



# INSIDER'S MEDIA GUIDE

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## **Introduction**

This guide on media relations is designed to provide you with an insider's look at promoting your dental practice at the local level. By working with the media, you will drive awareness about dental sleep medicine and oral appliance therapy, ultimately pulling new patients into your practice.

It is important that people in your local market make the connection that your dental practice is the place to go when they need solutions and expert knowledge for treating their snoring and sleep apnea.

Media relations outreach involves working with various media for the purpose of informing the public. Basically, it is *free* publicity for your dental practice through stories in newspapers, local magazines, television shows or radio programs.

This toolkit provides you the resources you need to perform media relations outreach that can make a difference in growing your practice.

### **Five Tips for Getting Media Coverage**

1. **Know the media inside and out.** Read the newspapers and magazines you want coverage in. Get to know the reporters names. See if coverage of other businesses spurs ideas for you.
2. **Become a resource.** Call local reporters who may need your help on a story and let them know your expertise. A well-spoken local dentist will be like gold to a personal health reporter.
3. **Build a relationship.** Invite your local personal health reporter to visit your office for a tour or take them to lunch.
4. **Take advantage of real news hooks.** Make sure reporters know about anything new happening at your dental practice – new hires, special events, etc.
5. **Help reporters localize a national story.** Stories in national media like the *Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today* or the “Today Show” often get picked up in your local market. When appropriate, find ways to localize stories and offer to be a spokesperson for media.

## **Using the Toolkit**

In this toolkit you will find materials designed to help support your media outreach efforts at the local level. The materials are customizable and contain placeholders to signify where you should provide specific information.

### **What is a Press Release?**

A press release is a written communication directed at the news media to announce something as having news value. A press release is concise, with the most important information in the beginning so media will see it right away.

**Below, please find a description of each toolkit item, as well as a suggested timeframe for providing these materials to the media.** To use the materials, you will need to fill in each piece appropriately. Please insert information in the fill-in-the-blank areas only as noted. All words in red should be replaced with the correct information – for example, insert your city name where it reads **CITY**. All words in black are options you can choose to personalize your release – for example, replace **his/her** with “his” if you are a male practitioner. Please add your credentials and information about your experience and practice at the end of each customizable release.

- **Customizable AADSM Membership Press Release**
  - Topic: Press release telling media about your new or existing membership in AADSM
  - Media: Intended for newspapers and local business magazines; this can also be used for radio or television
  - Timing: Distribute as soon as possible after receiving membership; follow-up calls to reporters or producers may help build interest
- **Customizable AADSM Event Press Release**
  - Topic: Press release with detailed information for the media on any AADSM-related events you may attend in the future, such as:
    - National Annual Meeting
    - Study Club
    - Educational Course
  - Media: Intended for newspapers, local business magazines or radio
  - Timing: Distribute as soon as possible after event; follow-up calls to reporters or producers may help build interest
- **Customizable OAT Launch Press Release**
  - Topic: Press release announcing OAT as a sleep apnea treatment
  - Key Message: OAT is an effective alternative to CPAP
  - Media: Intended for newspapers, consumer magazines, radio or television
  - Timing: Distribute as desired during the year to generate awareness for OAT
    - Consider distributing on National Sleep Apnea Awareness Day (April 18), Better Sleep Month (May) or sharing with specific media immediately after a sleep apnea-focused article appears
- **Customizable Sleep Apnea Treatment Tips Press Release**

