

# Making News:

## *The Newsworthy Nuggets that Best Tell Your Story*

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Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine

# Your Presenters



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Community & Media Relations  
Coordinator

*Trained in broadcast journalism  
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Director of External Affairs

*Trained in print journalism with 15  
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# Learning Objectives

- Understand the elements that make a story newsworthy
- Understand the media platforms available to promote your news
- Identify newsworthy opportunities in your research, clinical practices, education/training programs and other areas
- Craft a summary statement about your news
- Prepare for a media interview



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# Keeping Audience Top of Mind

*What best defines your target audience?*

## **AGE • LOCATION • DEMOGRAPHICS**

- Students
- Alumni
- Patients (*and potential patients*)
- Faculty/staff
- Community members
- University community
- In-state colleagues
- Other scientists
- Colleagues across the country
- People interested in \_\_\_\_\_.



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# Keeping Audience Top of Mind

*What best defines your target audience?*

## **AGE • LOCATION • DEMOGRAPHICS**

- Who will benefit most from your news?
- Who is most likely to be interested in your news?
- Where are they located?
- What's the best way to communicate with them?



Events like Kids in White Coats offer great visuals for photographers and showcase the outreach arm of our mission.

# What makes a story **newsworthy**?

*Choosing a story that includes these 7 elements helps ensure your news gets through the noise so that your message is heard.*



Think about what you like to sit down and read with a good cup of coffee.





# Newsworthy Element #1: Proximity

**WHERE** your news is happening determines who will cover it.

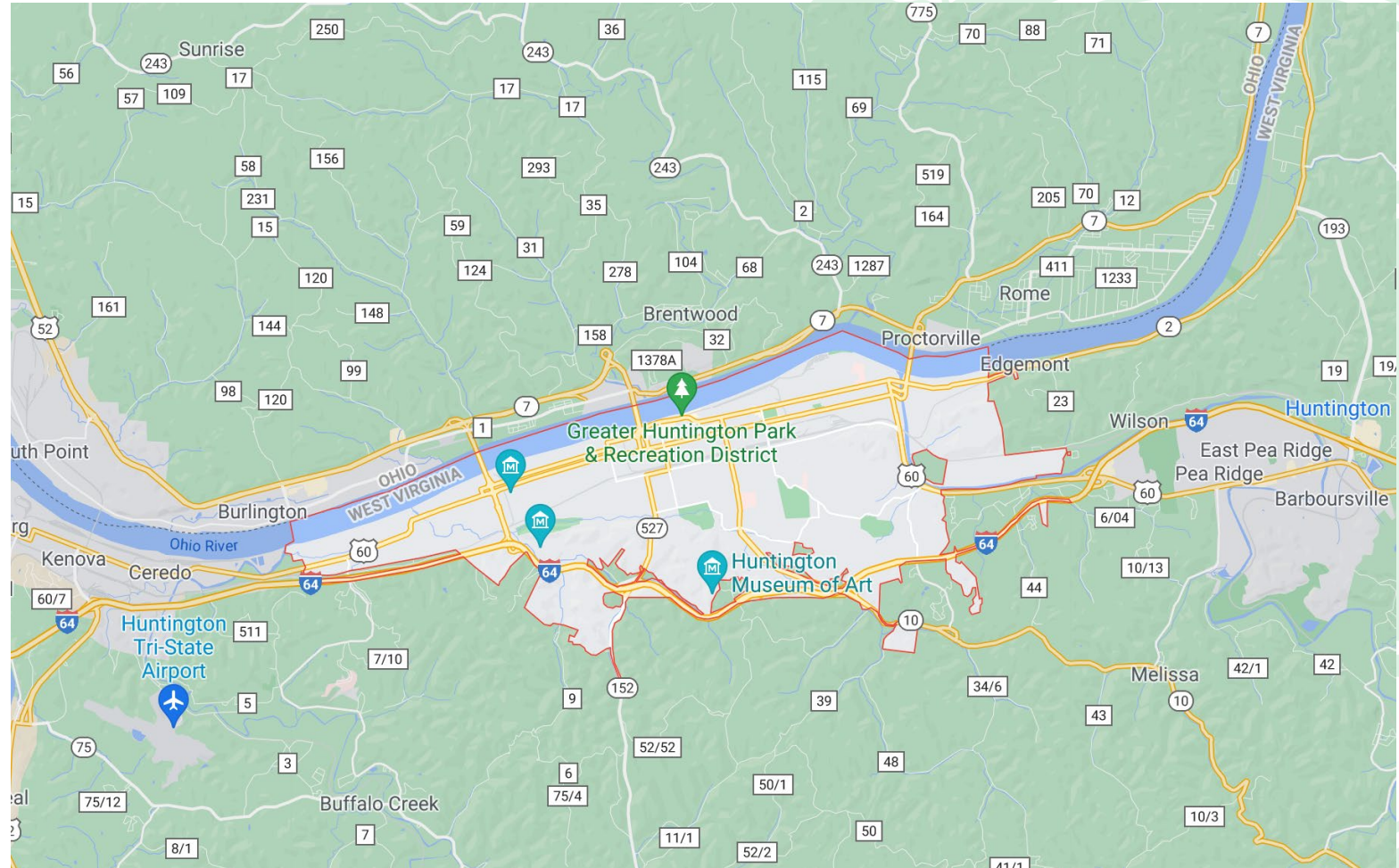
Is it happening nearby? Local events, information or happenings are newsworthy to local media outlets because they affect the community and region the media outlet serves.

