

# ANNE KLEIN COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

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## Keeping the Flu From Bugging Philadelphia

One in a Series of Award-Winning Solutions

### The Challenge:

The Delaware Valley Healthcare Council wanted to educate the public about the national delay in flu vaccine distribution and flu prevention in order to raise public awareness and prevent emergency room overcrowding and panic.

### Results:

- Media coverage raised public awareness about the flu, flu prevention measures and the region's preparedness. Despite the delay in the availability of vaccine, there was no public panic, and emergency rooms were not unduly taxed.
- Eight major media covered the story based on the "flu" news conference: WCAU-TV (NBC 10), WPVI-TV (ABC 6), WTXF-TV (FOX 29), WPHL-TV (WB 17), KYW News Radio, WHYY-FM (PBS), the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and The Associated Press. In addition, *USA Today* picked up the AP story and ran articles, as did many other area newspapers and radio stations. The media continued to report on the story and provided updates throughout the flu season.
- The program received a Jersey Shore Public Relations & Advertising Association JASPER award for Media Relations/News Conference and a Pepperpot Meritorious Achievement award for Public Service from PRSA's Philadelphia chapter.

### Background:

With a national delay in distribution of flu vaccine announced late in the fall of 2001, the Delaware Valley Healthcare Council asked Anne Klein Communications Group what it might do to educate the region's residents about the impact of the delays, and about preventing and treating the flu. A key issue was the avoidance of unnecessary emergency room use, as hospital emergency rooms in the Philadelphia region were overcrowded and occasionally on divert status.

### The Campaign:

AKCG recommended DVHC harness the resources of its member organizations and work with the city of Philadelphia to disseminate the necessary information. Because of the public health implications of the topic, AKCG recommended a major news conference be held. Key healthcare organizations, including the DVHC, the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, the Philadelphia Health Department, and the region's hospitals, agreed to participate in the educational news conference held Jan. 3, 2001.

Extensive research conducted by AKCG amassed the information necessary to prepare the media materials, including a media alert, news release, agenda and individual fact sheets on: flu vaccine distribution priorities; flu symptoms and when to seek medical attention; flu vaccine effectiveness; flu prevention tips; home treatment for flu; and how physicians can locate flu vaccine for high-risk Philadelphia residents. AKCG selected a location, built the media list, invited the media to the news conference and assisted at the event.

*To learn more about how Anne Klein Communications Group can help you create news and communicate effectively with your audiences, please call and ask for Anne Klein or Chris Lukach.*