The GIA Awards for Excellence recognize outstanding work by members of the GIA and their staffs. The awards acknowledge the most creative and effective approaches used to promote academic medicine through alumni relations, development, marketing, public affairs, and public relations programs and projects.

It was an honor and privilege to serve as chair of this year’s GIA Awards for Excellence competition. This winter, assisted by AAMC staff and talented GIA colleagues who served as judges, I had the opportunity to experience the best of the best of your work. We were all impressed by the caliber of professionalism, creativity, and innovation exhibited by the GIA members who entered the competition. Their achievements in publications, writing, media relations, special projects, events and online media demonstrated the powerful impact of institutional advancement at medical schools and teaching hospitals throughout the United States and Canada.

There were 123 entries from 50 institutions in the competition this year. I extend my sincere appreciation to all of the judges who generously gave of their time and expertise. Their dedication to this program was apparent in the careful review and evaluation of each and every submission.

In addition to the judges, I would also like to acknowledge Tanya Marvin from the City of Hope who assisted us throughout the entire awards process, along with the AAMC staff.

This year, on the 50th anniversary of the GIA, we celebrate and honor our colleagues with 15 Awards for Excellence and 18 Honorable Mentions. The judges selected award recipients who are truly going above and beyond to produce exemplary work and achieve standout results. The award-winning submissions remind all of us why we are involved in the important work of advancing the missions of medical education, research, and patient care. I hope you will take the time to view and learn more about these entries.

Congratulations to the Award for Excellence honorees and to all who entered and participated in the competition. And thanks again to all of the individuals who made this year’s competition a success. We can all take pride in celebrating the outstanding work of our colleagues in GIA.

Sincerely,

Brenda Maceo
GIA Awards Chair and Vice Chair for Marketing, Public Affairs and Public Relations
Vice President, Public Relations and Marketing
University of Southern California
2012 GIA Awards for Excellence Judges

Publications Category; Shoestring Category; Special Projects, Programs, Campaigns Category; and Premier Performance Category Judges

David Anderson, Medical Foundation of North Carolina and University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine
Edward Keohane, University of Massachusetts Medical School
Michael Knecht, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital
Jacqueline Kozloski, Thomas Jefferson University and Hospital

Electronic Communications Category Judges

Cynthia Floyd Manley, Vanderbilt University Medical Center
Jacob Portnoy, University of Minnesota Academic Health Center
Vincent Rhodes, Eastern Virginia Medical School

Robert G. Fenley Writing Category Judges

Heidi Cannella, UT Southwestern Medical Center
Richard Puff, University of Cincinnati College of Medicine
Jonathan Rabinovitz, Stanford University School of Medicine

2012 GIA Awards for Excellence Chair

Brenda Maceo
Vice President, Public Relations and Marketing
University of Southern California

The GIA extends its gratitude to Brenda and her colleague at City of Hope, Tanya Marvin for overseeing and administering the awards competition, and to each of the judges for volunteering their time and expertise. Many thanks to all who submitted entries.
GIA Award for Excellence
Publications Category: Single or Special Issue

Duke Cancer Report
Duke Medicine

Duke Cancer Report is a publication intended to support the Duke brand and raise awareness locally and globally of Duke Medicine’s mission of transforming medicine and health.

The challenge:
Duke Cancer Report’s primary objective is to raise awareness about Duke’s leadership in cancer research and patient care. Part of the challenge included how most effectively and economically to communicate that message to the center’s key audiences, including referring physicians, oncology specialists, and national oncology leaders.

The solution:
Although the report is an in-depth, weighty communication, the information is delivered with concisely written copy and a lot of illustration, including graphs, callouts, bulleted lists, photographs, captions, and subheads. Its format was designed to be scanned, encouraging readers to jump to information on a specific topic or quickly get a general sense of the progress of Duke’s cancer research and patient care initiatives. To increase the report’s value for future reference, contact information was included for clinical trials; research sources were listed within the articles; and contact information for specific researchers and physicians was included. “Resources for Clinicians” was placed on the back cover for ease of use.

To save money, the report also served as a fundraising publication. The development staff opted not to produce an annual report and instead mailed this report to donors.

The results:
A national reader survey of referring physicians in January 2011 found:
76 percent had read the report; 41 percent felt more positive about Duke cancer research and care after reading the report; and 8 percent were prompted to take action (go online for more information; contact a specialist).