We care more about things that happen close to home.

Different standards for:

- Traditional events vs. Zoom
- Specialty care

Source: [PBS NewsHour](#)



# Newsworthy Element #2: Timeliness

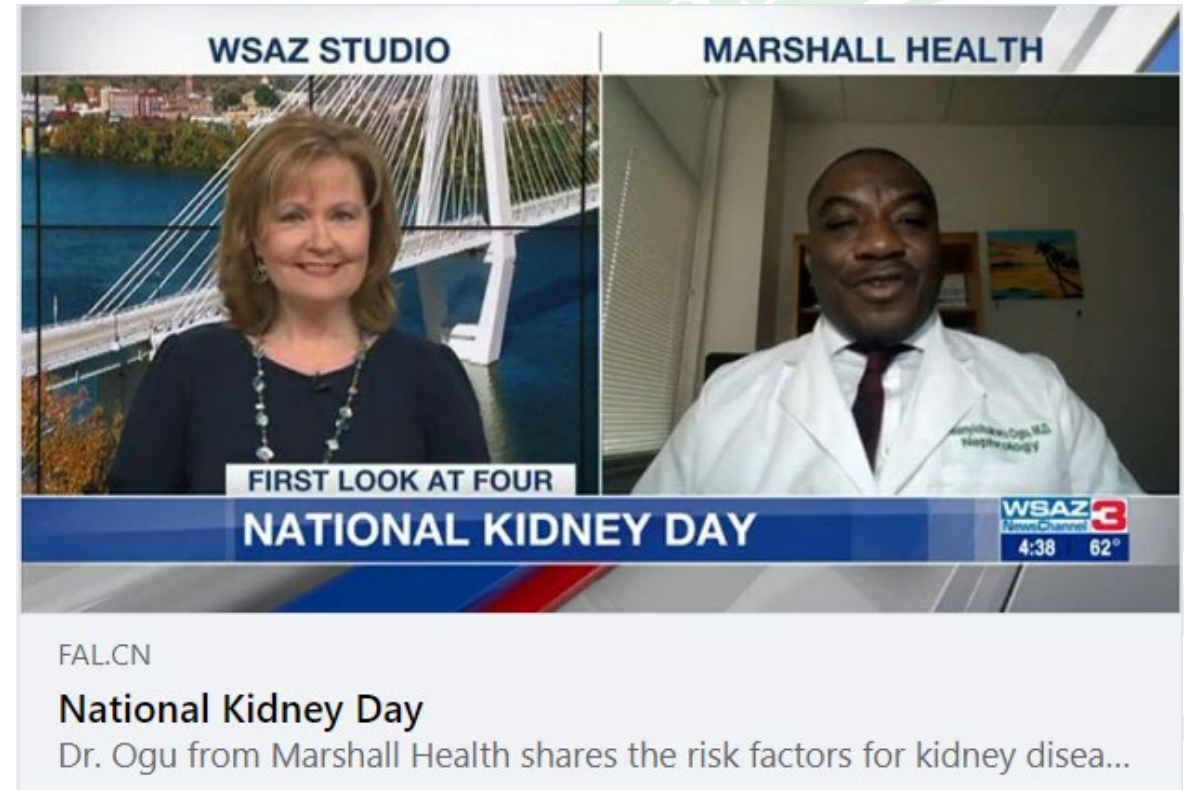
Immediate, current information and events are newsworthy because they just recently occurred.

