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 **Scoliosis Awareness Month Event and Media Guide**

*Scoliosis is a condition that causes the spine to abnormally curve sideways. Although many people have not heard of the condition it is surprisingly common, impacting infants, adolescents and adults of all races, classes and all genders.*

*National Scoliosis Awareness Month highlights the growing need for education, early detection and awareness about scoliosis and its prevalence. The campaign also unites scoliosis patients, families, physicians, clinicians, institutions, and related businesses in collaborative grassroots networking throughout the month.*

*This guide will help you join this movement and work with the local media to spread the message to Speak up for Scoliosis!*

**CONDUCT AN EDUCATIONAL SESSION ON SCOLIOSIS**

We have prepared materials so that you can provide information about scoliosis to your community in an educational session.

There are three progressively more informative options that hospitals and community centers will have for conducting the seminars:

Option 1: Show a scoliosis video and provide handouts on scoliosis. (15 minutes)

Option 2: Show a scoliosis video and present a PowerPoint presentation on scoliosis. Also, provide handouts on scoliosis. (35 minutes)

Option 3: Show a scoliosis video and present a PowerPoint presentation on scoliosis and invite a local health professional to conduct a Q&A session based on materials provided in this media and community guide. Also, provide handouts on scoliosis. (45 minutes)

The following is the agenda for Option 3 and can be shortened for Options 1 and 2:

**SCOLIOSIS: EARLY DETECTION IS KEY TO PREVENTION**

Agenda

1. Welcome (5 minutes)

2. Scoliosis Video (10 minutes)

3. PowerPoint Presentation: Overview of Scoliosis (20 minutes)

4. Audience Questions & Answers (Q&A) (10 minutes)

The presentation contains some audiovisual elements so it would be helpful to have a computer with PowerPoint. If a computer is not available, you could simply show a video and have a brief discussion afterwards.

The following are 5 easy steps to help you plan your health seminar:

Step 1: Pick a date, time and room at your hospital, school or community center and begin advertising the seminar at least four weeks in advance. Consider June 26, which is International Scoliosis Awareness Day. Once you have a date picked, [submit it to our event calendar](https://www.srs.org/forms/submit-event.php) and we will share it through our social media.

Step 2: Post a sign-up sheet at your hospital, school or community center’s information desk for those who wish to attend.

Step 3: Do what you can to publicize the event for the general community.

Step 4: Set up chairs and refreshments and hold the session.

**How to publicize Your Event**

One of the most important parts of holding a health seminar is making sure that people know about it and are interested enough to attend.

Start publicizing your seminar at least four weeks in advance. Feel free to customize the materials to include your letterhead, your contact information and relevant facts about the seminar you plan to hold.

Newsletter: Include details about the seminar in your hospital or community center’s newsletter. Details should include information on the seminar, date, time, location and hospital/center’s contact person and/or phone number.

Flyer: Create a flyer about the seminar and distribute it at your hospital/center’s scheduled events. You can post the flyer throughout the hospital/center including the front door, front desk and bathroom stalls. Partner with your local school district to share information with parents. May districts distribute relevant flyers through regular e-mail or “Friday backpack” papers. Or perhaps it could be inserted as a paid advertisement in your local newspaper.

Word-of-Mouth: Encourage your staff to talk to patients about attending this important seminar.

Calendar Listing: Submit a calendar listing to your local daily and weekly newspapers and to your local television and radio stations for possible inclusion. The listing should include information on the seminar, date, time, location and hospital or community center’s contact person and/or phone number. It should be sent at least four weeks in advance to these media outlets.

**HOW TO PITCH YOUR STORY TO THE MEDIA**

While the media generally welcomes health and medical story ideas, reporters from each medium (television, radio, print and Internet) have different needs and approaches to a story.

*Television*

What are the visual elements of the story? Here are a few:

* Spine-related elements such as video of abnormal curves, x-rays of a normal, straight spine as compared to a curved spine affected by scoliosis
* Surgery-related elements such as video from operating room, animation, video of patients’ bodies before and after operation
* Observation and examination-related elements such as video of screening tests either at school or in doctor’s office, video of checkup at doctor’s office
* Brace-related elements such as video of various types of braces, patient demonstrating putting on a brace, wearing a brace at school or while exercising
* Review the [SRS YouTube account](https://www.youtube.com/c/ScoliosisResearchSociety/videos) to access several video resources already available.

When pitching a television reporter, note what kinds of pictures that can be made available so that the reporter can start to envision the piece.

Another option for a reporter is to follow a patient before, during and after surgery. The patient and their parents must be willing to allow a camera crew to follow them through their daily activities and struggles with scoliosis and then for several weeks, perhaps months, after the surgery. Selecting the right patient and parents is extremely important to producing a successful story.

*Print*

Print reporters generally cover health stories in more depth than radio and television reporters. Provide them with comprehensive information and references about scoliosis – most of which are included in this guide. Reporters will likely want to take photographs or may request previous photographs taken of the patient illustrating their spinal curve prior to treatment. More frequently, print reporters are being asked to file stories for the Web site affiliated with their print publication. Ask the reporter if he or she would like an animation or b-roll for the Web version of the story.

*Radio*

Most radio stations do not have a reporter dedicated exclusively to medical stories. In many cases, however, there are opportunities to get medical stories covered through other means. If you can get the news director or assignment editor interested in the story, it can be assigned to a general assignment reporter.

