

How to Plan an HCHR Media Spectacle in Five Easy Steps!

Step 1: Research! Look for upcoming governor's debates, relevant chamber of commerce events, or healthcare-related events. Also think of relevant dates like anniversaries (ex: 1 year anniversary of Vermont Health Connect), etc.

Step 2: Make a plan! Get together a crew of VWC members, friends, or neighbors and set goals and a timeline. If need be, do reconnaissance on the location where the event will be held in order to know which entrances will be used by event participants.

Step 3: Prepare!

- Do turnout calls to make sure you have a critical mass (and figure out transportation)
- Make a banner (you can use an old sheet and paint) with messaging that connects the event with our campaign demands (ex: Gov. Shumlin: Equitable Financing Now!; Healthcare Is a Public Good, Not for Private Profits)
- Write a press release and send to local reporters the day before. Call them to confirm they'll be covering event and make personal connection. Tell them there will be a photo opportunity and spokespeople available and they shouldn't miss it.
- Develop talking points and print flyers with our HCHR demands (ex: Progressive taxes to fund GMC)
- Prepare a spokesperson to talk to media. (someone with personal story that connects to demand)

Step 4: Show up at event with beautiful banner and a dozen members and stand by the door or go inside. Call press once you're there and let them know HCHR is present. Sing songs. Greet event participants and passers-by with flyer handouts and smiles. Identify the press when they arrive and introduce them to your spokesperson.

Possible options:

- Arrive early, approach decision maker early (invite the press) share story and call question
- Be prepared with brief powerful story and question to insert in the conversation.
 - in an organized time
 - in an opportune moment if none are formally offered
- Greet the decision maker as she/he enters with powerful song. Finish with calling question.

Step 5: Debrief! Before action participants disperse, take 15 minutes to reflect on how the event went, thinking about logistics, tone, response from press, power-holders and passersby. Report-back to other VWC members/lists about how it went. Check the press tomorrow and see if you made it in the press. Make a plan for next time!

Key points to remember:

- **Tone is important:** We're going for spectrum between moral authority and dignified outrage. Think of how to subvert the "angry protester" frame that the press often employs.
- **Tell stories:** Personal stories can be excellent tools for connecting with an audience and humanizing action participants.
- **Make it relevant:** Effective actions provide a creative hook and amplify a perspective on a story that is already trending and media-worthy. Don't be boring!
- **Think about next time:** How was this a leadership development opportunity for VWC members and participants? What relationships did you develop with local reporters?

Criteria:

- People must feel a sense of taking useful action so it must be something that involves mass participation and must make sense as a way of moving our agenda forward
- We should deliver a message and reframe the issues on our terms (human rights framework)
- When we confront power holders we should force a response in a way that no matter what happens, we can win
- Use our strategic orientation for guidance
- Attract, not alienate people (not seem like wingnuts)
- Simple, understandable message that is difficult for media and onlookers to misinterpret
- Puts a human face on the crisis
- Ensure that we have the capacity and resources to pull it off