In November 2010, Duke distributed 63,000 copies of the report in advance of the U.S. News survey period for selecting the top medical centers in the nation. Duke’s reputation score in cancer rose nationally by more than 2 points over its 2010 score, and the center moved from 12th position to 11th position.

Judges said: “One of the most clear, crisp and efficient uses of data I have seen in a publication.”
Contact: Carol Harbers, carol.harbers@duke.edu
GIA Award for Excellence
Publications Category: External Audience Periodicals

Discoveries Magazine
Cedars-Sinai Medical Center

Discoveries magazine is Cedars-Sinai Medical Center’s flagship publication about medical research and its impact on patient care. Through engaging human-interest and trend stories, Discoveries showcases the excitement of scientific discovery and the men and women who benefit from it. The twice-yearly magazine is mailed free to approximately 150,000 subscribers in Southern California, including patients, donors, faculty, staff, media, and friends.

The challenge:
Cedars-Sinai, the largest nonprofit hospital in the western United States, also maintains one of the top non-university-based medical research programs in America—but that fact is largely unknown. The purpose of Discoveries magazine is to raise awareness about this lifesaving research and the role it plays in advancing clinical care without diluting or oversimplifying the message for a sophisticated lay audience.

The solution:
Cedars-Sinai created a sophisticated, friendly, and fresh design for the magazine that allows lay readers to connect with complex scientific topics in an exciting visual way. Because the majority of research under way at Cedars-Sinai is translational, the medical center has an extraordinary resource for stories: its patients.

By focusing on storytelling, the editorial team creates a personal and emotional connection between the reader and the topic. Many feature articles tell the stories of patients who have directly benefitted from new technology or clinical trials. Others involve nontraditional storytelling approaches such as infographics and photo essays to convey their message.

The results:
Cedars-Sinai Discoveries has been well received. Circulation has grown from 40,000 to 150,000 in five years. It is also distributed in the hospital public areas, in waiting rooms, and in doctors’ offices, and sent to partner institutions around the country. Survey results indicate that it is one of the hospital’s most effective communication vehicles for reaching out to donors and patients alike.

The summer 2011 issue, which featured a story about a new valve replacement surgery in clinical trials, was used by a major heart valve manufacturer to present its product to other medical institutions. The same story led to several referrals of patients who eventually took part in the clinical trial described in the story.

Judges said: “An incredibly sharp publication that is equal parts modern, interactive and inspiring.”
Contact: Laura Grunberger, grunbergerl@cshs.org
**Launching a New Brand: UMMC Connections**
University of Maryland Medical Center

*UMMC Connections*, an internal quarterly publication, showcases the people and programs that inspire pride across the University of Maryland Medical Center. In the spring of 2011, *UMMC Connections* was redesigned to promote the partnership of the hospital and its affiliate—the University of Maryland. As part of that restructuring, *UMMC Connections* transitioned from bimonthly to quarterly.

**The challenge:**
As part of the rebranding, *UMMC Connections* was redesigned to fulfill two goals: to promote the interprofessional connections between the university and the hospital, and to produce content appealing to patients and visitors, in addition to the 6,800 hospital employees and 1,200 attending physicians. With its broader outreach and the transition from bimonthly to quarterly, the editorial team had to be more selective in the stories they chose and more creative in the way those stories were told.

**The solution:**
The rebranding debuted May 12, 2011. A new logo and color palette meant a whole new design for the publication, whose spring issue was distributed immediately after the public unveiling of the logo. The new design presented all articles in a bolder and fresher way. New taglines and features, such as a spring-themed back page, reinforced the quarterly publication schedule. Because this issue was published during National Nurses Week, the team demonstrated the interprofessional collaboration of the university-hospital partnership through the context of nursing. Past *Connections* issues featured stand-alone patient stories. Due to space constraints, patient stories became part of larger stories that promoted other hospital initiatives and accomplishments.

**The result:**
The redesign was well-received by staff members, with more hits on the Web and depletion of the print issues at many of the 22 distribution kiosks. The biggest difference was an increase of about 500 more hits to the electronic version from the Internet, indicating it appealed beyond the usual internal audience. Moreover, the 8,300 copies of the spring 2011 issue placed in kiosks around the hospital were depleted at a faster rate than in the past, especially at the main entrances where patients and visitors enter the hospital.

