial Index, or A.B.I. Other tests determine where blockages are located.

### **Treatments for P.A.D.**

Lifestyle changes and medications are prescribed for mild cases of P.A.D. They include: stopping smoking, getting more exercise, eating a healthier diet and taking drugs to manage blood pressure, cholesterol and diabetes, if it is present.

Patients for whom lifestyle changes and medications are not enough may be treated with procedures performed within the blood vessels to widen the channel and allow more blood to flow to the muscles. In some patients, bypass surgery, in which a new blood vessel is attached above and below the blockage, is used to treat blockages in the legs.

“Early detection and treatment of P.A.D. are critical,” said \_\_\_\_\_ (local doctor).  
“Controlling PAD can make a huge difference in your ability to walk, live the lifestyle you want and just enjoy life.”

To attend the P.A.D. information session, please register in advance at \_\_\_\_\_ (phone or email or Web) by \_\_\_\_\_ (when).

## **Article # 2**

### **Free Seminar on P.A.D. Set for \_\_\_\_\_ (date and location)**

A free informational seminar on P.A.D., or peripheral arterial disease, will be held \_\_\_\_\_ (date and location ) as part of September's P.A.D. Awareness Month campaign.

P.A.D. is a serious condition. Yet, many people don't know about P.A.D. Even more worrisome, those most likely to be affected by the disease may not be aware that they are at risk.

The information session aims to help people who are at risk of developing P.A.D. understand the condition, its causes, how it is diagnosed and how it may be treated.

P.A.D. occurs when blood flow to the legs and feet is restricted by a build-up of fatty deposits in the blood vessels in the legs. It can cause to pain, cramping and discomfort that can make walking – and life – miserable. In extreme cases, P.A.D. can result in the loss of a leg or foot to amputation. And having P.A.D. indicates a higher risk for heart attack and stroke.

If you have P.A.D., you may not experience its symptoms: Tiredness, cramping or pain in the legs when walking that goes away at rest; foot or toe pain that disturbs sleep; or slow-to-heal wounds or sores on the feet or toes.

But even without symptoms, you may have P.A.D., or be at increased risk for it. Factors that increase the likelihood of P.A.D. include:

- Over age 50
- African-American
- Currently smoke or previously smoked
- Have high blood pressure, or hypertension
- Have high cholesterol
- Have diabetes
- Have had heart disease, a heart attack or stroke

“Early detection and treatment of P.A.D. can prevent it from getting worse and interfering with your ability to walk and do the things you enjoy,” said \_\_\_\_\_ (local doctor.) “Because heart disease and P.A.D. are caused by the same factors, early treatment of P.A.D. is also good for the heart.”

To attend the P.A.D. information session, please register in advance at \_\_\_\_\_ (phone or email or Web) by \_\_\_\_\_ (when).

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## **Customizable Radio Script**

A “live read” public service announcement or PSA is a script with no sound effects or music that is read out loud by a disc jockey or program host during his or her program. Live reads are often used to promote local events and happenings. In this section you’ll find a customizable script for the purposes of promoting September P.A.D. Awareness Month events in your community.

### **Tips for Pitching a Live-Read Script**

- Localize the script by adding your organization’s phone number, Web site, and printing it on your organization's letterhead.
- Type the script in uppercase type and double-space it for ease of reading.
- Send a copy of the PSA script to public service directors at your local radio stations. Include a short, one-page cover note about our September campaign, the relevance of P.A.D. to the station’s listeners, and what your organization is doing in the community. (See the sample newsletter article and media alert for language to use in your letter.)

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**DID YOU KNOW THAT APPROXIMATELY 9 MILLION AMERICANS** OVER AGE 50 ARE LIVING WITH A DISEASE THAT AFFECTS THEIR LEGS, AND RAISES THEIR RISK OF HEART ATTACK AND STROKE? IT’S CALLED PERIPHERAL ARTERIAL DISEASE, OR P-A-D.

P-A-D DEVELOPS WHEN LEG ARTERIES BECOME CLOGGED WITH PLAQUE—FATTY DEPOSITS THAT LIMIT BLOOD FLOW TO THE LEGS. IT’S CAUSED BY THE SAME RISK FACTORS THAT LEAD TO HEART DISEASE. JUST LIKE CLOGGED ARTERIES IN THE HEART, CLOGGED ARTERIES IN THE LEGS RAISE THE RISK OF HEART ATTACK AND STROKE.

SOME PEOPLE WITH P-A-D HAVE LEG MUSCLE PAIN WHEN WALKING THAT GOES AWAY WITH REST. MANY HAVE NO SYMPTOMS AT ALL.

**[INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME]** IS HOSTING EVENTS DURING SEPTEMBER’S P-A-D AWARENESS MONTH CAMPAIGN, **[INSERT SPECIFIC DATES]** HERE IN **[INSERT CITY/TOWN]**. THIS IS PART OF A NATIONAL CAMPAIGN COORDINATED BY THE P-A-D COALITION TO INCREASE AWARENESS OF P-A-D.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT LOCAL EVENTS, GO TO **[INSERT ORGANIZATION WEB ADDRESS HERE]** OR CALL **[INSERT ORGANIZATION NUMBER]**. THAT’S **[INSERT ORGANIZATION WEB ADDRESS HERE]**.

