

TO: "Nurse Practitioners: Rx for America's Health" Board of Directors
FROM: Citigate Communications
RE: 2002 External Communication Report
DATE: October 31, 2002

Citigate Communications recommended and pursued a variety of activities to promote NPs to external audiences, which include primarily lawmakers, employers and insurers. Rather than focus strictly on media relations, which was a predominant focus during Year I of our working together, we utilized an integrated marketing approach, consisting of media relations and direct marketing to deliver our messages to chosen audiences.

Because we are committed to our work with "Nurse Practitioners: Rx for America's Health," we very often donated time above and beyond our allocated budget to ensure projects were given the attention needed to complete them properly.

We were pleased that we helped the campaign garner some significant media placements and that our conversations with reporters further strengthened media relations on behalf of the campaign. We're also proud of the collateral materials created. They deliver strong messages and a professional look. Below are highlights of accomplishments achieved during 2002.

- Generated media interest and interviews for NPs providing care at the 2002 Winter Olympics
- Facilitated discussions with reporters and interviews at conferences where the campaign had a presence, including the National Managed Health Care Congress and the National Council of State Legislatures Annual Meeting
- Generated national media interest in nurse-managed centers, including *The New York Times*
- Wrote opinion letters that were published in *USA Today*, the *Los Angeles Times* and *Chicago Sun-Times*
- Facilitated interviews between NPs and reporters at *Good Housekeeping* and *Fitness* magazine, which resulted in nice coverage for NPs
- Designed a campaign trade show booth and visuals to accompany the booth
- Developed trade show collateral materials
- Wrote and designed an ad for *State Legislatures* magazine
- Developed and designed media tip cards and media guides for campaign members and contributors

More detailed descriptions of our work on various activities follows below.

Media Relations – Proactive

2002 Winter Olympics

Before the Winter Games, Citigate Communications brainstormed several angles that we pitched to the media assembling in Salt Lake City. Using information garnered from our conversations with the NPs working at the clinic in the Salt Palace, we created a pitch that we distributed to national media. We then followed up with reporters by phone, fax and e-mail to encourage interest in a story on any of the topics we presented.

From our work, we attained media opportunities with the Associated Press, the Salt Lake Tribune and KSL-TV, the NBC affiliate in Salt Lake City -- for NPs Penny Jenson, Kismet Rasmusson and Diane Kendall on the care they provided at the Olympics. All three reporters were interested in how inversion and the extra exhaust produced by trailers and busses that normally would not be in Salt Lake City were triggering asthma attacks and respiratory ailments. This angle had the most resonance among media because it had a consumerism aspect. The link these reporters were trying to make was that extra pollution resulting from Olympics activity was exacerbating many health conditions.

Upon talking about this subject, we encouraged our NP spokespeople to bridge to other topics, such as how patient treatment at the clinic in the Media Center had surpassed that in the Poly Clinic. The reporter from AP also seemed mildly interested in the fact that this year's games were the first Olympics in which NPs provided care in a NP capacity.

Unfortunately, due to schedule conflicts, our NPs who graciously volunteered their time at the clinic in the Salt Palace missed the deadlines for two of the interviews we secured. In another instance, the NBC affiliate in Salt Lake planned to visit the clinic on site, but at the last minute were pulled to cover another story.

We also received a request from a reporter at American Medical News for a story about assessing the medical side of the recent Olympics. Although her request was to speak with MDs and DOs only, we encouraged her to review the pitch we created specifically for the NPs providing care at the Olympics. One of those angles included how the team of NPs providing care was hand picked by a physician charged with running the health care facilities at the Salt Palace. We suggested that reporters consider interviewing the physician, which captured her interest.

We facilitated an interview between the reporter and physician. The physician understood that he needed to be the "mouthpiece" in order for this reporter to include the great things NPs were doing at the Olympics in her story. We also urged her to include what this physician had to say about NPs as part of her story since we helped facilitate this interview for her. Unfortunately, after several attempts, the reporter was unable to connect with the physician and was forced to finalize her story without our information.

NP Pitch Letters

Citigate Communications resumed work on this activity, which was suspended in the Fall of 2001 after the September 11th attacks. Once again, we distributed the pitch letters, which centered on the personal stories of NPs who live and provide care in the top 10 media markets across the country.