**Judges said:** “This is what an internal piece should look like.”

**Contact:** Meghan Scalea, mscalea@umm.edu
GIA Award for Excellence  
Electronic Communications Category: Non-Web-based

**Amazing Things Are Happening Here**  
New York-Presbyterian Hospital

In an effort to regain recognition of its stature in the face of increasing competition, New York-Presbyterian (NYP) Hospital created an advertising campaign to differentiate itself from its competitors. Inspiration came from hospital-conducted interviews with patients who consistently expressed their positive experiences, passionately and emotionally, with the staff at NYP. These interviews evolved into the “Amazing Things Are Happening Here” campaign.

**The challenge:**
In 2010, the New York marketplace had become cluttered with advertising from three local NYP competitors. Their messages attempted to copy NYP’s leadership positioning and they outspent NYP by at least 2 to 1 in media. Results of independent research companies indicated that competitors’ advertising was generating greater audience awareness than NYP’s advertising efforts.

**The solution:**
NYP decided to capture its patients’ incredible medical journeys on camera, unscripted, in a unique testimonial format to reignite consumer awareness of the brand. Using black-and-white video, the hospital’s advertising agency produced simple, authentic, 60-second visuals of five patients sharing their experiences at NYP before, during, and after treatment. To reinforce the advertising message, the agency undertook an integrated campaign of television, billboard, and online exposure.

**The result:**
According to independent research indicators, “unaided advertising awareness” more than doubled, from 11 to 24 percent, after only four weeks on air, surpassing all competition. It sustained this level after three months on air. “Positive word-of-mouth/buzz” increased from 17 to 26 percent. NYP ads significantly outscored the competition and attained benchmark goals of greater than 50 percent response for several key attributes, including “differentiation,” “relevancy,” and “information worth sharing.” Almost half of respondents gave NYP commercials an “excellent” rating—double that of the leading competitor. According to internal NYP data, telephone inquiries from referring physicians increased approximately 25 percent, and unique daily visits to the Web site increased more than 40 percent.

**Judges said:** “Kudos to the marketing team for finding those stories and more importantly for having the sense to get out of the way and let the patients tell them.”

**Contact:** David Feinberg, daf@nyp.org
GIA Award for Excellence
Electronic Communications Category: Web-based

**Scope Medical Blog**
Stanford University School of Medicine

Scope (http://scopeblog.stanford.edu) is a group-authored medical blog offering external audiences a curated source of biomedical news and conversation.

**The challenge:**
Historically, the Office of Communication and Public Affairs at Stanford University School of Medicine has promoted the research and clinical enterprise of its faculty through print and broadcast media. Over the past four years, however, social media has disrupted the traditional newsroom and simultaneously offered an opportunity for the school of medicine to connect directly with its audiences.

**The solution:**
Scope was launched as a medical blog to provide external audiences with access to high-quality, timely biomedical news and conversation. It is designed to reach two primary audiences: health care and biomedical research professionals; and educated, science-minded U.S. adults.

To be credible, the blog would need high-quality writing and processes that could support high-volume output delivered in a style true to the medium. All writers on Scope are asked to leverage their expertise (many have Ph.D.’s or other graduate education in the life sciences) and follow their interests. Two contributors also act as editors. A style framework was developed to create a consistent experience for readers that is elegant and noise-free and also offers a variety of syndication options such as a Twitter feed and an RSS feed. The School of Medicine brand is present but does not dominate the design. Stanford’s Information Resources & Technology (IRT) department has managed two site builds. Scope runs on a custom WordPress installation that IRT also maintains.

**The results:**
In its few first months of publication, Scope site visits averaged in the thousands. In 2011, however, the blog averaged about 25,000 unique visitors per month, with a peak of 42,000 visitors in its busiest month. About 49 percent of traffic comes from referrals from other sites (excluding search engines), indicating heavy linking to Scope.

Scope entries have been referenced in, or included on, Boing Boing, Medgadget, New York Times’s Motherlode, Los Angeles Times’s Booster Shots, KevinMD.com, 33 Charts, and countless other sites.

**Judges said:** “Scope Medical Blog succeeds where many of us have tried and failed.”
**Contact:** John Stafford, john.stafford@stanford.edu
GIA Award for Excellence
The Robert G. Fenley Writing Category: Basic Science Staff Writing

“Mars and Venus, Revisited”
By Elaine Vitone
Pitt Med Magazine
University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine

For decades, epidemiological studies have shown sex-based differences in a number of diseases and disorders—but amazingly, scientists have only recently begun to analyze data by sex or even to consider it as a variable. The author started asking Pitt researchers what they were learning and found that men and women and boys and girls are worlds apart in terms of their nervous, cardiovascular, musculoskeletal, and immune systems, and that these differences have important health implications.