## Customizable Eblasts, Facebook Posts and Twitter Tweets

More and more health organizations and hospitals are using electronic communications and social media such as Facebook to communicate with their community constituents.

Review the special PAD health messages and send them out via your available communications channels. Simply cut, paste and send!

### Sample Eblasts for Electronic Publications

**Example 1:** Did you know that having clogged arteries in the legs is as dangerous as having clogged arteries in the heart? Known as peripheral arterial disease (P.A.D.), clogged leg arteries greatly increases one's risk of heart attack, stroke, amputation, and death. Get a leg up on better health and find out if you should be tested for P.A.D. [Insert call to action such as "Visit (Hospital Web site) or call (telephone number) for information" or "Take the attached PAD test and, if you are at risk, call today for a free P.A.D. screening appointment."]

**Example 2:** Peripheral arterial disease (P.A.D.) -- clogged leg arteries -- greatly increases one's risk of heart attack, stroke, amputation, and death. If you have diabetes, smoke or have heart disease risk factors such as high blood pressure or high cholesterol, you may be at risk. September is Peripheral Arterial Disease Awareness Month. Take our P.A.D test [link to P.A.D. risk test] and find out if you should be screened for P.A.D. Call [telephone number] for information.

**Example 3:** Do you have leg pain when you walk that goes away with rest? If so, you may have a common vascular disease called P.A.D. September is P.A.D. Awareness Month. Get a leg up on better health and find out if you should be tested for P.A.D. [Insert call to action such as "Visit (Hospital Web site) or call (telephone number) for information" or "Take the attached PAD test and, if you are at risk, call today for a free P.A.D. screening appointment."]

### Facebook

Choose one of the following messages to use as your Facebook status. Simply log in to your Facebook account and copy and paste the message of your choice into your status box (where it says "What's on your mind?").

**Example 1:** Heart attack. Stroke. Amputation. Death. Peripheral arterial disease (P.A.D.) is no walk in the park. Get a leg up on better health and find out if you should be tested for P.A.D. Visit [insert Web site] for information.

**Example 2:** Got leg pain when you walk that goes away with rest? If so, you may have a common vascular disease called P.A.D. Get a leg up on better health and find out if you should be tested for P.A.D. Visit [insert Web site] for information.

**Example 3:** They say as we age, we lose an inch or two. Sadly, those with peripheral arterial disease sometimes lose a whole foot. Get a leg up on better health and find out if you should be tested for P.A.D. Visit [insert Web site] for information.

**Example 4:** Peripheral arterial disease (P.A.D.) means clogged arteries of the legs. Get a leg up on better health and find out if you should be tested for P.A.D. Visit [insert Web site] for information.

## **Twitter**

Tweet one of the following messages to help raise awareness of P.A.D. Simply log in to your Twitter account and copy and past the message of your choice into your update box (where it says "What's happening?").

- Heart attack. Stroke. Amputation. Death. Peripheral arterial disease is no walk in the park. Learn more at [insert Web site].
- They say as we age, we lose an inch or two. Sadly, those with P.A.D. lose a whole foot. Learn more at [insert Web site].
- September is P.A.D. Awareness Month. Get a leg up on better health at [insert Web site].

## **Campaign Backgrounder**

Use this document to provide the media with background information about September's P.A.D. Awareness Month campaign.

### **Peripheral Arterial Disease—A Disease on the Rise**

In the United States, approximately nine million Americans suffer from a common and serious disease that few have ever heard of -- peripheral arterial disease or P.A.D.

P.A.D. occurs when arteries in the legs become narrowed or clogged with fatty deposits, reducing blood flow to the legs. This can result in leg muscle pain when walking, disability, amputation, and poor quality of life. Blocked arteries found in people with P.A.D. can be a red flag that other arteries, including those in the heart and brain, may also be blocked – increasing the risk of a heart attack or stroke.

Everyone over age 50 is at risk for P.A.D. Risk increases if a person:

- Smokes, or used to smoke
- Has diabetes
- Has high blood pressure
- Has abnormal blood cholesterol
- Is African American
- Has a personal history of coronary heart disease or stroke

In many, P.A.D. is a silent disease, causing no recognizable symptoms. People with P.A.D. may have one or more of the following symptoms:

- “Claudication” – fatigue, heaviness, tiredness or cramping in the leg muscles (calf, thigh or buttocks) that occurs during activity such as walking and goes away with rest.
- Foot or toe pain at rest that often disturbs sleep
- Skin wounds or ulcers on the feet or toes that are slow to heal (or that do not heal for 8 to 12 weeks).

P.A.D. is largely unknown, often unrecognized, and regarded by many as an inevitable consequence of aging.

