

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS: HELPING YOU TO SPREAD THE WORD...

BY TONI BRISTOL

We started our August campaign this year by releasing a series of PSAs. The PSAs cover a variety of topics, not just children's vision. If you have not yet listened to the PSAs, please visit [COVD's website](#) and listen to them. They are located under "Children's Vision and Learning Month" as well as in the drop down menu for the Media.

The plan for the PSAs is to give you a tool to help make vision therapy visible in your community. Radios are required to air a certain amount of PSAs and depending on their size, they often have a department in charge of PSAs. PSAs have to be for a non-profit organization and COVD is a 501(c)(3) non-profit.

Radio stations will often play PSAs when they are trying to fill air time. This can occur at any time throughout the day or night. If they really like the message for a PSA they can play it as often as they like. If you want to ensure that the PSA is aired in your area, you may be able to pay to have it run and to have them add your name at the end of the PSA, stating "sponsored by..."

If there are a number of COVD members in your area, you may want to consider joining together to pay for the radio spots. To determine which radio station you want to approach, first contact the station that the majority of the parents of your VT patients listen to. In this case, do not have a "sponsored by..." line added to the PSAs.

When you are approaching radio stations to request they air the PSAs without paying for air time, start by calling the radio station to find out who you should send the information to and be sure to get the email address. Be sure to ask if you should send an introductory email first with no links in it or if a link to the PSAs is OK. If it's OK, send a link to COVD's website (to the specific page that has the PSAs, <http://tinyurl.com/COVDPSAs>) and be sure to mention that COVD is a 501(c)(3) non-profit. Include the text version for the 30 second and 60 second PSAs which are on COVD letterhead. While ideally it's best to include it as an attachment, I would recommend putting the text for the PSAs in the body of your email (you should be able to copy the text from the PDF).

As with all media, follow-up is important. Keep in mind that the individuals who work in the radio station are often very busy. They may be very interested in your email, but something hotter crosses their desk and they don't respond to your email. Follow-up by calling to see if your email was received, again making sure you state you are calling regarding a PSA for a nonprofit organization regarding Vision and Learning (or whatever the topic is).

If you don't hear back to your email or your call, send the email again, but take out the links and just input the text

with no attachments. If you want to have the station air the PSAs during August make sure your subject line says "time sensitive PSA."

Sometimes the radio station will ask you to fill out some paperwork to demonstrate that the PSA is indeed for a non-profit organization. In this situation please forward the paperwork to the COVD office at info@covd.org.

Finding all the radio stations in your area is simple, visit [radio-locator.com](#) or [ontheradio.net](#). There are also many college stations as well as other schools that have stations, in addition to many religious stations that may be very interested in airing these PSAs.

Please let us know when your PSAs are aired and if you get any feedback from your patients. We hope you enjoy them! Here's to a great August campaign this year.

Need to insert:

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