



HEALTHCARE CASE STUDIES

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American Health Care Association

Health care association maintains funding

SITUATION

Washington, D.C.-based American Health Care Association (AHCA) is the non-profit national federation of affiliate state health organizations, together representing more than 11,000 non-profit and for-profit nursing facility, assisted living, developmentally-disabled, and sub-acute care providers that care for approximately one million elderly and disabled individuals each day. AHCA called upon us when the industry was confronted with congress-imposed pending Medicare cuts that would slash health care funding for nursing home residents.

STRATEGY & TACTICS

Hanser & Associates helped AHCA formulate and implement a winning strategy and conduct a series of successful events and news conferences in the Midwest.

RESULTS

Events at member-operated nursing home facilities in Sioux City and Dubuque, Iowa; and Cincinnati, Ohio drew news media coverage and attention to pending cuts. The strategy got the attention of key members of Congress and resulted in maintaining funding for nursing home residents.

BioForce Nanosciences

Branding develops international marketplace

SITUATION

Chicago-based BioForce Nanosciences provides innovative commercial products for applications in nanotechnology, including consumable support products for atomic force microscopy (AFM). In 2005 BioForce introduced its flagship instrument platform, the Nano eNabler™ system, a molecular printer that rapidly and precisely delivers liquids to surfaces — such as silicon chips — in droplets that are ten billion times smaller than a drop of blood. The system increases productivity in new cell biology applications in the biomedical and life sciences markets.

STRATEGY & TACTICS

BioForce hired Hanser & Associates as the company prepared to begin commercial product sales worldwide. We helped create BioForce's global brand and product positioned, planned the company's investor relations and marketing programs, and prepared marketing and media materials.

RESULTS

BioForce's brand and innovative products were well-received in the North American and international medical marketplace at the time of launch.

Calvin Community

Long-term PR exemplifies “How a retirement community ought to be”

SITUATION

Des Moines, Iowa-based Calvin Community, a not-for-profit continuing care retirement community built in 1965 needed to increase occupancy in the community’s 400-unit independent living, assisted living and skilled nursing facilities. Leaders called upon Hanser & Associates.

STRATEGY & TACTICS

Hanser & Associates created a long-term, comprehensive marketing plan to inform prospective residents about Calvin’s unique community and position it as an ever-present positive example of “How a retirement community ought to be.” Our staff worked alongside Calvin’s management team and board of directors to implement the plan, including highly visible 40th Anniversary events around the city, new website, marketing materials, annual reports, quarterly newsletters, television ad campaign, and news coverage in local media.

RESULTS

Calvin Community has been featured in dozens of news articles in Des Moines-area media; and residents and their families are re-energized to see “our community” featured in media. Calvin’s volume of inquiries, tours and occupancy increased sharply.

Catholic Health System

Hospital mergers improve profitability

SITUATION

Buffalo, NY-based Catholic Health System, formed in 1998, is a non-profit healthcare system that provides care to Western New Yorkers across a network of hospitals, primary care centers, imaging centers and nursing homes. Due to shrinking revenues, the system was under significant financial distress and at a crossroads. The board and management decided to “retask” three hospitals – providing each with a new healthcare focus – and transfer ownership of another. These were not simple solutions. Catholic Health hospitals have long been pillars in the local communities; and the healthcare mission is centered on community involvement, healing compassion and attention to the underprivileged. Rumors of potential hospital closings or employment upheaval had sparked protest marches and created ongoing anxieties among some stakeholder groups.

STRATEGY & TACTICS

Catholic Health board and management retained Hanser & Associates in 1998 to help create a multi-year communication strategy that would address stakeholder concerns, explain management decisions, and adhere to the needs and doctrine of Catholic Health’s religious sponsors. We provided comprehensive counsel and planning, furnished the framework for employee communication, media relations and community outreach.