Outreach efforts resulted in very little media interest. Reporters said available space for feature stories was slim due to the amount of breaking news they were being forced to cover on a daily basis. More positively, however, many reporters said they kept our story angle on file and would give it future consideration.

National Managed Health Care Congress -- Baltimore

Citigate Communications crafted a media advisory and pitched media on why NPs are pushing to make their presence known among managed health care providers. In short, they want to promote their rationale for being fully recognized as primary care providers in managed health care plans, which makes perfect sense given that the traditional managed care model is crumbling. Patients should have the right to choose a NP as their primary care provider and to know that their HMO will cover the visit.

We had great conversations with reporters who cover health care policy at Washington, D.C.-based publications such as the *Washington Post*, *USA Today*, CNN Radio and Bloomberg News. All of them understood the gist of our angle, but said they needed more of a breaking news component in order to pursue a story. They couldn't "sell" a story to their editors solely on what NPs propose. We suggested our angle be part of a larger story but still could not persuade them to commit to a story.

American Association of Colleges of Nursing Faculty Practice Conference -- Chicago

Citigate Communications learned about an upcoming conference sponsored by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing. The conference on faculty practice was in Chicago April 18 – 20. We recommended to the Board that we pitch the nurse managed centers angle to Chicago reporters, particularly since several NPs who are considered nurse managed center "experts" would be in town and available to talk with reporters.

Citigate Communications drafted a media alert on the importance of academic nursing centers in urban and rural settings. We distributed the alert to Chicago-based health care reporters at print and television outlets and conducted follow up. Oscar Avila, a reporter with the *Chicago Tribune* who wrote a story earlier this year about the "rural doctor crisis," expressed interest in our pitch and requested additional local information. We contacted him with NP Lucy Marion and provided him with more detail about her center, the Center for Integrated Health. However, he ultimately was not able to pursue a story about nurse-managed centers.

Nurse-Managed Centers

Citigate Communications spoke with several NPs who work in nurse-managed centers across the United States and conducted research on the center model and history. As part of our research, we also reached out to the federal NP lobbyist for help identifying if there are any NP groups lobbying to change the Medicaid and Medicare rules for reimbursement and if there are any other lobbying activities (initiated by NPs or physician groups) to the benefit or detriment of NPs.

Citigate Communications then noticed an alert about federal legislation on the Kaiser Family Foundation Web site that could impact nurse-managed centers if passed into law. We disseminated information about the Senate bill and requested help discerning if the legislation will allow nurse-managed centers to sustain or expand their operations (i.e., will NMCs become "healthier" as a result of this legislation).

After requesting additional information from NPs on what this legislation could mean, we ultimately were put in touch with Tine Hanson Turten of the Nurse Managed Health Center Consortium. Upon talking with Tine, we crafted a media pitch centering on the communities and patients that rely on nurse-managed health centers for health care service and the fact these centers have little monetary assistance. Given the shortage in most state budgets, new funding from this legislation becomes more crucial. Otherwise, our nation's most vulnerable populations will fall through the health care safety net. This pitch was distributed to select reporters at high-profile media outlets around the country.

During our follow up, we had great conversations with reporters at *The New York Times* and *USA Today*. We then arranged an interview between Tine and the reporter at the *Times*. After much encouragement to persuade these reporters on why a story on this topic is needed now, both said they couldn't "sell" the concept to their editors.

State Budget Shortfalls – Letter to the Editor

Because so many states were facing budget shortfalls this year, Citigate Communications recommended creating a letter to the editor with the message to state lawmakers to not balance the budget at the expense of cutting state-funded health programs. This letter was sent to newspapers in the top 10 media markets; we also enlisted the help of members in our Speakers Bureau to take this copy, tailor it as needed, and send it to their own local publications.

As a result of our efforts, we know of one confirmed media placement. This letter, signed by Lucy Marion in Chicago, was published in the *Chicago Sun-Times* in June. We did not receive much feedback from others in our Speakers Bureau on whether or not they submitted this same letter to their local papers.

Media Interview – Freelance Reporter

Citigate Communications helped facilitate an interview between MJ Henderson and a freelance reporter who had pitched a story to the *Washington Post* on the difference between NPs and PAs. The first interview went well and we expected the reporter to want to speak with MJ for a follow up conversation. Ultimately, this reporter's editor put the story on hold. We contacted the reporter several times afterward asking for an update on whether or not this story would be resurrected. To date, this freelance writer has heard nothing further about it.