- Topic: Press release positioning OAT as an effective alternative to CPAP
- Key message: Follow these steps to treat snoring and sleep apnea with OAT
- Media: Intended for newspapers, consumer magazines, radio or television
- Timing: Distribute as desired during the year to generate awareness for OAT
  - Consider distributing on or around National Sleep Apnea Awareness Day (April 18) or Better Sleep Month (May), or sharing with specific media immediately after a sleep apnea-focused article appears
- **Customizable Daylight Saving Time Press Release**
  - Topic: Press release raising awareness about the importance of sleep, especially during daylight saving time, and the prominence of sleep apnea
  - Key Message: OAT is an effective treatment for those suffering from sleep apnea
  - Media: Intended for newspapers, consumer magazines, radio or television
  - Timing: Distribute with adequate time for publication in March or November
    - Newspapers: Send to reporters any time during January or February for publication in March, or any time during September or October for publication in November
    - Magazines: Send to editors any time during October or November for publication in March, or any time during June or July for publication in November
    - TV/Radio: Send any time during February for coverage in March, or any time during October for coverage in November
- **Customizable Summer Travel Press Release**
  - Press release positioning OAT as an effective alternative to CPAP that is convenient for summer travel
  - Key Message: OAT can make traveling easier
  - Media: Intended for newspapers, consumer magazines, radio or television
  - Timing: Distribute with adequate time for publication in May, June, July or August
    - Newspapers: Send to reporters in May, June, July or August
    - Magazines: Send to editors any time during January through April
    - TV/Radio: Send any time during April through August
- **Customizable New Year's Resolution Press Release**
  - Press release raising awareness about the relationship between getting quality sleep and achieving health resolutions, and positioning OAT as an effective treatment option for those losing shut-eye to sleep apnea
  - Key message: A trip to the dentist may be the necessary next step to a healthier New Year
  - Media: Intended for newspapers, consumer magazines, radio or television
  - Timing: Distribute with adequate time for publication in January
    - Newspapers: Send to reporters in November or December
    - Magazines: Send to editors in September or October
    - TV/Radio: Send in late-November or December
- **Customizable Snoring and Sleep Apnea Bylined Article**
  - Description: Bylined articles are written by industry experts who represent a company or organization. The articles cover current issues or trends related to the author's industry or area of expertise. While bylined articles are not required to be as objective as press releases, it is important that they are not blatantly

self-serving. Bylined articles should be submitted with a cover letter and offered as an exclusive to the publication.

- Topic: Bylined article raising awareness about the relationship between snoring and sleep apnea, and positioning OAT as an effective treatment from dentists
- Key message: Dentists can help treat sleep apnea with a treatment called oral appliance therapy
- Media: Intended for regional consumer magazines
- Timing: Distribute as desired during the year to generate awareness for OAT
  - To offer the magazine exclusivity, submit to one publication at a time with a specific deadline for when the editor should confirm if the magazine is interested in publishing the article.
- **Customizable Media Phone Script**
  - This document includes a customizable phone script and voicemail message for use when pitching selected members of the media
  - Intended for newspapers, consumer magazines, radio or television
- **Customizable Media Pitch Email**
  - This document includes a customizable email for use when pitching selected members of the media
  - Intended for newspapers, consumer magazines, radio or television
- **Customizable Sleep Physician Letter**
  - This document includes a customizable letter that can be used to introduce yourself to local sleep physicians
  - This document is not a media-facing piece – it is specifically targeted to local sleep physicians
  - Distribute this letter as soon as possible to local sleep physicians; follow up with a phone call to introduce yourself and begin cultivating a business relationship

**Items below available only upon receipt of designation. Contact the national AADSM office at [info@aadsm.org](mailto:info@aadsm.org) to obtain the following:**

- **Customizable ABDSM Diplomate Press Release**
  - Press release telling media about your new or existing status as an ABDSM Diplomate
  - Intended for newspapers and local business magazines; this can also be used for radio or television
  - Distribute as soon as possible after receiving Diplomate status; follow-up calls to reporters or producers may help build interest
  - **Available upon designation**
- **Customizable Accreditation Press Release**
  - Press release telling media about your dental office receiving AADSM accreditation
  - Intended for newspapers and local business magazines; this can also be used for radio or television
  - Distribute as soon as possible after receiving accreditation; follow-up calls to reporters or producers may help build interest
  - **Available upon designation**

## **Identify Appropriate Media**

It is very important to reach out to the right people with your news. Consider all newspapers, magazines, television stations and radio stations in your area. Generating positive publicity requires that you know who your local media are, what they are looking for and how to deal with them personally.