RESULTS

The strategy and communication plan received approval from all levels of the Catholic administration, including the Vatican. The Catholic Health restructuring announcement produced community-wide understanding and acceptance of the change. Western New Yorkers, patients and employees (and their unions) responded favorably. The net result of the management action has been Catholic Health saving millions of dollars annually.

Catholic Health System

Health care system generates support for service expansion

SITUATION

Buffalo, NY-based Catholic Health, formed in 1998, is a non-profit healthcare system that provides care to Western New Yorkers across a network of hospitals, primary care centers, imaging centers and other community ministries. The successful system consolidated hospitals and services following the 1998 merger; then introduced advancements in cardiac, neonatal and other services; increased patients served; and improved financial performance. In 2000, Catholic Health needed to expand comprehensive cardiac care, the largest patient demand, projected to increase more than 20 percent in the next decade. Although Catholic Health led in cardiology services (with 45 percent market share), none of its hospitals provided cardiac surgical procedures. Catholic Health desired to provide a full continuum of cardiac care services rather than transfer patients outside the system to receive surgery at competing hospitals regarded for quality cardiac care. Catholic Health's goal: Successfully add heart surgery and advanced cath lab services in a competitive marketplace. Although Catholic Health had obtained necessary Certificate of Need approval from New York regulators, success would not come easily.

STRATEGY & TACTICS

Catholic Health board and management called on Hanser & Associates to recommend a communication strategy, message and plan that would resolve competitive issues, address stakeholder concerns related to Catholic Health's expansion, and launch the new service line to produce revenue for Catholic Health. The firm, already knowledgeable regarding marketing of cardiac services and familiar with the Catholic Health executive team through a series of previous projects, began the assignment with primary and secondary research. We interviewed local cardiologists and cardiac surgeons, health care administrators and community leaders. We also conducted comparative market research using data on cardiology centers in the top 100 markets in the U.S, which proved the need for an additional surgical center in Buffalo and that "competition breeds quality." These findings preempted competitors from credibly declaring, "Buffalo doesn't need another cardiac surgery center." Then, Hanser & Associates wrote physician, employee, donor and community communications; supported media relations; and created new Catholic Health Cardiac Services marketing materials.

RESULTS

The strategy and communication program created by Hanser & Associates received approval from Catholic Health's management and board, and was implemented within weeks. The resulting Catholic Health cardiac expansion announcement produced community-wide understanding and support of the new service. Funds to build and equip the new facility were quickly raised from donors. Top national cardiac surgeons sought the position of medical director for the new program. The program began performing surgeries in newly constructed cardiac operating rooms within 18 months! Net result: A much-needed cardiac surgery program serving the needs of patients in Western New York and producing millions of dollars of new revenue annually for Catholic Health.

CHI Health Good Samaritan

Award-winning campaign encourages residents to prevent influenza

SITUATION

With influenza season bearing down and a shortage of flu vaccine making headlines in fall of 2004, CHI Health Good Samaritan (formerly Good Samaritan Hospital), located in Kearney, Neb., wanted to inform the public in central Nebraska of the importance of proper hand washing to help prevent the spread of bacterial and viral infections.

STRATEGY & TACTICS

Hanser & Associates created and implemented the “Give Health a Hand” public relations campaign. Through print, radio, TV and online news coverage and area hand-washing demonstration events, the firm secured media placements throughout central Nebraska that resulted in more than 95,000 media impressions — nearly three per household — about the importance of frequent hand washing. Omaha-based Redstone worked alongside Hanser & Associates to create the campaign’s integrated advertising and interactive tactics.

RESULTS

CHI Health Good Samaritan reported that influenza numbers were down during the 2004-2005 flu season, and central Nebraska was one of the last areas in the United States to be struck by influenza. It was not a coincidence. Public Relations Society of America in 2005 awarded Hanser & Associates the prestigious national Bronze Anvil award for the “Give Health a Hand” campaign. Considered the “Oscars” recognizing excellence in public relations tactics, the annual Bronze Anvil awards recognize the very best in PR tactics in North America.

