

Hosting an Action Coalition Event

Hosting an event can be a great opportunity for your Action Coalition to engage local communities, organizations, funders, and state leaders as well as to increase support to advance the work of the Future of Nursing: *Campaign for Action*.

When planning an event, consider what the purpose of your gathering will be. Will this be an informal meeting of your steering committee? An informational meeting to inform stakeholders about your progress? A supportive rally meant to engage diverse stakeholders to help advance your work? Or

will it be a convening of nursing and other health professional leaders to brainstorm new ways to advance *Campaign* goals? No matter who your audience is, or how large or small your event will be, strategic planning in advance will help you achieve your goal and manage expectations along the way.



Planning an Event: Strategic Planning Questions

Effective planning will help ensure that your event targets the right audience and gets you the results you want. When thinking about hosting an event, you should consider several questions. You might not be able to answer all of these right away, but it's important to think about them *before* your event.

Goals and Objectives:

- What do you hope to achieve as a result of this event?
- What do you want attendees to take away from this experience?
- Is an event the best or most appropriate way to achieve your goals?
- How will this event strengthen or advance your *Campaign* efforts and address the pillars or focus of your *Campaign* work?
- Will there be next steps or actions that you want participants to take? If so, how will you track them?

Planning and Production:

- Have you consulted with your *Campaign* liaison or the Center to Champion Nursing in America (CCNA) to determine how they might provide support or counsel?
 - Are there opportunities for your coalition partners to help develop the event, promote it, or even host it at their offices? Can you align with another organization that is hosting an event to consolidate resources and potentially increase attendance?
 - What is the best date and location for your event? Have you checked local community calendars to determine any conflicts or opportunities?
- What are your budgetary constraints? Does your budget permit offering light beverages and snacks, which can be a great way to keep participants satisfied and engaged?
 - How will this event be archived? Does it make sense to hire a photographer or videographer?
 - Have you considered web-streaming and recording your event so audiences outside the area can participate in or view the event? Depending on the goal of the event, having a video archive could help extend your impact.
 - What is your post-event strategy? Will attendees be asked to join a listserv? Will they be asked to engage their organizations as members of your Action Coalition? What is the “ask”? How will you ensure that attendees engage or do what you are asking? How will you measure success?
 - How will participants provide feedback or evaluate the event? Will you provide a questionnaire as a handout?
 - Consider managing your event planning and logistics by assembling a team and recruiting student interns as additional support. Remember, you can tap into technology such as Constant Contact or Survey Monkey to help you with organization and tracking event invitations.

Planning an Event: Strategic Planning Questions (CONTINUED)

Communications and Marketing:

- Who is your audience?
- What is your event's primary message? How does it tie into the *Campaign for Action* messages? Connect with your *Campaign* liaison to get the latest campaign messages.
- Will you present something new or groundbreaking that local media may cover? If so, consider inviting select reporters to attend (remember, a meeting itself is generally not considered newsworthy).
- How will you promote this event, and what resources do you need to help you get the word out?
- Do your event materials (invitations, advisory, agenda, etc.) match the *Campaign* branding guidelines?
- Have you considered distributing *Campaign* flyers or backgrounders? Have you consulted with your *Campaign* liaison to discuss what is available from the national office?
- If you plan to have speakers, who are your best candidates? For example, if you are working toward education progression, can you include a local nursing school dean, student, or professor?
- If there are multiple speakers, what are their roles and what is expected of them?
- Will speakers only be asking to give oral presentations, or will you plan to have slide presentations?
- Will copies of presentations be available to participants after the event?
- If you are inviting local or state businesses, policy-makers, and leaders, would you like a representative from the *Campaign* to present? If so, fill out the [Speaking Request Form](#), available from CCNA.
- Is there a personal story someone can tell or a story you can capture and share on your website?
- Once you're ready to promote your event, make sure to reference the toolkit modules "[Introduction to Traditional Media Outreach](#)" and "[Creating Effective Media Materials.](#)"

There are many considerations when planning an event, and the questions above are a good starting point. But make sure to contact your *Campaign* liaison for additional support. The sample event-planning timeline and agenda included in this document will help you put some of these ideas into action.

Building Your Audience

Whether you are celebrating your Action Coalition's achievements or raising awareness of planned future activities, events can be an excellent way to engage and build your audience, as well as to solicit ideas and input to help your Action Coalition find innovative approaches to advancing the IOM recommendations. We suggest inviting a diverse group of dynamic attendees that reflect the many target audiences of your specific activities. Most importantly, be sure to invite any support staff who have participated or helped you since the start of your program.

