



# SPONSOR A COMMUNITY HEALTH EVENT

Hosting an event in your community is a popular way to promote the profession and/or celebrate PA Week. Great events always involve careful planning. Whether you are setting up a few information tables or planning a health screening, here are some tips to help make your event a success.

## **Start With an Event Idea That Will Generate Buzz**

When planning what type of event to host, take the needs of the community and the popular health issues of the day into account. Your event should demonstrate how providing needed health services in the community underscores the role PAs play in healthcare.

Be sure to consider the legal aspects of your ideas. A health education event put on by PAs is fine (i.e. “10 Surprising Ways to Improve Your Family’s Nutrition” or “Tips for Getting Your Kids Outdoors.”) However, if you are doing health screenings or anything else that requires a license, you’ll need to create a plan that assures you are abiding by your state law.

## **Choose a Project Leader and/or Committee**

Committees are typically created to assist in planning and organizing large events. Consider adding non-PAs to your committee; an outsider’s perspective may be useful.

Committees for large events should include an event leader who not only manages all activities but also develops the budget and invites others to get involved. Committees should also include clinicians who will staff the event, volunteers who will set up and take down equipment, and marketing or public relations experts to help publicize the event. Smaller scale events will require fewer people but still require focus and organization.

If you are the event leader, remember to consistently communicate with everyone involved. Make sure to plan and run efficient meetings, respond to questions quickly and develop a small, diverse network of people to staff the committee. Delegate tasks to appropriate people, but stay on top of assignments and deadlines.

## **Set Goals**

It is important to set goals for the event early in the planning process. Determine up front what you are hoping to achieve. To establish a theme and goals for your event, answer the following questions:

- Is there a particular health issue of concern in your community?
- Are you trying to include a select group of participants or the general public?

- What size event do you want to hold and how many people do you expect to attend?
- Do you have a budget? Will the event be free, or will you need to charge a fee? Can you seek sponsors and/or supporters from whom you can draw resources?
- Is the theme of the event appropriate for the time of year?
- Is it in coordination with another event in your area?

After developing goals and a theme, set specific and measurable objectives that you can review after the event ends. A goal of “high attendance” is vague and subjective; a more effective target is: “Our goal is to have 200 participants at our first health event.” Then plan your services, budget and space around that expectation.

### **Creating a Checklist**

Preparation must begin early when planning a large-scale event that involves many components. A checklist is a great tool for planning events of all sizes, especially those that have several elements such as sponsorships, speakers, media outreach, materials production and evaluation.

### **Determine Location and Timing**

The location should be determined early in the planning process. The space should suit the size and style of the event, as well as your budget. Also consider the venue’s visibility and accessibility: hosting an event in a mall, for example, will allow your activity to be seen and enjoyed by a broad spectrum of people; however, you will need to check with the location to determine whether they require any permits and how you can reserve the space.

Timing is also very important. Try to avoid a scheduling conflict with another event that might also appeal to your target audience. Setting aside a few hours is best, since not everyone will be able to attend within a small time window.

### **Establish Funding and Budget**

The budget’s scope depends on the event you’re planning. If some sources of financial support are not known ahead of time (such as grants), plan an event scenario that integrates one model with funding and one with limited or no resources.

### **Possible sources of financial support:**

- Healthcare employers such as a hospital or clinic
- Community service organizations, universities and technical schools
- Grants or constituent organization funds
- Registration charges
- Exhibiting fees (for health fairs)

- Businesses with a healthcare component (e.g., pharmaceuticals, insurance or medical supplies)

#### **Potential costs:**

- Medical supplies
- Food
- Rent for space and equipment
- Speakers' fees, room and board, travel expenses
- Marketing activities
- Educational materials, such as fliers and brochures
- Decorations, giveaways and door prizes

Remember that many organizations have more to offer than just financial support. In-kind contributions can meet a lot of your needs, such as volunteer staff, food or promotional materials. When reaching out for support, if you detect interest behind a response of “Sorry, we have no resources at this time,” then explore what else they may be able to contribute.

#### **Potential donations/in-kind support:**

- Personnel time and skills
- Food
- Door prizes
- Room space (public schools or libraries)
- Reduced costs through laboratories or suppliers
- Decorations
- Equipment and medical supplies (from a hospital)

#### **Executing the Event**

- Create a comprehensive plan “that captures the detailed timing of each event (e.g., from when food service personnel arrive to when food is placed on tables) so you know what should be happening each moment during the event and who is in charge of each task.
- Gather everyone from your team and walk through the event space in advance of the event.

- Draft a media advisory to send to media outlets approximately one week ahead of the event and again the day before (for more help on working with the press please refer to AAPA's Working with the Media guide).
- Get social and make sure you plan out social posts and capture photos to share through digital channels, including Facebook and Twitter. Be sure to tag AAPA so that we can promote your event, too.
- After the event, draft an “after action report” for all your volunteers and staff that includes outcomes from the event, statistics like how many people attended or how much blood was donated, your final thoughts on the event, and a thank you to your team. This document can also be adapted into a press release.