An excerpt:
To say that men and women are of different minds is a tired punch line, a fact of life we accept so fully that it’s practically old hat. But if you try to talk about differences in terms of the structure and function of the brain—the organ itself—scientists stumble over the idea, hindered by certain hang-ups.

For one, throughout the history of our evolving understanding of human health, we’ve tended to chalk up every inconsistency between the sexes as a function of the circulating hormones that are so powerful through our reproductive years. For another, if you point out a difference—even something as statistically strong as the slant toward women when it comes to major depression—people shrug it off. … People tend to get caught up in the social construct of gender if you try to talk about the sexes in terms of biology.

But in recent years, scientific circles have begun to accept the notion that socialization isn’t all to blame. If it were, why would women in Sweden—a place where education and labor laws have gone a long way to foster equality among men and women—be just as prone to depression as American women? Nor can we explain it all away with circulating hormones. For example, Alzheimer’s disease—which emerges years after sex hormone levels wane—is more fatal in men than in women. Investigators at Pitt and elsewhere are finding that we are built differently and wired differently, quite literally. The neurocircuitry that connects the parts of the brain has a very distinct way of evolving in males versus females. It turns out, we are fundamentally different, even at the cellular level.

Judges said: “This article shows tremendous enterprise in drawing together different strands of research around the medical school and tying them together in answer to a fascinating question.”
Contact: Margaret McDonald, mmaggie@pitt.edu
GiA Award for Excellence
The Robert G. Fenley Writing Category: General Staff Writing

“A Second Hand, a Second Chance”
By David Greenwald
UCLA Medicine
UCLA Health System

In July 2010, UCLA Health System announced it was establishing a hand-transplantation program. While hand transplants had been performed elsewhere in the country, the UCLA Hand Transplant Program would be only the fourth in the country and the first such program in the western United States. This article in UCLA Medicine discusses the new program and groundbreaking surgical procedure through the prism of its first patient, to open a window for readers on her life and to take them into the operating room to experience the drama of the surgery and its impact on the life of one patient and her family.

An excerpt:
At 2:55 in the afternoon on March 5, 2011—one of those lovely sun-washed days in Los Angeles—Emily Fennell moves the index finger of her right hand. This wouldn’t be remarkable if not for the fact that just hours earlier Emily had no right hand at all. But now, 16 hours after she was wheeled into O.R. 12 on the second floor of Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center, Emily has a new right hand of flesh and bone, with five long, slender fingers, and the hope of recapturing a more normal life. And with that slight, almost imperceptible stirring of her finger, Emily Fennell, a 26-year-old mother from Yuba City, California, becomes a part of history as the first patient in the Western United States to receive a hand transplant. And UCLA makes history as the first hospital west of the Rockies to perform the landmark surgery.

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… As she is rolled in her bed down the long corridor to the O.R. suites, Emily’s mother, Kim Herman, who arrived at the hospital shortly after her daughters, and Andrea follow. The procession stops at the red line on the floor, beyond which family cannot pass. It is the moment for Kim and Andrea to say good-bye. Each leans over to wrap Emily in a long, tight hug. The medical team has assured Emily that even at this stage, she can still change her mind about the surgery. “Are you sure?” Kim asks very softly. “Yes,” Emily responds. “I’m sure. I’m scared, but I’m sure.”

Judges said: “Expertly written. The writer pulls you through the surgery giving the reader an excellent eyewitness account.”
Contact: David Greenwald, dgreenwald@mednet.ucla.edu
“Aging with AIDS”
By Kim Kowsky
Edited by Laura Grunberger
Discoveries
Cedars-Sinai Medical Center

As more people with HIV/AIDS enter middle and older age, a cruel irony is emerging: the same medications that saved and prolonged their lives also may be contributing to several serious chronic illnesses and challenging the prevailing view of AIDS as a manageable condition. Through the story of a 67-year-old patient and interviews with epidemiologists and neuroscientists at Cedars-Sinai, freelance writer Kim Kowsky and senior editor Laura Grunberger worked together closely to give the story focus and direction. The editor also suggested a “by the numbers” page to give the story context. Taking some of the statistics out of the body copy helped the flow of the story and released its emotional content.