Identify individuals at each newspaper, magazine, radio and TV station who can reach your patients and potential patients. Here's how to develop that target list:

### **Newspapers and Magazines**

Local **newspapers** have an inherent interest in community news. When reaching out to them, keep in mind that they likely have a limited staff on tight deadlines. Be considerate of time and offer to send information via email.

Local and regional **consumer magazines** are an appropriate target for a more in-depth article that can tell the story of a patient's treatment from beginning to end or share detailed tips on the process for receiving oral appliance therapy.

Alternately, local **business magazines** may be interested in news about your facility and staff including accreditation announcements, attendance at seminars and educational courses and new designations for staff members.

In all cases, color photography will be of interest to these publications. Here are some tips for finding the best people at local newspaper and magazines:

- First, scour local newsstands for publications you may not know about. Weekly papers can be great vehicles for news and can help you reach a wider variety of people.
- Read the publications to get a sense of the types of stories they cover. Take note of the bylines (author's name) of relevant stories.
  - Look specifically for reporters and editors who cover health and local business stories.
- Call the newspaper or magazine itself to find contact information for reporters whose names appear in bylines of appropriate stories. Ask for the editors of the pages/sections in which these stories appear.

### **Television Stations**

When you have great visuals to share, television stations may be interested. There are three groups of people to keep in mind when working with television stations: the planning desk, the assignment desk and the producers. The **planning desk** is responsible for planning the news, usually 24 hours in advance, while the **assignment desk** serves as an "air traffic controller" of a newsroom by managing news crews and generating stories. The **producers** oversee and organize production and are usually assigned to one specific show or broadcast.

- To discuss broader story ideas without a fixed day/time, ask for a show producer.
- Depending on the size of the station, each show (morning, noon, evening and night) may have a different producer.
- You should work with the producer to determine ways you can fit in his/her specific show.

## **Radio Stations**

Radio stories should be concise and news- or tip-oriented. Visuals are not an option in radio, so be prepared to offer a high-energy spokesperson who can call in for a live interview or to provide a succinct sound bite.

- Research the biggest radio stations and shows in your area – including news stations, which report news around the clock, and talk shows, which can be a great outlet for discussing tips, trends and products.
  - Call the radio station in advance to find out if it produces its own news.
- Radio producers are usually assigned to a specific show, so if there is a show that focuses on or frequently discusses personal health, ask for the show producer, who is responsible for the making of the show as well as the content.

## **Contact the Media**

Now that you've found the right outlets and contacts and have reached out to them, here are some tips to work with the media to make sure they cover your story and convey all of your messages:

### **Making the First Call**

The first time you reach out to a journalist and introduce yourself:

- Ask if it is a good time for them to speak with you – and if it's not, arrange to talk later.
  - Avoid deadline times, which are typically after 3 p.m. for daily newspapers and 30 minutes prior to any newscast.
- Let them know that you have a specific story you are interested in discussing with them and that it would be a good fit for their section, show, publication, etc.
- Describe your story idea to them succinctly and explain how it would benefit their audience.
- Follow up with them through email, reiterating the details of your story idea, within two days of your conversation so you – and your story – remain top-of-mind.

### **Developing Relationships with Media**

- Establish a rapport with your priority media contacts – those who contribute to the most relevant outlets, sections or shows. Staying in contact with the media ensures that they view you as a reliable source of news and will help you in future news stories.
- Drop them notes to let them know when something is coming up, and check in with them to see if they are working on anything with which you may be able to help. It's okay to be persistent – they rely on you to help them do their jobs.
- One of the most important rules of dealing with the media is to work with journalists, not against them. Remember to relate to them as professionals who are doing their jobs and do not buy into negative stereotypes.

### **Providing Information**

- Be responsive and respectful of their deadlines. Media often work on very short deadlines and may be working on more than one story at a time.
- Make sure all information is organized and easy for them to use.
- If you are unsure of the answer to a question, tell them you will check on it and get back to them – quickly, of course.