Breaking News -- Study

Through its constant monitoring of what the media is reporting on, Citigate Communications uncovered a new study on how poor health care is costly for businesses. This information provided us with a good opportunity to distribute a pitch targeted to one of the campaign's key audiences – using the media to tell the story on how employers can keep their employees healthier. Our angle: employers need to put pressure on insurance providers to include NPs in their plans. We already know that primary care services aren't given proper attention in this country. Patients need better choices, need to understand how important primary care services are and need to have better access to primary care providers.

We created a one-page media advisory and distributed it to health care business reporters at national news outlets. We then placed personal follow-up calls to encourage coverage of our story angle. Reporters did not respond favorably to this pitch, indicated a need for research that would “prove” our argument. They didn’t consider anecdotal information strong enough support.

National Conference of State Legislatures Annual Meeting -- Denver

Citigate Communications pursued two tactics for this conference – traditional media relations and creating marketing materials written to state lawmakers. Media relations efforts consisted of creating a media advisory alerting Denver-based media to consider a story about why it’s in the best interest of state lawmakers to allow NPs parity in delivering primary health care services. We made several rounds of proactive calls to reporters, editors and producers.

As a result of this outreach, we arranged an interview between NP Linda Pearson and KMGH-TV (ABC affiliate in Denver). The segment was scheduled to air during the NCSL Annual Meeting on the evening news. Unfortunately, the piece ultimately was bumped due to some breaking news about a suspected terrorist in Denver. Citigate Communications contacted the station the next day to further encourage use of the segment. The reporter said “we have the segment fully produced and will put it on the air if we can.” We monitored the station with the help of a monitoring service, but the story got bumped due to other breaking news.

National Conference of Gerontological Nurse Practitioners Meeting -- Chicago

Citigate Communications had some in-depth conversations with Lyn Chilton and MJ Henderson and devised two key angles to pitch to Chicago-area media in hopes that they would pursue a story tied to the NCGNP convention in September. Due to attention that Medicare overhaul is receiving and what it will mean to patients, Citigate Communications contacted select Chicago-area media to pitch two ideas: why it’s best for patients if NPs are allowed to treat and refer them for additional health care services directly and how NPs can better ease the seniors “access to care” crisis if they weren’t bound by certain regulations.

We conducted outreach to several area reporters and editors. Reporters we spoke with said they understood our angle, but wouldn’t agree to pursue a story.

Media Relations – Responding to Breaking News

We also reacted to several news stories and requests from reporters. This work, depending on the circumstance, entailed drafting and submitting letters to the editor and/or responding directly to reporters with appropriate information and story ideas.

Concierge Boutique Practices – Letter to the Editor

In January, *The New York Times* published a front-page story about physicians starting “concierge,” or “boutique,” practices. Citigate immediately penned a letter-to-the-editor, signed by Board member Harriet Hellman, about how appalling this practice is at a time when primary care providers are in greater demand than ever. It also makes a rather compelling statement about how she, as a nurse practitioner, already provides virtually all the care provided by these specialized practices with none of the same luxuries.

Citigate submitted this letter to the newspaper; we also distributed it to our Speakers Bureau to use in case the story appears in their own local papers. We continued to use this same letter, changing the “signer” accordingly, when other print publications published similar stories.

We were pleased that a letter we submitted to the *Los Angeles Times*, signed by Speakers Bureau member Christine Betzold, published in August. This letter was sent in response to a story the newspaper published about concierge medical practices during the summer months. Members of the BOD and Speakers Bureau were alerted to the placement and provided a link to the actual letter.

Institute of Medicine Report

In May, *USA Today* reported that there are 18,000 deaths per year due to lack of insurance and access to proper health care. Citigate Communications drafted a letter to the editor in response, suggesting ways in which to better access to health care, signed by Eric Scharf, executive director of ACNP.

As a result, *USA Today* published Eric’s letter. Scoring a placement in this newspaper is a major coup. They are extremely selective in choosing letters and opinion pieces that ultimately get published. Even better, this newspaper reaches a large national audience. Members of the BOD and Speakers Bureau were alerted to the placement and provided a link to the actual letter.

