

Working Effectively with PBS Stations

"You cannot understand the future of public broadcasting if you do not grasp the power of this thing called localism. The strength of public broadcasting lies at the local level."

-- Kenneth Tomlinson, chairman
CPB Board of Directors



PBS

Scores of PBS stations will be involved in the grassroots campaign on behalf of *Remaking American Medicine*, often working with QIOs and other National Partners. For those individuals who may be developing a local coalition but have little or no experience with public broadcasters, we hope the following information will be useful.

Outreach is a key component that sets public television apart from its commercial counterpart. Most notable is its ability to bring people together before, during or after a broadcast. Public broadcasting is able to provide this service because of its distinctive structure -- a national broadcast system that encourages local action. Outreach bridges the gap between community concerns and program content by providing opportunities to engage discussion, provide expert opinion, educate and inform.

Outreach Director: Most often the individual in charge of coordinating these activities within the station is the Outreach Director. We encourage you to contact this person as you begin your organizational efforts.

The following are the types of outreach activities most often conducted by PBS stations in support of a national/local initiative.

Community Assessment: Stations are well versed in discerning the needs of their communities. They have long-term relationships with important stakeholders, many of whom may wish to become involved in a RAM coalition. Stations are also constantly seeking feedback from their audiences and are experienced in employing qualitative and quantitative tools.

Local Programming: If additional resources become available, stations may agree to produce local programs that would be broadcast in conjunction with the national series. These activities, which are the prerogative of the station's Programming Department, may include:

- Covering coalition/quality-related news events on the station's news programs.
- Producing 30- or 60-minute documentaries.
- Hosting a live, studio-based community forum featuring expert panelists and *Champions of Change*. Phone banks of station volunteers often support call-in programs.
- Producing interstitial programming. These short, one- or two-minute pieces often air prior to and during the national broadcast. Interstitials may also be videostreamed on the station's Web site.