### **Becoming a Source**

- Media constantly look to experts in various fields who can provide commentary on various issues in response to current events.
- Send information on your office and a list of the subjects you can discuss. Be sure to include your phone numbers and hours you can be reached.
- Offer to meet with the editors and reporters who cover topics on which you can comment in order to get acquainted. Members of the media are more likely to contact individuals they know or feel comfortable with as a source.
- When contacted by the media, be sure to return calls promptly. Reporters work on very tight deadlines and how quickly you get back to them often will determine if you are included in the story, as well as whether you will be contacted for future stories.



## **Media Messaging**

### **Key Messages:**

1. Oral appliance therapy is an effective alternative to CPAP.
2. Dentists can effectively treat snoring and sleep apnea with oral appliance therapy.
3. Go to [LocalSleepDentist.com](http://LocalSleepDentist.com) to find a dentist in your area who can help treat snoring and sleep apnea.

### **Key Statistics:**

- According to the International Classification of Sleep Disorders, habitual snoring has been found in about 24 percent of adult women and 40 percent of adult men.
- According to AADSM, 12-18 million adults in the U.S. have obstructive sleep apnea.
- According to AADSM, up to 50 percent of sleep apnea patients do not comply with or tolerate CPAP.
  - Research suggests that average CPAP use tends to fall between 3.0 and 5.0 hours per night.
- Compliance with oral appliance therapy has been shown, using patient diaries validated by covert monitoring, to be as high as 75 percent of patients using the appliance all night seven nights a week
- Oral appliance therapy is effective and offers a higher rate of patient compliance than CPAP.
- As the field of dental sleep medicine has grown, AADSM membership has significantly increased over the past several years.
  - Today, the AADSM has nearly 3,000 members. In 2002, AADSM had 300 members.

### **Talking Points:**

1. **Oral appliance therapy is an effective alternative to CPAP.**

#### ***Oral Appliance Therapy as a Solution***

- Oral appliance therapy can minimize the symptoms of snoring and sleep apnea.
- Oral appliance therapy is recommended for mild to moderate obstructive sleep apnea patients who prefer oral appliances to CPAP.
  - The practice parameters state: “Oral appliances (OAs) are indicated for use in patients with mild to moderate OSA who prefer them to continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) therapy, or who do not respond to, are not appropriate candidates for or who fail treatment attempts with CPAP.”
- Oral appliance therapy is also recommended for severe sleep apnea patients – but severe cases should always try CPAP before considering OAT.
- Oral appliances are appropriate for use in patients with primary snoring.
  - An oral appliance is an effective and non-invasive treatment for snoring that doesn't require weight loss or behavioral changes.
- Patients like oral appliance therapy because it is comfortable, easy to wear, quiet, portable and easy to care for.
- The majority of patients prefer using an oral appliance to CPAP.

### ***Oral Appliance Therapy as a Solution -- Continued***

- The side effects of oral appliance therapy are generally minor and most improve within a few weeks.
  - Common OAT side effects are excessive salivation, muscle and tooth discomfort and, occasionally, joint discomfort.
  - Major adverse effects of OAT are uncommon but can include slight tooth movement, permanent changes in a patient's bite, ongoing muscle soreness or loosening of dental restorations.
  - Side effects of oral appliances are no more common than CPAP.

### ***CPAP as a Challenge***

- CPAP, or continuous positive airway pressure, is the recommended treatment for sleep apnea.
- Up to half of sleep apnea patients don't comply with or can't tolerate CPAP.
  - Sleeping with a CPAP machine, which includes a face mask, tubing and a constantly running motor, can be difficult.
  - Common CPAP complaints include mask discomfort and nasal congestion, as well as protests about the relative noise and bulk of the machine.
  - CPAP machines are difficult for travel.
- CPAP has maximum benefit for patients only when they are willing and able to use it continuously.
  - The many sleep apnea patients who don't comply with or tolerate CPAP are in need of an effective, alternative treatment option.