It's news because it's new.

For events:

- Before – to drum up participation, or
- After – to inform, create awareness

Social media, internet journalism and the 24/7 news cycle have expedited the timeliness factor even more.



Dr. Ogu participates in a Skype interview with WSAZ on National Kidney Day.



# Newsworthy Element #3: Relevance

People are attracted to information that helps them make good decisions. If you like to cook, you find recipes relevant. If you're outdoorsy, tourism and travel articles may appeal to you. We depend on relevant information that helps us make decisions.

Demographics matter.

Advertising is driven by this concept.

The media turns to us as local experts for topics as they gain traction in the legislature, in other areas of the country or on social media.

Source: [PBS NewsHour](#)

[https://www.wvnews.com/news/wvnews/wv-health-officials-law-enforcement-warn-of-vaping-solutions-containing/article\\_6d77f93b-e2a9-5e87-b531-4b2be6902953.html](https://www.wvnews.com/news/wvnews/wv-health-officials-law-enforcement-warn-of-vaping-solutions-containing/article_6d77f93b-e2a9-5e87-b531-4b2be6902953.html)

TOP STORY

WV health officials, law enforcement warn of vaping solutions containing illicit substances

by JoAnn Snoderly STAFF WRITER Dec 1, 2019



As a result of these discussions, a State Journal reporter wanted to talk with Dr. Henderson about his vaping research.

# Newsworthy Element #4: Innovation

**How** is your news fresh and innovative?

What are we doing that is different from our colleagues at other institutions?



A reporter from *The Herald-Dispatch* interviews Dr. Lavender.