Consider the following stakeholders when developing your event outreach list:

- Philanthropic, community, and other potential program partners and funders
- Hospital leaders and executives, including, but not limited to, the CEOs and CNOs of local hospitals and health care systems
- Frontline nursing staff
- Local business stakeholders, including the local Chamber of Commerce, business owners, and chairs of businesses and boards
- Other health care organizations and associations, such as your state hospital association
- Public health and policy leaders
- State chapter organizations, including AARP and professional medical associations
- Disease advocacy groups and caregiving groups
- National State Nurses Association, nursing associations within your state, including state chapters of minority nursing associations and other diversity organizations
- Local nursing school programs, nursing students, and new RNs
- A representative from the mayor's office
- Directors of local foundations. Begin by visiting the Forum of Regional Associations of Grantmakers at www.givingforum.org for potential funders in your state.
- Community organizers and health leaders (Department of Workforce Development, Workforce Investment, and Department of Labor)
- Local chapter of the National League of Cities (State Municipal League)
- Local print, television, and radio media (if appropriate)
- Physicians and other health care providers and leaders in your area.
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grantees, scholars, and fellows (CCNA can facilitate connections)

It may not be appropriate to invite all of these stakeholders to each event, and there may be others you wish to invite who are not listed. Depending on the topic area discussed (e.g., education, leadership, scope of practice) or the type of event, some individuals and organizations will have greater interest in some topics versus others. They will also have more influence on one topic over another. Make some strategic decisions about whom you wish to invite, why their presence is important, and what outcome their attendance can help you achieve.

What Makes an Event Newsworthy?

If your event is newsworthy, you will want to invite and engage media in order to reach a wider audience and gain additional support for your AC's work. Remember, not all events are newsworthy in and of themselves—and that's okay. However, when you know what reporters are looking for and prepare your event accordingly, it can increase the odds of obtaining media coverage.

Here are some criteria to help you determine if an event is “newsworthy”:

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| Discovery or Novelty | Is your event focused on sharing information that is new or surprising? Are you looking at an existing problem—such as the growing nursing shortage—in a new way? |
| Timeliness | Is your event related in some way to a topic or concern of the moment? What health care issues are trending in the news? Does your event address how nurses can have a role in reducing hospital readmissions? Will it address the imminent nursing shortage? |
| Magnitude | Is your event relevant to a large group of stakeholders? Are there several local nursing organizations, hospitals, or health care systems that would benefit from the information being shared at this event? Does it have national impact? |
| Human Interest | Can you provide patient stories that would highlight your work and make it more compelling? For example, sharing the patient's perspective on how a nurse practitioner made a critical care decision that impacted the quality of her care can go further than simply talking about how nurses should have a larger role in decision-making. |
| Notable Spokesperson | Does your event address an issue that has caught the eye of a well-known public figure? Can you engage the participation of a high profile spokesperson? The involvement of such a person—on a local, regional or national level—can do wonders for getting an issue into the headlines. You can also consider a prominent leader in health care, or a national spokesperson from the <i>Campaign for Action</i> . |
| Milestones | Does your event have an important historical marker or anniversary, either locally or nationally? For example, your event might be tied to the anniversary celebration of a major public health initiative or during National Nurses Week. |

Promoting Your Event

Once you decide that your event is newsworthy, you'll want to make sure to promote it so members of the media can attend or cover the event. The following list contains elements that will help make your event more media-friendly—from the early planning phase to post-event follow up.

Scheduling. If possible, try to hold your event in the morning so reporters can meet their deadlines. Avoid Mondays and Fridays, as people tend to be out of the office those days, if they take a long weekend. Do your research to find out what other events are taking place in your community that might be competing for media attention.

Community counts. While the issues the *Campaign for Action* addresses are of national concern, they also make an impact within your community. Even if the topic at hand has a national impact, make sure to highlight the local connection, so reporters in your area will want to cover the story. Your speakers and materials must all reflect the situation in your state.

Know the media. As you refine your media list, try to do some cursory research on the key reporters. (See the Building Your List of Media Contacts section of the [“Introduction to Traditional Media”](#) document for more information.) Have they covered this issue before? What stories on health and on workforce have they covered? You can find this information out by checking the stories they have written or produced on the newspaper's, radio station's, or TV station's website. You can also find great opportunities to promote your story to non-profit media outlets online. Do they have nurses in their families? Don't limit the targets to health editors. Consider the business editor, photo desk,

calendar editor, and editorial page editor. With budget cuts to newsroom staff, it may be difficult to encourage media to actually attend your event. If this is the case, you could consider holding a conference call (also known as a telebriefing) between members of the news media and your spokespersons. If you have interesting and important data to present, you may wish to consider a webinar or webcast format. Is there someone's personal story they could cover?

Media advisory. Be sure to prepare a shortened version of the press release that tells the who, what, when, where, and why in an outline form. These alerts are used to remind the media about your event. Make sure to type “Media Advisory” in large print across the top of your page. Media advisories can be faxed or issued one week before an event to give editors time to assess the story. Be clear in stating who is available for interviews. Make follow-up calls a day or two before the event. (See [“Creating Effective Media Materials”](#) for more details.)

Handouts. Generally, you should consider distributing a press kit that might contain a press release with key information; fact sheets or backgrounders that amplify the content and context of the press conference; copies of any prepared statements by speakers; and biographies on key spokespeople.