An excerpt:
In 1983, Steve Bolan spent his 40th birthday getting a physical. Although the movie advertising executive seemed healthy, he was worried about a mysterious illness that was making many of his friends seriously sick. Steve received a clean bill of health, except for a strange but benign yeast infection normally seen only in infants. When the infection persisted for a year, his doctor finally diagnosed him with AIDS-related complex, or ARC, a term no longer in use to describe people who have minor symptoms caused by infection with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). “I knew it wasn’t good news, but no one really understood what it meant,” says Steve, who was eventually diagnosed with full-blown Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome, or AIDS.

“More and more people around me were getting sick and dying, but all my doctor could say was ‘let’s wait and see.’ That was the horrible part—waiting for him to tell me my time was up.” …

Steve, whose diagnosis and treatment have run roughly parallel to the evolution of drugs that fight the disease, now suffers from diabetes, heart disease, and liver problems that may, in part, be induced by these medications. “My doctor has been trying to convince me that what I should worry about now is heart disease or diabetes, not AIDS,” says Steve.

Contact: Laura Grunberger, grunbergerl@cshs.org
GiA Award for Excellence
Special Projects, Programs, or Campaigns Category: Alumni Relations

Celebrating the Life and Legacy of Dr. Peter
University of British Columbia, Faculty of Medicine

Dr. Peter Jepson-Young, a 1985 M.D. graduate of the University of British Columbia (UBC), dedicated his life to advancing acceptance and treatment of HIV/AIDS through sharing his own story, which he told on television through The Dr. Peter Diaries, and through the Dr. Peter AIDS Foundation (DPAF), which he established just weeks before he died on Nov. 17, 1992. From 1990 to 1992 the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) aired 111 weekly episodes of The Diaries, giving many people their first introduction to someone who was openly gay and had AIDS. Dr. Peter's life and legacy touched the UBC Faculty of Medicine's alumni affairs team, and they wanted to recognize their late classmate at the 25th anniversary of the M.D. Class of 1985.

The challenge:
The alumni affairs team set dual goals of planning an outstanding reunion and a celebration of Dr. Peter's life that would raise awareness and understanding of HIV/AIDS. They needed to collaborate with three other independent teams, UBC Central Alumni Affairs, the CBC, and the DPAF, and ensure that the event stayed focused on Dr. Peter's life and legacy, not individual projects or messages.

The solution:
The team chose the CBC studios as their venue. Plans included showing a consolidated video of The Dr. Peter Diaries to be followed by a panel discussion with some of Dr. Peter's classmates, his mother, and the Diaries producer. The DPAF provided hors d’oeuvres and volunteers to serve at the reception. UBC Central Alumni Affairs secured the studio, covered the cost of technical labor onsite and the RSVP and e-blast system, provided the e-vite design and printed program, and contributed staff to help organize the event. The CBC discounted the rental cost of the studio and provided a well-known CBC personality to moderate the panel. After the many in kind contributions, there was no monetary cost to the event for the Faculty of Medicine Alumni Affairs, other than staffing.

The results:
Registration was full within 24 hours, and the audience of 315 packed the CBC studios on September 9, 2010. The Vancouver Sun and the National Post brought local and national publicity to the event and the HIV/AIDS research under way at UBC. The Class of ’85 raised $24,000 for the DPAF, adding to the $1.3 million raised during DPAF’s 20th anniversary celebrations in the following weeks.

Judges said: “Very compelling approach to engage broad groups in support of a valued alum. While the metrics provided include dollars raised, they clearly achieved so much more.”
Contact: Marisa Moody, marisa.moody@ubc.ca
GIA Award for Excellence  
Special Projects, Programs, or Campaigns Category: Marketing

My Hospital Notebook  
UCLA Health System

Because UCLA is a quaternary academic medical center, many pediatric patients spend extended periods hospitalized. Recognizing a need for a support group, the director of child life services formed the UCLA Parent Advisory Council (PAC). One of PAC’s first actions was to conceive of a binder that would be rich with advice, resources, and words of wisdom for parents of children newly diagnosed with a chronic or life-threatening condition. Marketing was asked to make the parents’ vision a reality.

The challenge:
Marketing’s job was to bring this labor of love to life, honoring the vision and content the PAC requested while maintaining UCLA’s brand and messaging. The goals included creating materials in a format that could be easily updated; finding a suitable binder; and creating English and Spanish versions.