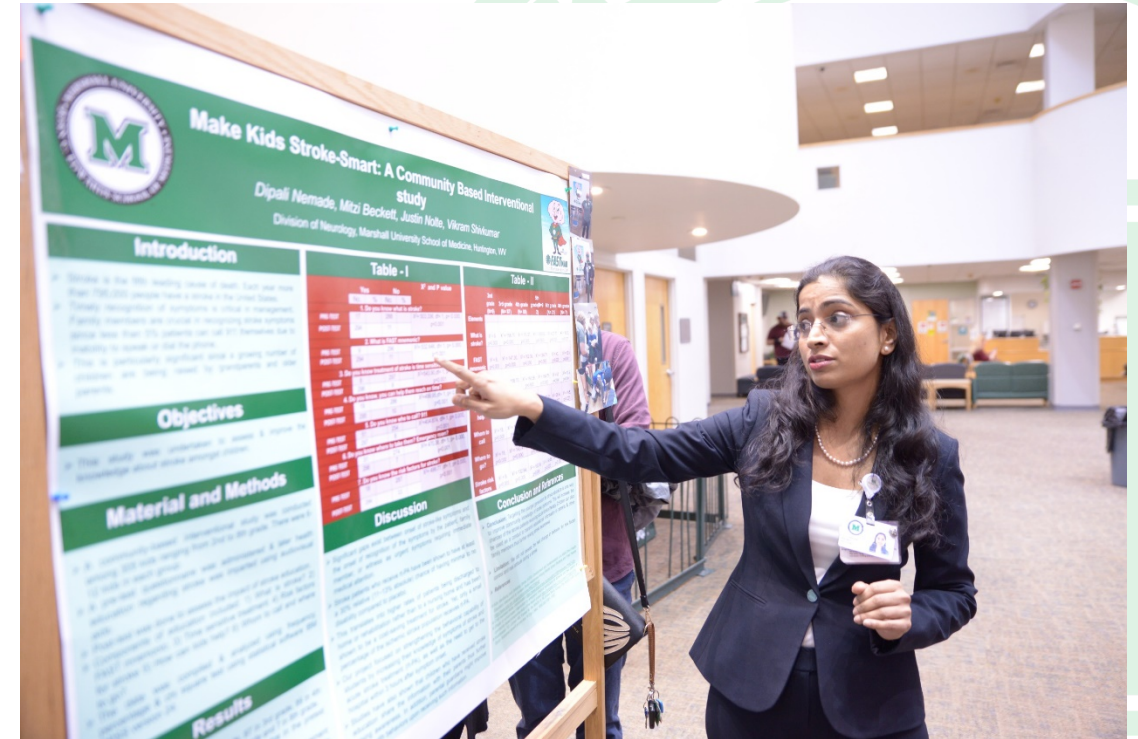
# Newsworthy Element #5: Evidence-Based

This element shows that we take our role as a School of Medicine seriously.

Sometimes this requires patience.

- Waiting for results to publish
- Waiting for patient outcomes
- Waiting until there's something to show for our work

Don't speak on topics you aren't comfortable addressing. It's OK to politely decline.



A neurology resident presents her research during Health Science Research Day. We had solid local coverage of Research Day, pre-COVID.



# Newsworthy Element #6: Interesting

People are interested in other people. We like unusual stories of people who accomplish amazing feats or handle a life crisis because we can identify with them.

Media outlets want stories that generate **READERSHIP**, **IMPRESSIONS** and **CLICKS**.

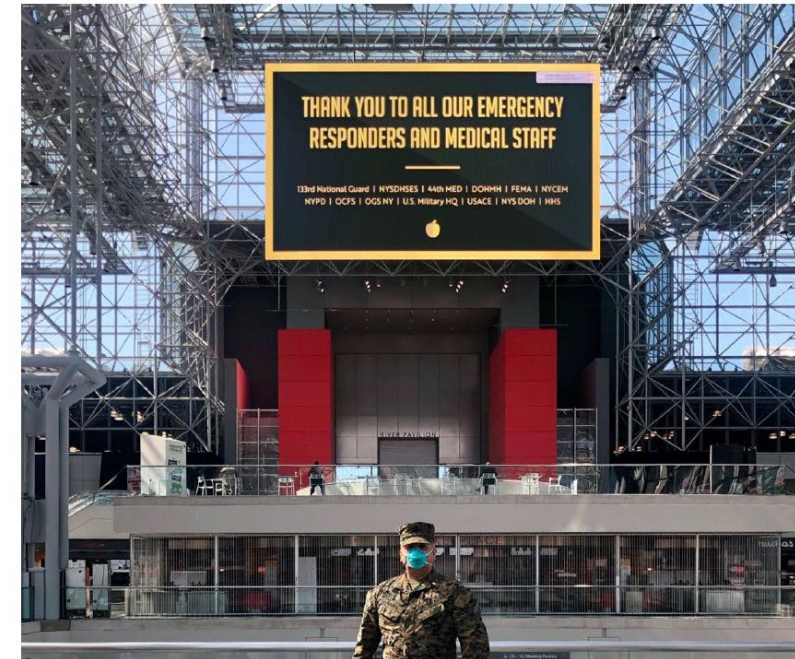
## HUMAN INTEREST STORIES

- Powerful patient testimonies
- Overcoming the odds
- Making a difference

Source: [PBS NewsHour](#)

Marshall Health surgeon and marine deployed to New York City to assist in COVID-19 treatment

By TAYLOR STUCK The Herald-Dispatch [tstuck@hdmediallc.com](mailto:tstuck@hdmediallc.com)  
Apr 17, 2020



Amid the constant flow of health-driven information during COVID, stories like this one about Dr. Sanabria appealed to readers.

# Newsworthy Element #7: Conflict

Conflict and controversy attract our attention by highlighting problems or differences within the community.

These are not the types of news we want to attract for our organization, but we want to be prepared when/if they do.

