Your agency may have a developed relationship with the media throughout your state; if so, you can leverage that relationship to help receive media coverage on your HAI consumer and technical reports. Or, your agency may be new to working with the media and would like to learn more about opportunities. If possible, talk with someone with communication/media relations experience, such as a Public Information Officer (PIO), to garner feedback and engage the media.

First, decide if a low-key approach or “full court press” is preferred or needed for your state’s report. From there, you can determine which dissemination format(s) may be best for this audience and your approach. It will be helpful to discuss the report background and your promotion ideas with the PIO for their feedback; however, be aware of any time constraints and plan to meet with your PIO well in advance of the anticipated publication date.

The workgroup recommends a “full court press” approach for those states who are publishing their first HAI report, or those who have published only a few reports in the past. For those states who are seasoned and experienced with publishing HAI reports, a full court press may not be needed, as facilities and the media should be well-aware of your report and its typical roll-out plan.

Regardless of which approach is chosen, facilities should be notified in advance of the upcoming HAI report. It is recommended that facilities receive this notification, along with an embargoed copy of the state’s report, about 1-2 weeks prior to the publication date. The embargoed state report should be de-identified so facilities are not able to distinguish which data belongs to which facility (aside from their own). Consider holding one or multiple conference calls in order to answer any questions from facilities, and be sure that facilities are fully prepared for potential media attention. Also, when planning your publication date and facility outreach, be aware and sensitive to any situations simultaneously occurring among your facilities that may also be garnering media attention (e.g., hospital outbreaks, designation of a hospital as an Ebola treatment center, hospital mergers, etc.) so as to not overwhelm hospitals and to ensure that media are available to capture your report.

What’s the difference?

- **A low-key approach** would involve posting the HAI report to your state’s website, and notifying interested partners such as the state’s American Hospital Association (AHA) chapter, Quality Improvement Organization (QIO), and state HAI Advisory Group/Committee of its release. Individual facilities may want to pursue publicity on their own. That means your agency’s PIO should be fully briefed on when the report will be released and what the data indicate—or what they do not—about facilities’ and the state’s performance. At a minimum, prepare a press release and talking points in advance. Talking points are for internal use
and outline the important information, data, and findings from the report. Talking points should also include relevant information that would be needed to answer potential questions from outside sources. You may want to post the press release on your agency’s website or have it ready to go should there be questions from the media. Be sure to alert your governmental affairs staff about the report, since lawmakers may take an interest in the findings as well.

Ideally, an HAI report will be made publicly available in some way, such as via your agency’s website. If you prepare a consumer report to accompany the technical report, the whole point is to get that information to your target audience (i.e., healthcare consumers) using communication resources that are appropriate for your audience and obtainable for your agency. This approach may call for a full court press.

- **Full court press** means you will use all media relations tools at your disposal. This could include email blasts, promoting the press release, and sharing articles on social media. To reach traditional media (such as newspapers, broadcasters, or online outlets) you may want to hold one or several news conferences in different parts of your state with a spokesperson to review the findings and answer questions. If this is not an option, a conference call exclusively for the media could work. Again, a prepared script and talking points to answer common or expected questions are ideal. A good technique to generate coverage is to bring in partners and stakeholders to join your organization’s spokesperson at the event. Consider holding the news conference at a hospital with especially good performance data, and invite a hospital representative to speak. To present the patient perspective, consider asking a consumer group representative or an HAI prevention advocate in the community to speak at your news conference about his/her personal experiences with HAIs and/or using your state’s HAI report. Work with the representative to ensure messaging does not contradict the report findings.

An alternative to a news conference—especially a news conference “road show”—is a satellite media tour. It can be expensive, but you can cover many media markets in a relatively short period by booking time and pre-arranging appointments to have your spokesperson interviewed via satellite by various local television stations one after the other. Using “Skype” to conduct interviews with television stations may be a more affordable approach.

**What if your agency is interested in doing more than the low-key approach, but does not have resources for a full court press?**

- **Meet the media in the middle**. You could approach the dissemination plan with a strategy that goes beyond low-key, but doesn’t hit full court press. You can pick dissemination formats based on your audience, but also based on what your agency can take on with their available resources. Once you know your audience and preferred format, reach out to your PIO for feedback on ways to disseminate. The PIO may also be able to share the report with outlets they have relationships with, and may be aware of specific writers who would be interested in a story. See below for ways to disseminate your report and findings.
Formats to Disseminate the HAI Reports

A) Traditional Media

Your press release (also called a news release) should cover the Who, What, When, Where, Why and How points succinctly. You may also want to prepare a backgrounder that provides detailed information about the data report, how data were collected, what the results indicate and how they are used to help improve patient safety in a healthcare setting. This could be in narrative or fact sheet format. Use plain language in an effort to make health information more understandable for the public. Post these materials on your web site where they can be pulled from, and push them out to partners and stakeholders and to the general public via social media. All informational materials should include a URL or, if electronic, a live link to the HAI report. Also include a live link in your social media.

Pitch to the media story ideas, or why the information is important and should be covered. While it takes some legwork, recruiting an “average consumer” who might speak to them about successfully using the report would be helpful, as the media outlet’s readers/viewers could better identify with that person (i.e., “She used this information to benefit herself and her family; so could I”).

Prepare items for the media to pull from, including the press release with quotations, one or two photos, and links to background information.

B) Social Media

Social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, and YouTube are an excellent way to reach partners and stakeholders and can be particularly effective because of their interactivity, especially Facebook and Twitter. People will like, share, comment and re-tweet. Many members of the media also monitor these sites, along with agency blogs. Always include a link to the press release and monitor comments so that you can correct misinformation in real time. If your organization has a Twitter account, a “Twitter chat” can offer an opportunity to interact with the general public in real-time to share messages and answer questions about the report and the state’s HAI prevention activities. If a Twitter chat is scheduled, typically for an hour, prepare responses to potential questions ahead of time. Remember to advertise the date/time of your Twitter chat (both on social media and through website postings), and provide details about how to participate. During the chat, you can disseminate links to your HAI report and other relevant websites as needed.

Twitter Chat Resources:

Example postings for a CDC-sponsored Twitter chat: http://www.cdc.gov/Features/TwitterChat/


How to Create a Successful Tweet Chat: http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/twitter-chats-with-pam-moore/

C) Partner Outreach

Engage patient advocates in your state, especially if they sit on the HAI Advisory Group/Committee. Getting their permission in advance to share their story with reporters and offer their contact information with reporters is also helpful.

Hold a partners call with your partners or stakeholders to prepare them for the release of the report and answer any questions well in advance. This should include state organizations such as the QIO, AHA chapter, and other relevant partners.

Send an email blast to partners and consumers with a direct link to the report, once the report is available online for viewing.

D) Website

Update your website with the recent report, promote the report on related webpages, and always provide direct links to the report page. Consider including contact information on the website should anyone have questions or wish to provide feedback.

Write a blog post for your agency’s blog, or ask a local outlet if they can share your press release and/or write a blog on their site.