The solution:
The “My Hospital Notebook” binder incorporates the words of wisdom from PAC parents and serves as a reference guide. It contains a welcome letter from the chair of pediatrics and the PAC, and seven sections:
• Who’s taking care of my child?
• What do we need to know about the hospital?
• Where do we stay if our child is in the hospital for awhile?
• What do we do if we need a break?
• Where can we find additional support?
• Tips for communicating with your medical team
• My information organizer

Divider pages feature anecdotal advice from parents and warm, engaging photography. To reinforce the overall brand, the theme “It begins with U” was incorporated. The binder has pockets and blank pages and tabs for adding personalized information. The content files are maintained in Microsoft Word, allowing hospital staff to update information easily and inexpensively.

The result:
Parents are appreciative and excited to receive the binder—and say it gives them a sense of independence. Outpatient clinic staff also use the binder to inform parent about services when an outpatient is going to be admitted. Several council members have used to the binders themselves; one placed her daughter’s medical data inside to keep everything in one place.

Judges said: “A beautiful and easy-to-use product. I imagine it seemed a bible to some parents during their child’s hospital stay.”
Contact: Judi Goodfriend, jgoodfriend@mednet.ucla.edu
GIA Award for Excellence
Special Projects, Programs, or Campaigns Category: Public Affairs/Community Relations

Funding UTMB’s Future: Communications Strategies for a Texas-Sized Challenge
University of Texas Medical Branch

In 2008, the main campus of University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) on Galveston Island sustained more than $1 billion in damage from Hurricane Ike. A groundswell of community support prevented the closure of campus and UTMB garnered support from the 2009 Texas Legislature. But work toward recovery remained as the 2011 legislative session drew near and Texas grappled with balancing its budget.

The challenge:
The Office of Public Affairs had to achieve the following results in the 2011 legislative session: debt service on a tuition revenue bond for a new hospital; maintain a fund for storm recovery; maintain base funding to preserve Level I trauma center status; and obtain a new contract for correctional-care services.

The solution:
Public Affairs developed an information campaign to educate key audiences about the legislative process; implemented a statewide media relations campaign; and positioned UTMB leaders as experts on numerous issues to be debated by the Texas Legislature.

Outreach through print materials included one-page briefings for legislative staff; pocket cards providing at-a-glance access to data on economic impact and legislative priorities; presentations to legislative committees; and letters from the UTMB president to donors and alumni. Web-based outreach included Ben’s Blog, a view of the session authored by UTMB’s senior vice president for health policy and legislative affairs; a Budget Update Web site; and updates via dynamic feature boxes on internal and external Web sites, the online employee newsletter, and social media. The media relations team provided general media relations about UTMB legislative priorities and developed an op/ed strategy to build statewide awareness of UTMB’s value, even to areas beyond its primary service area.

The results:
Capitol staffers were uniformly complimentary of UTMB’s one-page briefs; 29,374 click-throughs to Ben’s Blog between January and June 2011; 59,000 page views of Ben’s Blog from June to August; 7,836 page views of Budget Update in four months; 30 op/eds published in papers whose readership totaled 3.6 million; and 1,461 hits in general earned media from October 2010 through June 2011.

Most important, all four legislative priorities were met. UTMB is continuing to repair and mitigate storm damage, continuing to advance its missions, and preparing to build the new hospital.

Judges said: “Very thorough, comprehensive, well thought out approach to tackling a complex subject.”
Contact: Chris Comer, ccomer@utmb.edu
GIA Award for Excellence
Special Projects, Programs, or Campaigns Category: Public Relations

Promoting the world’s first stem cell clinical trial for epidermolysis bullosa
University of Minnesota Academic Health Center

When University of Minnesota Medical School blood and marrow transplant physicians published a groundbreaking research paper about treating a rare and lethal skin disease in the New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM), it created a solid opportunity to promote the novel transplantation work still being done, 42 years after doctors there performed the world’s first successful bone marrow transplant in 1968. In 2010, University of Minnesota physician researchers were conducting a clinical trial—the first of its kind in the world—to treat a lethal skin disease known as epidermolysis bullosa, or EB. The work would be sure to further position the University of Minnesota Medical School as a world leader in regenerative medicine research and treatments—if only there was a way to tell everyone about it.