Reflect on takeaways from 2020:

- Spokesperson as a “source of truth”
- Know when to stay quiet and when to have a voice
- Stay focused on our mission
- Always protect our patients

Source: [PBS NewsHour](#)



Dr. Clements answers questions from the media when Marshall Health opened the region's first drive-thru COVID testing location in March 2020. To protect patient privacy, reporters were invited to ask questions during a designated time and asked to leave before patients arrived for testing.

# Which strategy is right for your news?

*The content and significance of your news will determine our approach.*

## HIGHER PROFILE

- News release distribution through PR Newswire/EurekAlert
- Media pitch
- Original article

## ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES

- News release distribution to local markets
- Social media post
- Personnel brief
- Newsletters
- Guest columns/opinion-editorials



[Click here to print page](#)

### Resident of the Month

UWI grad Rahman Barry, MD, is US med school's top resident for March

Sunday, March 17, 2019



Jamaican-born Rahman Barry, MD, is Resident of the Month for March at Marshall University's Joan C Edwards School of Medicine in Huntington, WeSt



# Which outlets are right for your news?

*Each media outlet has an identified audience demographic. We work with you to make a conscious decision about what is most appropriate for your story.*

## LOCAL/REGIONAL MARKET

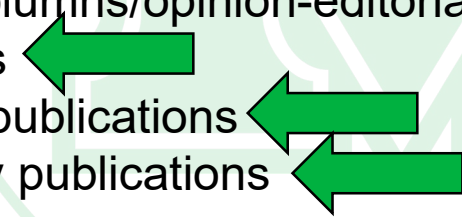
- Television (WSAZ, WCHS, WOWK)
- Newspapers (Herald-Dispatch, Charleston Gazette-Mail, Ashland Independent, Ironton Tribune + other daily/weeklies)
- Magazines (Huntington Quarterly, Tri-State Living)
- Radio (Kindred-Dawg, River, Planet; iHeartRadio – KEE, TCR, The Brew, B97)

## STATE MARKET

- Newspaper (The State Journal)
- Radio (WV Public Broadcasting, WV Metro News)
- Magazines (WV Executive, WV Living)

## ADDITIONAL OUTLETS

- News release distribution to local markets
- National/Associated Press pickup
- Social media post
- Personnel brief
- Newsletters
- Guest columns/opinion-editorials
- Podcasts
- Internet publications
- Specialty publications



# Earned Media vs. Advertising

## EARNED MEDIA

The equivalent dollar amount of air time, column inches or impressions if paid in the form of advertising.

In FY20, the SOM/Marshall Health had \$1.5 million in earned media.

## THE GRAY AREAS OF “PAY TO PLAY”

- Mutual backscratching
- Proper vetting
- Is it worth it?

[http://www.herald-dispatch.com/news/ten-years-later-huntington-drops-the-fattest-city-title/article\\_303f1cf0-b95a-50f4-bdd5-966f994c26f3.html](http://www.herald-dispatch.com/news/ten-years-later-huntington-drops-the-fattest-city-title/article_303f1cf0-b95a-50f4-bdd5-966f994c26f3.html)

Ten years later, Huntington drops the 'fattest city' title

By BISHOP NASH Nov 25, 2018 Updated 18 hrs ago



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# Case #1: The Opioid Epidemic

*That infamous day with 26 overdoses in August 2016 led to an onslaught of national and international media attention.*

## WHAT WE LEARNED

- Coordinated media inquiry responses citywide. Very selective on who we grant access to.
- Emphasized positive initiatives
  - Ex: America Magazine – facilitated/supervised more than a dozen interviews



Dr. O'Connell answers media questions during the opening of Project Hope for Women & Children.



# Case #2: Chili Peppers & Walnuts

*Two research studies that have had lasting appeal.*



**Spicy compound from chili peppers slows lung cancer progression**

Released by Experimental Biology in 2019 following PhD student presentation at conference. The release by EB instantly gave it national appeal.

- 14+ mentions



**Scientists tie walnuts to gene expressions related to breast cancer**

First released by Marshall, followed by release by advertising agency working for California Walnuts.