Iowa Department of Public Health

Bilingual collateral notifies residents of bioterrorism readiness

SITUATION

In the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks and later bioterrorism threats across the USA, the State of Iowa’s Department of Public Health needed crisis communication to inform all Iowa residents about the state’s bioterrorism readiness.

STRATEGY & TACTICS

Hanser & Associates implemented statewide bioterrorism readiness communication for the state. We create statewide bilingual communication when we wrote and designed a newspaper insert describing the state’s bioterrorism readiness programs, including smallpox vaccination. We arrange for it to be delivered to 1.7 million Iowa homes during February 2003.

RESULTS

The English/Spanish publication was the first bioterrorism-related information successfully delivered to every household in Iowa.

Iowa Donor Network

Non-profit transforms identity, develops new name and logo

SITUATION

The non-profit Iowa Donor Network (IDN) — formerly known as Iowa Statewide Organ Procurement Organization (ISOPO) — is the state's organization serving as the initial, primary contact for all human organ, tissue and cornea donation. The agency strives to increase public awareness of the need for organ donations among potential donors. ISOPO needed a new name and logo, and retained Hanser & Associates to lead a branding process transforming the agency's identity and introducing the new name and logo. IDN wanted to maximize the opportunity to generate statewide news coverage, spread important organ donation messages in conjunction with the announcement and enhance understanding, acceptance and participation in organ donation.

STRATEGY & TACTICS

The firm confirmed the selection of the name, designed logo graphics depicted IDN's role — saving lives by joining donors, health care professionals and recipients — and helped launch the new brand, including announcement events in Des Moines and Iowa City. We created news media materials, conducted media spokesperson training for spokespersons and informed local media. We also placed news coverage statewide, including stories in Iowa cities where major medical centers are located, and letters to the editor were placed, drawing attention to the need for more organ donors.

RESULTS

The new name and logo were well received by medical professionals, patients and the public. The events and resulting news coverage moved the needle of awareness and participation, and IDN reported increased calls from potential donors.

Iowa Pharmacy Association

Association uses PR to define position in community

SITUATION

Des Moines, Iowa-based Iowa Pharmacy Association (IPA) is the state society representing the profession, serving the professional needs of all pharmacists, pharmacy students and pharmacy technicians. IPA retained Hanser & Associates to help the statewide association communicate more effectively with the Iowa legislature and statewide opinion leaders regarding drug costs. The association needed to communicate how members help contain Medicaid drug costs in Iowa and how Iowa pharmacists improve health care and save state money.

STRATEGY & TACTICS

We helped association executives formulate a strategy, message and communication materials — including a brochure — to effectively tell pharmacists' story to the Iowa legislature, statewide opinion leaders and other target audiences.

RESULTS

The communication campaign resulted in a better understanding of the role of Iowa's pharmacists among target audiences; adequate funding for Medicaid drug costs in Iowa was maintained.

MedImmune, Inc.

Video news release and PSA aired around globe

SITUATION

MedImmune, a Gaithersburg, Maryland-based international biotechnology development company, hired Hanser & Associates for media spokesperson training in conjunction with the U.S. product launch of Synagis™, the first bioengineered respiratory drug. Synagis™ had been prescribed in 1997 to avert potential respiratory illnesses of the McCaughey septuplets, the world's first living septuplets.

STRATEGY & TACTICS

The firm provided media spokesperson training to Ken and Bobbi McCaughey, parents of the McCaughey septuplets, and prepared the parents for taping of a video news release (VNR) and public service announcement (PSA).

RESULTS

The VNR and PSA were distributed, and aired by 1,600 TV stations around the globe (including the Oprah Winfrey show when the septuplets were guests), with 604 million total impressions. MedImmune's marketing executive said, "Results (and sales) were beyond our wildest expectations."