The challenge:
The two primary goals of the project were to:
1. Secure national, regional, and local media coverage of the research publication on the date the NEJM embargo lifted
2. Drive key audiences to all of the storytelling elements that were created to explain and support the research and housed on the Academic Health Center’s EB Web site page

The solution:
Staff members on the project team created more than a dozen storytelling elements to break down the complexities of the clinical trial and treatment, including videos, participant story snapshots, physician expert bios, fact sheets, and photos. These materials were made available to reporters on a password-protected Web page for one week prior to the NEJM embargo lifting to help reporters understand the research so that the news stories they wrote would be well-informed and of high quality.

The results:
The hard work of the project team earned more than 140 media stories totaling millions of media impressions, drove key audiences to watch the videos about the work more than 2,230 times, and elevated the EB Web site landing page to the most frequently visited page on the University of Minnesota Web site for the fiscal year.

Judges said: “Great bench-to-bedside story and well planned and executed. Nice to see a real communication plan with all the necessary elements.”
Contact: Laura Stroup, lstroup@umn.edu
GIA Award for Excellence
Shoestring Category: Public Affairs

Preserving stem cell research in Minnesota: A fight to save science and save research
University of Minnesota Academic Health Center

The 2010 midterm elections dramatically altered Minnesota’s political landscape as the state House and Senate swung to Republican majorities for the first time since state elections became partisan in 1973. With first-time Republican legislators promising extensive budget cuts and a conservative approach to public policy, the University of Minnesota’s budget, medical education programs, and outreach clinics instantly became a target.

The challenge:
At the start of the 2011 legislative session, conservative lawmakers quietly introduced the Human Cloning Prohibition Act. The legislation, as written, would broaden the state’s statute to include a ban on therapeutic cloning and forbid federal funding for human embryonic stem cell research, challenging future NIH funding. The result of the bill’s passage would be potentially catastrophic: a lifesaving medical technology would be reduced to an illegal act. Compounding the issue was the state’s $5.4 billion budget deficit. Any fight against the bill would have to be grassroots in nature, activating advocates and creating a groundswell the governor could not ignore.

The solution:
A team of public affairs and communications staff immediately went on the offensive by:
• Securing testimony of U of M stem cell experts and health sciences administrators before key committees
• Hosting two media events, one patient-focused and the other focused on the biomedical industry
• Building a “Research Saves Lives” landing page to engage key stakeholders and advocates
• Producing an informational video
• Securing earned media placements in outlets statewide
• Activating allies within disease-related advocacy organizations

The results:
The advocacy efforts created a groundswell of citizen outrage and prompted legislators to examine the issue. Media relations efforts secured 35 placements in March and April 2011. The landing page secured 328 unique visitors in March and April. The video drew more than 100 views from stakeholders and legislative staff.

The governor vetoed the Human Cloning Prohibition Act and, with the support of the university and its allies, positioned his opposition to the legislation as nonnegotiable during the ensuing special session.

Judges said: “Solid grassroots public affairs work designed to educate and advocate—nicely executed.”
Contact: Steve Jepsen, sejepsen@umn.edu
GIA Award for Excellence
Shoestring Category: Public Relations

Dozer the Marathon Dog: A Public Relations Bonanza
University of Maryland Medical Center

A split-second decision by a three-year-old goldendoodle named Dozer presented the University of Maryland Medical Center's communications team with a "golden" public relations opportunity. The dog bolted from his yard and joined runners in a half-marathon to benefit the University of Maryland Greenebaum Cancer Center. With the help of a 27-second video of the dog crossing the finish line, the team developed a public relations and fundraising campaign around Dozer. There was no budget to promote this happy accident of fate.

The challenge:
Dozer’s romp through Howard County, Md., on May 15, 2011, was an unexpected opportunity to draw attention to the cancer center. To maximize the impact of the story, the team needed to:
• Connect Dozer to the cancer center and half-marathon
• Drive Web traffic to the center’s Web site and Dozer’s fundraising page
• Use social media to tell the story widely at no cost

The solution:
After securing permission from the dog’s owner, the communications team began pitching the story to media, spread the word through Facebook and Twitter, and posted Dozer’s video on YouTube and the medical center’s Web site. The communications team produced a second video to tell viewers Dozer was raising money for cancer research and how to donate. On May 26, Dozertedogfanpage launched on Facebook; today his page has 16,000 fans.

The result:
Word of Dozer’s dash quickly spread around the world and captured the attention of the news media. The video of him crossing the finish line went viral. A story on ABC World News was seen by an estimated 7.7 million viewers. Dozer has raised $25,000 for research at the cancer center. He will serve as a mascot for the 2012 race, which will be held on May 6 in Howard County.