- 45+ references in 2019; 8+ in 2020

# Making Research News

*What is newsworthy research?*

## 1. Evidence-based

- Published (peer reviewed)
- Presented
- Grant funded

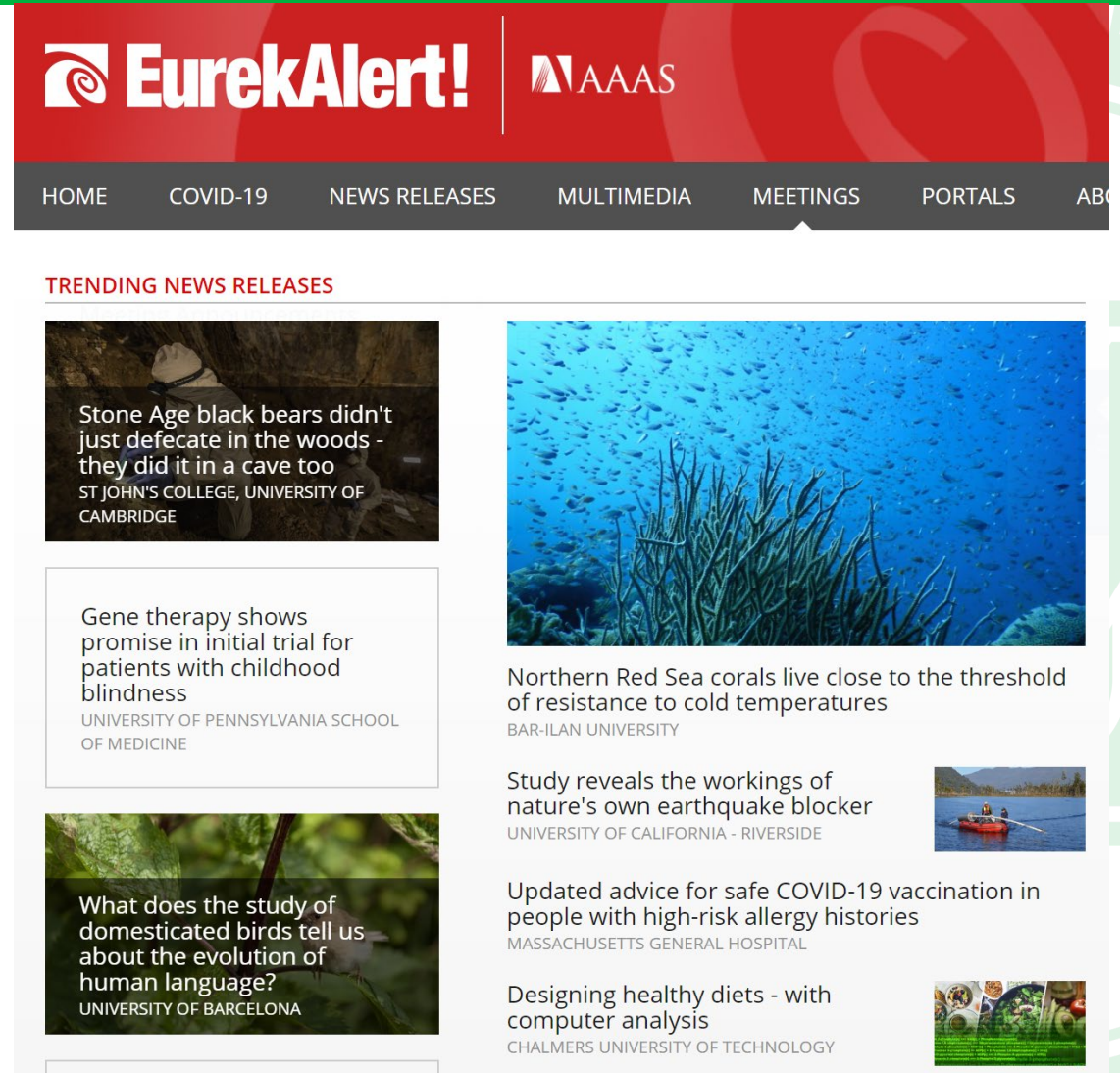
## 2. Be your own translator

## 3. Connect the dots

- Clearly define the real-life applications, significance of the research

## 4. Close the loop!

- We love sharing your grant award news, but your outcomes throughout the course of the study are equally, if not more, important.