Ottumwa Regional Health Center

Communication plan improves patient experience & community relations

SITUATION

Ottumwa, Iowa-based ORHC is a regional hospital committed to providing exceptional care in a compassionate manner. It serves an eight-county area in Southeast Iowa and Northeast Missouri, and ORHC's 1,000 employees rank it among the region's largest employers. As ORHC was undergoing change, its leaders set a goal to be ranked in the top 5 percent of hospitals nationally in patient satisfaction, and in 2005 engaged Hanser & Associates to formulate a plan to guide marketing communication.

STRATEGY & TACTICS

The firm first reviewed employee, patient and community survey data to find improvements needed in communicating with internal and external stakeholders. We also audited all channels of communication, including a review and analysis of all written communication (i.e., hundreds of marketing materials, newsletters, ads and news releases) and other forums of dialogue and community relations. Next, we conducted one-on-one interviews with ORHC leaders and community stakeholders to understand the broad community issues and leadership dynamics, and six focus groups among physicians, community leaders, patients, employees and volunteers to fully explore the issues. Then, the firm made recommendations to ORHC's board of directors and executives, including a new role for sustainable marketing driven by communication from within ORHC. A public relations plan was created, which included actionable recommendations to evolve the communication function for improved transparency, listening, accountability and celebrating successes. We also provide media spokesperson training to ORHC's senior executives to help improve communication with the community.

RESULTS

Hanser & Associates' recommendations were adopted by ORHC's board and implemented by executives. As a result, ORHC has reported improved relationships with employees, patients, physicians, volunteers and community leaders. Furthermore, ORHC has been able to complete new business initiatives and improve efficiency. ORHC received the National Outstanding Patient Experience Award and is recognized in the top 5% in the nation for patient care, and satisfaction among physicians, staff and volunteers.

Palmer College of Chiropractic

Public relations protects college during crisis

SITUATION

Palmer College of Chiropractic was established in 1895 in Davenport, Iowa by D.D. Palmer, founder of the chiropractic profession. Palmer College (formerly named Palmer Chiropractic University System) has approximately 3,000 students enrolled at campuses in Davenport, Iowa; Port Orange, Florida; and San Jose, California; and 26,000 alumni practicing around the world. Hanser & Associates was retained in 2004 by the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees as they prepared to announce extensive changes. The Board was also at the midpoint of the \$35 million capital campaign for the new Academic Health Center (AHC) in Davenport.

STRATEGY & TACTICS

Hanser & Associates conducted a communications audit, proposes strategies to protect the college's market position during a crisis and maintain/build the Palmer College brand, created a plan of action, and drafted communications materials for the Executive Committee as it prepared to make changes in the college's administrative team, and reaffirm its commitment to governance of the institution. The Board on Feb. 5, 2004, accepted the resignation of the chancellor and took action to immediately realign the administrative team and refocus on critical topics; and appointed a team of respected administrators to lead each campus on an interim basis. Throughout the process, the college relied upon Hanser & Associates' counsel regarding how to communicate the Board's objectives: improving effectiveness of communications between the board, administration, staff, students and alumni; and improving governance. With the college's communications staff temporarily reporting directly to us, the firm orchestrated timely flow of information to internal and external audiences nationwide. Tactics included emails/memos/letters to staff, students and alumni, briefings for community leaders, and news releases and interviews for news media in California, Florida and Iowa; we also prepared statements and talking points for the Board and top administrators.

RESULTS

Palmer College continued to operate well under governance of the Board as it explored — with unified assistance of faculty, staff, students, alumni and the community — greater integration of its campuses and educational programs. The institution received mostly positive news coverage in local and trade news media during the transition. The \$35 million capital campaign surpassed its goals and raised more than \$45 million for AHC construction and other capital projects. Today successful Palmer College remains committed to the practices of good governance for institutions of higher education.