### **September is P.A.D. Awareness Month**

The Peripheral Arterial Disease (P.A.D.) Coalition is an alliance of more than 80 North American health organizations, professional societies, government agencies and corporations united to improve the health and care of patients with P.A.D. Established in 2004, the P.A.D. Coalition is a division of the Vascular Disease Foundation ([www.vdf.org](http://www.vdf.org)), a national, not-for-profit section 501(c)(3) organization. The P.A.D. Coalition seeks to improve the prevention, early detection, treatment, and rehabilitation of people with, or at risk for, P.A.D.

Each September, the P.A.D. Coalition, its member organizations and participating hospitals work to increase awareness of P.A.D. risk factors, symptoms and consequences. This effort supports a nationwide campaign developed in partnership with the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute: Stay in Circulation: Take Steps to Learn about P.A.D.

### **Campaign Materials**

The campaign offers a wide variety of resources to help individuals and local communities take steps to learn about P.A.D. The following resources are available through the P.A.D. Coalition and its Web site, [www.padcoalition.org](http://www.padcoalition.org).

- Educational materials in English and Spanish for individuals to learn about P.A.D. and how to reduce their risk including:
  - Fact sheets about P.A.D.
  - Posters and print public service announcements
  - Radio public service announcements
  - An educational DVD featuring real people's stories about living with P.A.D.
- The Community Action Tool Kit—a collection of resources to help organizations and partners plan their own Stay in Circulation activities in local communities.

### **Campaign Partners**

The campaign is also working to secure partnerships with:

- National nonprofit organizations reinforced at the local level to extend the campaign's reach and message
- Hospitals and health systems to reach patients and clinicians with P.A.D. messages
- Corporate entities to expand resources and enhance the visibility of Stay in Circulation

For more information visit [www.padcoalition.org](http://www.padcoalition.org).

## Talking Points for Media Interviews about PAD

Below are key messages about PAD for use in media interviews.

- **Prevalence:** Peripheral arterial disease (PAD) is a common disease that affects approximately 9 million Americans. That's about:
  - One in 20 Americans over the age of 50; and
  - Nearly one in five Americans over the age of 70.
- **Definition:** Peripheral arterial disease (PAD) occurs when arteries in the legs become narrowed or clogged with fatty deposits, reducing blood flow to the legs. PAD may cause leg muscle pain when walking and lead to disability, amputation and a poor quality of life.

Having blocked arteries in the legs means you are likely to have blocked arteries in other parts of the body, such as in the heart and brain. Thus, PAD is a powerful warning sign of existing cardiovascular disease and raises the likelihood of having a heart attack or stroke.

- **Risk Factors:** Your risk for PAD is increased if you:
  - Smoke, or used to smoke
  - Have diabetes
  - Have high blood pressure
  - Have abnormal blood cholesterol
  - Are of African American ethnicity
  - Have a personal history of vascular disease, heart disease or stroke
- **Symptoms:** For many, PAD is a silent disease causing no recognizable symptoms. Some people with PAD have symptoms such as:
  - “Claudication” – the symptom of fatigue, heaviness, tiredness or cramping in the leg muscles (calf, thigh or buttocks) that occurs during activity such as walking and that goes away when you rest.
  - Skin wounds or ulcers on the feet or toes that are slow to heal (or that do not heal for 8 to 12 weeks).
  - Foot or toe pain at rest that often disturbs sleep.

Many individuals who do have leg muscle discomfort often think it is a natural part of aging and do not tell their health care provider.

- **Low Awareness:** Most Americans do not know the causes and consequences of PAD and thus are less likely to take steps to avoid it. In fact, a PAD Coalition survey showed that three out of four American adults are not familiar with PAD.
- **The Good News:** Early detection and proper treatment can prevent the devastating complications of PAD.

- **Treatment:** All people with P.A.D. require comprehensive treatment to lower their risk for heart attack and stroke, including:
  - Getting help to quit smoking and setting a quit date.
  - Lowering blood pressure to less than 140/90 mmHg or less than 130/80 mmHg if diabetes or chronic kidney disease is present.
  - Lowering LDL (bad) cholesterol to less than 100 mg/dl for all individuals with P.A.D. and to less than 70 mg/dl if at very high risk.
  - If diabetes is present, managing blood glucose (A1C less than 7) and practicing proper foot care.
  - Taking antiplatelet medications (such as aspirin or clopidogrel)

People with P.A.D. symptoms should exercise regularly, ideally in a prescribed P.A.D. rehabilitation program and use medications (such as cilostazol) to improve walking ability. Endovascular or surgical procedures may also be useful in some individuals

- **Call to Action:** Individuals with PAD risk factors or symptoms should talk to their health care provider about getting tested for PAD. **[Insert Organization name]** is hosting a free screening event for PAD as part of a national effort to spread the word about this common, dangerous vascular disease. **[Insert event details]**
- **More Information:** Visit [www.padcoalition.org](http://www.padcoalition.org) or call 1-866-PAD-INFO (1-866-723-4636). **[Alternatively, organizations can insert their contact information/Web site.]**