Judges said: “Can I still give to Dozer? A great demonstration of how a communications shop can seize the moment!”
Contact: Meghan Scalea, mscalea@umm.edu
GiA Award for Excellence
Premier Performance Category: Integrated Advancement

Be Part of the Cure
KU Endowment, University of Kansas Medical Center, University of Kansas Hospital

In 2011, one of the KU Endowment's major initiatives was helping the KU Cancer Center to secure needed funds and raise the public's awareness of its quest to attain cancer center designation from the National Cancer Institute (NCI). As part of an integrated advancement effort, KU Endowment joined with KU Hospital and the KU Medical Center to develop the “Be Part of the Cure: Discovery, Innovation, Care” campaign to assure that KU's goal, first identified in 2005, was realized.

The challenge:
The NCI invited KU Cancer Center to apply for cancer center designation in September 2011. With less than a year remaining in the application countdown, KU Endowment was tasked with the following:

• Raise the final $16 million of a two-year, $61 million campaign
• Build awareness and educate at least 100,000 members of the Kansas City metropolitan area of the benefits of attaining NCI designation
• Present a unified public communication strategy by building collaborations and lasting relationships between a multi-campus institution and competing organizations

The solution:
Staff identified four key activities for achieving objectives:

• Producing a TV special telling the story of the cancer center's quest through patient vignettes that highlighted the cancer center's core areas of excellence and directing viewers to a special giving page on the cancer center's Web site
• Increasing the cancer center's social media presence by recruiting 10,000 fans to its Facebook page
• Hosting parties with key stakeholders to kick off the campaign and celebrate successes
• Rallying electronic media around the NCI designation effort and radiating it communitywide to promote fundraising

The results:
“Be Part of the Cure” was a success. KU Endowment reached its fundraising goal. Contributions included many unexpected gifts, which arose from the Facebook recruiting effort. According to Nielsen ratings, the TV special reached more than 279,000 viewers. More than 10,000 new fans joined the Facebook page, and the number of people commenting, sharing, and liking its content continues to increase.

Judges said: “This campaign was equal parts strategic and aggressive. Well thought out, executed and measurable return on investment.”

Contact: Stephanie Grinage, sgrinage@kuendowment.org
2012 Honorable Mentions

Publications Category: Single or Special Issue

2010 Report to the Community
Barnes-Jewish Hospital

Service, Compassion, Care:
Community Benefits Report 2010
Emory University, Woodruff Health Sciences Center

Publications Category: External Audience Periodicals

Discoveries
University of California, San Diego Health Sciences

Stanford Medicine Magazine
Stanford University School of Medicine

Publications Category: Internal Audience Periodicals

CheckUp
Lehigh Valley Health Network

Electronic Communications Category: Web-based

VNR Lung Taste Buds
University of Maryland Medical Center

Telling Our Stories: UMassMedNow Video Features
University of Massachusetts Medical School

Electronic Communications Category: Rich Media

1:2:1 Podcast Series
Stanford University School of Medicine

The Robert G. Fenley Writing Category: General Staff Writing

“Unsung Heroes: BIDMC Nurses Help Patients Donate Life”
By Michael Keating
BIDMC Today
Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center

“Chronic Questions”
By Maya Bell
*University of Miami MEDICINE*
University of Miami Miller School of Medicine

The Robert G. Fenley Writing Category: Solicited Articles

“His 2nd Chance”
By Katie Sweeney
Edited by Laura Grunberger
*Discoveries*
Cedars-Sinai Medical Center

“The High Cost of a Medical Education”
By Sonya Collins
*Yale Medicine*
Yale School of Medicine

Special Projects, Programs, or Campaigns Category: Development

*Why I Donate Employee Giving Program*
University Hospital Foundation (Utah)

Special Projects, Programs, or Campaigns Category: Marketing

*MD Sparty Online Store*
Michigan State University College of Human Medicine

*Physician Photo Cards*
UCLA Health System

Special Projects, Programs, or Campaigns Category: Public Affairs/Community Relations

*Distracted Driving Public Awareness Campaign*
Lehigh Valley Health Network

Special Projects, Programs, or Campaigns Category: Public Relations

*Advanced Biometric Technology Helps Increase Patient Safety and Security in a Handy Way*
NYU Langone Medical Center

Shoestring Category: Public Relations

*Making it Social: Match Day on Facebook*
USF Health/University of South Florida College of Medicine