Ladies Home Journal

Citigate Communications responded to a reporter who was working on a story about nurses and how they integrate their professional knowledge to better the health of their families. We suggested the reporter consider speaking with some NPs. Our angle: because of the holistic model of care they are taught in school, and practice in their professional settings, NPs are experts at finding the root causes of ailments and the most effective treatments for people of all ages, whether the advice and care they provide is for their family or their patients. We hear this reporter also contacted Susan Wysocki directly. Susan provided her insight on the story and supplied the reporter with some quotes. The story published over the summer.

U.S. News and World Report

Citigate noticed that the cover story of an early April issue of the magazine centered on primary care doctors finding new ways to bring personal attention back to their practices. We wrote a letter to the editor in response to this article, highlighting that NPs consider these “new models of care” as nothing new when it comes to their delivery of primary health care. Hands-on care, active listening, greater accessibility, and patient involvement in care is standard practice for NPs. Additionally, we made the point that given the opportunity, NPs can help alleviate many the problems plaguing the primary healthcare system today. We then contacted Nancy Shute, the story’s author, to present the NP side of the story and responded to a request by the author for information on how NPs influence the quality of care in hospitals.

Direct Marketing Tactics

National Managed Health Care Congress

In preparation for the Congress in mid-April, Citigate Communications prepared materials to promote NP presence at the NMHCC to highlight the issues affecting NPs within the managed care system. Specifically, Citigate Communications:

- Helped design a campaign trade show booth (contents and collateral materials that we recommended producing)
- Coordinated all booth component writing and production

National Conference of State Legislatures Annual Meeting

Because nursing statutes are mandated on a state level, having campaign presence at this meeting was crucial. To prepare for this conference, Citigate Communications produced:

- New booth materials and collateral materials for the Annual Meeting, including a handout on NP cost effectiveness
- Copies of the recent USA Today letter to the editor placement
- A Q&A brochure that asks, then answers, questions of particular relevance to state lawmakers

Ad for *State Legislatures* magazine

Following the National Conference of State Legislatures Annual Meeting, Citigate Communications coordinated a one-time ad buy in the NCSL Annual Meeting wrap-up issue of *State Legislatures* magazine. This topic of the issue in which the ad appeared centers largely on finding solutions to our nation's health care problems.

The campaign purchased a ½ page ad. Citigate Communications coordinated the ad buy, wrote and designed the ad. The ad itself highlights nurse-managed health centers, run by NPs and other advanced practice nurses, as one investment with guaranteed great returns; yet, current funding in Washington keeps these important health facilities out in the cold. The ad appeared in the October/November issue. We forwarded a copy of this issue to each member of the Board.

Campaign Materials for Members & Donors

To thank campaign members and donors for their contributions to "Nurse Practitioners: Rx for America's Health," Citigate Communications created a media tip card – designed to help NPs garner media attention on their own – and a media guide, which is a more comprehensive "how-to" summary explaining media relations techniques. The purpose of both pieces was to help educate NPs on how to garner their own media attention and what to do when faced with a media interview so that they can communicate the messages they like and can keep control of the interview process.

Citigate Communications drafted the media tip card contents and design. We conducted an audit of material and provided our recommendations of content for the media guides. It contained a summary from our full media training session, relevant campaign materials, examples of news coverage garnered, and research citations, among other pieces.

Citigate Communications then coordinated logistics of this massive mailing of materials. We also alerted the NP community that these materials are available for purchase. We are fielding requests as they are received and making sure monies for these materials are received before being mailed.

Challenges

Perhaps most frustrating for Citigate Communications was feedback we often heard from reporters; they understood the angle of our pitches and how NPs contributed to the solution of many health care ills. However, in their opinion our angles weren't enough for them to pursue a story. Media indicating the need for stronger news hooks – such as pending legislation or a stronger “breaking news” component. In addition, and at the direction of the campaign Board of Directors, we turned more often to our Speaker Bureau to help facilitate our efforts on a local level. Media like to hear from their local news constituents, so we reached out to Speakers Bureau members several times this year to supplement our national media relations efforts. Although there were a few “stars” who took on these tasks (and whose efforts oftentimes were met with successful coverage), the majority of the Speakers Bureau did not participate when we issued these “calls to action.”

Looking Ahead

Citigate Communications looks ahead to future campaign projects with enthusiasm. We're proud to be working with such a great group of people who truly are dedicated to improving our nation's health care.

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