Promoting Your Event (CONTINUED)

Rehearsal. Do a walk-through either by phone or prior to the conference, so speakers know the logistics and timing of their role. Arrive early to situate speakers, canvass the logistics, organize materials, set up media/stakeholder sign-ins, etc.

Follow-up. After the event, send thank you notes to the VIPs who attended, along with a suitable photo, if you like. Many of those speakers represent other entities that have communications channels

on which they will run the story/photo. Distribute press kits to key media who were unable to attend the press conference. Track media coverage and monitor the press. Don't forget there are many places where you can publish highlights of your event and the stories you heard. You can then post them on your website, your partnered nursing association website, the *Campaign for Action* website, and on social media.

See sample even planning timeline on next page



Sample Event Planning Timeline

Below is a chronological timeline and tracking sheet for you to use throughout the planning process. Feel free to use this as a guide to help your planning, and add to it to meet your own needs.

To Do	Complete By	Coalition Lead	Date Completed
Invitations and Pre-Planning			
VENUE			
Research meeting venues, obtain price quotes, and check availability.	12 weeks prior		
Confirm venue and put down deposit.	10 weeks prior		
Confirm parking for participants.	3 weeks prior		
INVITATIONS			
Identify and invite speakers/panelists and determine if there is a need for someone from RWJF or CCNA to attend. If so, use the Speaking Request Form .	12 weeks prior Note: High level speakers may require more lead time—especially if travel is involved.		
Finalize invitation language.	7 weeks prior		
Finalize guest list.	7 weeks prior		
Confirm speaker/panelist attendance.	6 weeks prior		
Send presentation guidelines and questions to speakers/panelists.	6 weeks prior		
Send invitation to guest list. Post event flyers and start promoting via social media channels.	6 weeks prior		
Track RSVPs and provide the event team with periodic updates.	Ongoing		
Schedule conference call with speakers/panelists to discuss presentation and any questions. Identify presenter needs and presentation styles. Identify deadlines for presentations to be submitted.	4 weeks prior		
Resend invitation to invitees that have not RSVP'd.	3 weeks prior		

Sample Event Planning Timeline (CONTINUED)

To Do	Complete By	Coalition Lead	Date Completed
MATERIALS			
Draft conference materials and event program.	6 weeks prior		
Confirm event materials and print.	2 weeks prior		
EVENT PLANNING CHECKLIST			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine what A/V and meeting needs you require (examples below): • Microphones (roving, lavalier) • Easels • Laptop/projector/remote • Teleconference • Phone line • Internet • Number of signs and location • Podium • Tables (materials, registration, panelists) • Panelist name cards • Seating (theater or classroom) • Food and beverage (including dietary needs) 	4 weeks prior		
Confirm contract details.	3 weeks prior		
Confirm A/V and meeting needs with the venue.	3 weeks prior		
Give estimated number for food/beverage as RSVPs come in.	2 weeks prior (or when venue requires)		
Confirm number for food/beverage.	2 days prior		
DAY OF EVENT			
Test A/V functionality	Day of		
Coordinate with photographer to identify VIPs and photo opportunities onsite. If you don't have a photographer, consider designating a staff member to take photos to post on social media.	Day of		
Confirm parking situation with venue.	Day of		
Complete payment with venue.	Day of		

Sample Event Planning Timeline (CONTINUED)

To Do	Complete By	Coalition Lead	Date Completed
POST EVENT WRAP-UP			
Follow up with any questions or requests that came up during the meeting.	2 days after		
Send thank you notes to speakers/ panelists and potential funders for their participation.	1 week after		
Return any leftover materials or signage to the appropriate person.	1 week after		

Sample Event Agenda

Town Hall:

Partner with Nurses for a Healthy California

August 4, 2011

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

UC Davis Cancer Center Auditorium
Sacramento, CA

11 a.m.	Registration & Lunch	
11:30 a.m.	Welcome	Heather M. Young, Ph.D., R.N., F.A.A.N. Associate Vice Chancellor for Nursing, UC Davis Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing Dean and Professor
11:40 a.m.	Exemplars of Nursing	Helen Thomson, R.N. Nurse in Politics Kim Van Ysseldyk, N.P. Nurse Geneticist
11:50 a.m.	The <i>Campaign for Action</i>	Susan B. Hassmiller, Ph.D., R.N., F.A.A.N. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Senior Adviser for Nursing
Noon	Discussion: Identify Priorities to Improve California's Health	Facilitator: Deborah Ward, Ph.D., R.N., F.A.A.N. Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing, UC Davis Associate Dean

Distinguished Panel:

Susan B. Hassmiller, Ph.D., R.N., F.A.A.N., senior adviser for nursing, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Terry Hill, M.D., F.A.C.P., vice president, Medical Group Services, Hill Physicians Medical Group

Helen Thomson, R.N., former Yolo County Supervisor and California State Assemblywoman

Anita Creamer, senior reporter for older adults and aging issues, Sacramento Bee

Jeannine English, M.B.A., C.P.A., national board member, AARP

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