Many radio stations have public affairs and community service programs that welcome guest experts like doctors. Tell the station’s producers that this is a topic that will be of interest to their listeners. As a professional, you are well-spoken, articulate and can discuss scoliosis, its treatment options and the advantages of early detection and treatment in a way that an average listener can understand.

Another option is to send your press release or flyer to the local NPR affiliate. Local NPR stations cover topics of both national and local interest. You can [find your affiliate station](https://legacy.npr.org/stations/pdf/nprstations.pdf) on their website.

*Pitching the Story*

Most reporters will decide if they want to cover your story within the first minute or so of your e-mail, so start with the most interesting elements first. Articulate the essence of your story within the first few lines of your e-mail.

Grab their attention with key points such as:

* Scoliosis is a condition that affects two to three percent of the population, or about 7 million people in the U.S., so it is definitely of importance to all audiences
* A screening test for scoliosis is non-invasive and takes about 30 seconds
* People diagnosed with scoliosis can live full, active lives
* Only two-thirds of states mandate or recommend scoliosis screening in schools, so it is important that friends and family members learn to recognize the signs and symptoms of the condition and know that help from their doctor is available.
* See sample press release below for ideas

*Maintain Contact*

Scoliosis is not necessarily a “breaking news story,” so you may not be able to get reporters to do the story on the first or second e-mail. However, keep in contact with reporters on an intermittent basis to maintain a good working relationship and to keep the story a priority.

Remember that you want to be the person they call when they do decide to cover this story, and you have the resources to help reporters make the story both accurate and interesting

**SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE**

Dear editor

It’s Scoliosis Awareness Month! We hope that you will support the mission of the month to highlight the growing need for education, early detection and awareness about scoliosis and its prevalence within the community. This e-mail contains several resources for pulling together a printed or multi-media story.

* Share our press release below.
* [Watch a message from a Past President of the Scoliosis Research Society](https://vimeo.com/556262256), an international society of experts.
* Check out and share our [Patient Webinars](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w-YWIOj9A98&list=PLPKH9xsIPC0QgK66u_oETmPa5XkAbkkdN).
* Watch our specialists answer some of the [Frequently Asked Questions](https://www.srs.org/patients-and-families/common-questions-and-glossary) regarding scoliosis from diagnosis to treatments.
* Share a [patient success story](https://www.srs.org/patients-and-families/patient-stories).
* Submit questions to specialists with [our Ask A Doc tool](https://www.srs.org/patients-and-families/common-questions-and-glossary/ask-a-doc).
* Use our social media content including [sample social media posts](https://www.srs.org/patients-and-families/additional-scoliosis-resources/scoliosis-awareness-month) and [Speak Up for Scoliosis poster](https://www.srs.org/UserFiles/file/awareness-month/campaign-materials/AwarenessMonthPoster-Spine.pdf).
* Click here for the [National Scoliosis Awareness Month Support Letter](https://www.srs.org/patients-and-families/additional-scoliosis-resources/scoliosis-awareness-month) to send to your state governor.
* You can also find one of our member specialists near you [using this tool](https://www.srs.org/find/) on our website.
* Follow and share our posts on [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/srs_org), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/SRS_org), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ScoliosisResearchSociety), and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/srs_org/).

For Immediate Release.

**Speak Up For Scoliosis during Scoliosis Awareness Month**

*(Name of Practice or Doctor) recognizes**June as Scoliosis Awareness Month*

*City, State (XXX Date) –*  Scoliosis is a condition that causes the spine to abnormally curve sideways. Although many people have not heard of the condition it is surprisingly common, impacting infants, adolescents and adults of all races, classes and all genders.

Approximately [one out of every six children diagnosed with scoliosis](https://www.srs.org/patients-and-families/conditions-and-treatments/parents/scoliosis/syndromic-scoliosis) will have a curve that requires active treatment, sometimes involving surgery. Early diagnosis is the key to taking important first steps to providing treatment that may prevent more serious problems.

Every year in June, [National Scoliosis Awareness Month](https://www.srs.org/patients-and-families/additional-scoliosis-resources/scoliosis-awareness-month) highlights the growing need for education, early detection and awareness about scoliosis and its prevalence. The campaign also unites scoliosis patients, families, physicians, clinicians, institutions, and related businesses in collaborative grassroots networking throughout the month.

Only two-thirds of states mandate or recommend scoliosis screening in schools, so it is important that friends and family members learn to recognize the signs and symptoms of the condition and know that help from their doctor is available. It is often parents or primary care providers who first identify the issue. Fortunately, an examination and X-ray can confirm the diagnosis and an expert can recommend treatment, if necessary.

As part of our advocacy effort for the month, we sends requests to all US governors asking them to [proclaim June as National Scoliosis Awareness Month.](https://www.srs.org/patients-and-families/additional-scoliosis-resources/scoliosis-awareness-month) We invite our scoliosis patients, family members and advocates to support SRS’s request for proclamations by [sending in their own letters of support](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.srs.org%2FUserFiles%2Ffile%2FSupport_SAM_Letter.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK). Let your voice be heard in our state and take action to support those with spinal conditions.

Please visit [www.srs.org](http://www.srs.org/) for further information. Also follow us on XXX (fill in with your social media.)