The screenshot shows the EurekAlert! website header with the AAAS logo. The navigation bar includes links for HOME, COVID-19, NEWS RELEASES, MULTIMEDIA, MEETINGS, PORTALS, and ABOUT. Below the navigation bar, the 'TRENDING NEWS RELEASES' section displays several news items:

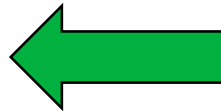
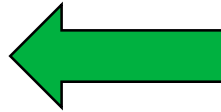
- Stone Age black bears didn't just defecate in the woods - they did it in a cave too**  
ST JOHN'S COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
- Gene therapy shows promise in initial trial for patients with childhood blindness**  
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
- What does the study of domesticated birds tell us about the evolution of human language?**  
UNIVERSITY OF BARCELONA
- Northern Red Sea corals live close to the threshold of resistance to cold temperatures**  
BAR-ILAN UNIVERSITY
- Study reveals the workings of nature's own earthquake blocker**  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA - RIVERSIDE
- Updated advice for safe COVID-19 vaccination in people with high-risk allergy histories**  
MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL
- Designing healthy diets - with computer analysis**  
CHALMERS UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY



# Clinical Services News

*This is fluid and open to interpretation, but “new,” “innovative” or “first” are easy go-tos.*

1. New service line
2. New provider
3. New clinic location
4. New partnership
5. New procedure
6. Innovations in care delivery





# Sharing your news

*What we need to help you effectively share your news.*

1. Who is your audience?
2. What are the details? (complete event information, grant/publication abstract/summary, etc.)
3. What is your timeline? (grant award date, event date, embargo lift). Make sure you plan ahead when possible!
4. Who will be the designated spokesperson should the media request an interview? Clear it with your chair, DA, supervisor.
5. What kind of graphic/image best represents your story? We will need this for social media.
6. Why is your news meaningful? Why are you excited about it?

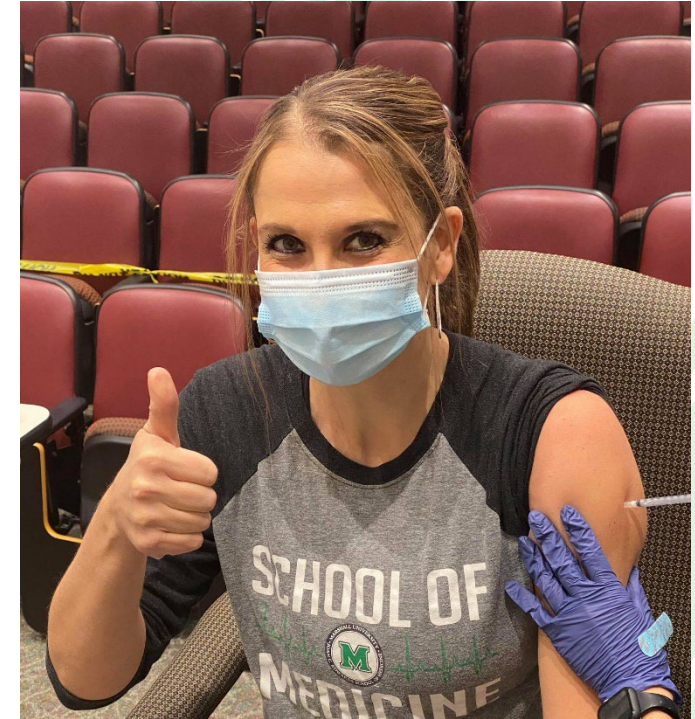


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# Our greatest opportunities

*We see these as our greatest opportunities in media relations to continue building the reputation of the School of Medicine and Marshall Health:*

1. Build relationships with specialty publications
2. Articulate more milestone innovations in patient care
3. Change how and how often we talk about our research
4. Generate more human interest stories
5. Be proud of the work we're doing at Marshall and share it!



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