**If a reporter contacts you – and other reasons to call Your Public Relations Office.**

* **You may not be *required*** to call your Public Relations (PR) office about every request from a reporter, **but it’s usually a good idea**.
* **PR must get involved in:** sensitive or potentially negative issues;any visit by a reporter/TV crew/photographer; any PR or news situation involving a patient or research volunteer
* **Time is critical!** Reporters have tight deadlines & news spreads fast on Facebook/Twitter. Reporters may contact multiple people at once, and only use information from whoever gets back to them first. Please don’t let inquiries sit in your inbox or phone messages!
* **Know When & How to reach your PR office.**
* **PR people can help you:** Decide what to do with a reporter inquiry – including deciding whether to give an interview, anticipating questions and talking through your key messages/sound bites. They can talk with you about possible options for publicizing your work through institution-generated publicity efforts and news channels, now or in the future.
* **If you speak to a reporter:** Avoid jargon and remember that everything you say is “on the record” & can be used. Ask to have them read your quotes back to you, and/or explain back to you what you told them. Don’t ask to see the entire article before it appears – unless you are working with a trade publication in your field.
* **If you can’t or don’t want to speak to a reporter who contacts you:** It’s fine to refer a reporter to the PR office, or to others with appropriate expertise.
* **Anyone who is asking for money** for the opportunity to be on their show, publication or website isn’t a reporter – they are selling the opportunity for advertising. Send them to your PR office.
* **You should also call Public Relations & ask to speak to the PR person assigned to your department/division/center, if**:
  + **You are aware of a potential “bad news” situation in your area** – Anything that could end up making negative headlines. We can’t always avoid negative headlines, but we can manage the handling of a situation for the best possible result.
  + **You have a highly important/impactful paper *accepted***. Don’t wait til you have galley proofs, as most journals now post final copies of papers online almost as soon as the researchers have approved the proofs!
  + **New breaks on a topic in your specialty** – especially if a public figure is diagnosed with a disease you specialize in, or there’s a new national report or controversy in your field.
  + **Someone else wants to involve you in their communication effort or publicize your work** – This could be a company, journal, professional society, patient advocacy group, government agency, funding source, or patient.
  + **You get strong indication of funding for a major grant**
  + **You have an idea for a feature story** or blog post that gives useful information to the public on a health or scientific topic of broad interest
  + **You become aware that a patient is reaching out to the news media** to get attention for his/her case or broader situation