## **2. Dentists can effectively treat snoring and sleep apnea with oral appliance therapy.**

### ***Dentists***

- Dentists pioneered the use of oral appliance therapy for treating snoring and sleep apnea.
- Many dentists are qualified to help treat and manage your snoring and sleep apnea.
  - Dental sleep medicine focuses on the management of sleep-disordered breathing, including snoring and obstructive sleep apnea, through the use of oral appliance therapy.
    - The AADSM is the only non-profit national professional society dedicated exclusively to the practice of dental sleep medicine.
    - The AADSM is the leading national organization for dentists who treat snoring and obstructive sleep apnea with oral appliance therapy.
- Dentists work closely with sleep physicians to treat snoring and obstructive sleep apnea.
  - Once a patient is diagnosed with primary snoring or obstructive sleep apnea by a board-certified sleep physician, a dentist trained in dental sleep medicine can provide treatment with OAT.

### ***Snoring and Obstructive Sleep Apnea***

- Snoring is a sign that your airway is partially blocked. The sound is made as the flow of air causes tissue in the back of your throat to vibrate.
- Snoring can disrupt the sleep of both the person who snores and his or her bed partner.
- Loud and frequent snoring is a common sign of obstructive sleep apnea (OSA).
  - Unrefreshing sleep can also be a sign of OSA.
- OSA occurs when the tongue and soft palate collapse onto the back of the throat, blocking the upper airway.
- People with OSA may stop breathing up to hundreds of times a night for anywhere from a few seconds to more than a minute.
- If left untreated, obstructive sleep apnea is a potentially life threatening condition that can increase the risk for serious health problems from congestive heart failure, stroke, high blood pressure and heart disease to diabetes, obesity, depression and impotence.

### ***OAT***

- Oral appliance therapy is an effective alternative treatment for people who are living with snoring and obstructive sleep apnea.
- Oral appliance therapy uses a mouth guard-like device – worn only during sleep – to maintain an open, unobstructed airway.
  - OAT devices prevent the airway from collapsing by supporting the jaw in a forward position.
  - An oral appliance should be custom fit by a dentist who is trained in dental sleep medicine.
  - Oral appliance therapy is often covered by medical insurance.
- Oral appliance therapy devices come in many different styles, and dentists with training in oral appliance therapy will recommend options based on a patient's personal needs.
  - OAT devices fit in the mouth during sleep like a sports mouth guard or retainer.
  - There are more than 80 oral appliance devices that have received FDA clearance.
  - Effective OAT devices are formed from custom dental impressions made by a dentist. An oral appliance is fitted and adjusted by a dentist to ensure proper fit and maximum effectiveness.
  - An FDA-accepted laboratory must make the custom-fitted OAT device.

### **3. Go to [LocalSleepDentist.com](http://LocalSleepDentist.com) to find a dentist in your area who can help treat snoring and sleep apnea.**

- Dentists who have a broad understanding of oral appliance therapy work with a patient's physician to treat and manage snoring and sleep apnea.
- People with loud snoring and sleep apnea sufferers with difficulty tolerating CPAP should go to [LocalSleepDentist.com](http://LocalSleepDentist.com) to find a dentist who can provide oral appliance therapy in their area.

**Message Reminders:**

- Dentists are *certified* by the American Board of Dental Sleep Medicine (ABDSM), not the AADSM.
  - Individuals who pass the certification exam earn the Diplomate, ABDSM “credential.”
  - There are more than 200 Diplomates (certified dentists) of the ABDSM.
- Dental offices – not dentists – can be *accredited* by AADSM.
- Never imply that dentists diagnose OSA, a medical disease that must be diagnosed by a physician.
- Don’t describe OAT as “eliminating” OSA symptoms.
- It is important to always mention that oral appliance therapy, like CPAP, does have side effects.
- It is important to note that OAT can be covered by medical insurance.
  - OAT is not covered by dental insurance.