Polk County Health Department

Consensus-building for public health priorities

SITUATION

Polk County (Iowa) Health Department is charged with delivering public health services in Iowa's most populous county and implementing health improvement programs as defined in an ambitious ten-year plan. Elected officials and Department management were charged in 2008 to create a new road map – Healthy Polk 2020 – to identify future health priorities while still implementing the Healthy Polk 2010 plan.

STRATEGY & TACTICS

Hanser & Associates was selected through a competitive process to support county-wide public input and consensus-building. We gathered detailed input directly from 1,600 community members via phone and online surveys.

RESULTS

Through the surveys and a subsequent public forum, Department leaders identified — and gained community support for — ten priorities to be focused upon during the next ten years to work towards a community in which all people are healthy. The priorities were announced at a public rally in Des Moines in 2009. The leadership group subsequently recruited volunteers and donors to work toward implementing each of the ten priorities.

Rx2000 Institute

News coverage, testimony and events prepared industry for Y2K crisis

SITUATION

As the year 2000 approached, nearly every mortal on the planet had heard about the potential crisis of Y2K computer problems ... yet Y2K had special implications for the healthcare industry, when a Y2K malfunction could have meant life or death. Recognizing the industry in general was not prepared or coordinated in its Y2K compliance efforts, Minneapolis-based Rx2000 Institute was formed in 1996 as a not-for-profit clearinghouse and consulting group for healthcare-related Y2K preparation.

STRATEGY & TACTICS

Beginning in 1998, Hanser & Associates placed news stories to create national dialogue. The firm also carried out promotional support activities for a series of nationwide educational meetings, including a "mock trial" during which a medical Y2K lawsuit was "litigated" before audiences. We also positioned Rx2000 as a leading national authority on the Y2K crisis in healthcare through testimony prepared for U.S. Senate hearings and news story placements in national media such as CNN, *Los Angeles Times*, *The New York Times*, *TIME*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Post*. Media value (cost if equivalent advertising space was purchased) approached \$1 million per year.

RESULTS

The campaign enlarged the national discussion on Y2K and pharmaceuticals, and on embedded systems in medical devices, helping prevent Y2K-related malfunctions in the healthcare industry in the USA. Crisis averted!

Swissray Global Healthcare Holding

Brand message, worldwide news coverage launch world's first digital X-ray

SITUATION

Hochdorf, Switzerland -based Swissray, established in 1988, pioneered the world's first direct digital radiography (DDR) X-ray technology that delivers high-quality radiographic images in just seconds. Swissray selected Hanser & Associates from among 170 U.S. healthcare public relations firms in 1997 as the company sought approval of U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the first DDR and prepared to launch sales in the USA.

STRATEGY & TACTICS

Hanser & Associates helped create Swissray's brand message and positioned their innovative products via demonstration installations in the USA medical markets ahead of FDA approval. When Swissray became the first to receive the registration to sell an integrated DDR system in the USA, we helped launch sales by announcing FDA's approval; supported Swissray at Radiology Society of North America's (RSNA) annual Scientific Assembly and Annual Meeting in Chicago (world's largest medical trade show); provided media relations (including a news conference conducted at RSNA and onsite trade show PR); and provided executive speechwriting, investor relations and other communications services.

RESULTS

The company gained extensive news coverage in trade and mainstream news media around the world, was well received at RSNA, and product purchases came quickly from medical facilities in the United States. Swissray was merged in 2013 to create Taipei, Taiwan-based Swissray Global Healthcare Holding which has continued development of digital diagnostic X-ray systems. By meeting different market demands, the company provides a series of digital and low-dose X-ray systems. Swissray's Vice President of International Marketing said, "Hanser & Associates is the best at what they do and possess unique expertise and delivery."

University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics

Employment of persons with disabilities increased

SITUATION

Iowa City-based University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics (UIHC) — recognized as one of the best hospitals in the United States — is Iowa's only comprehensive academic medical center and a regional referral center. UIHC's Center for Disabilities and Development and University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities are dedicated to improving the health and independence of people with disabilities and advancing the community systems on which they rely. The Center's Employment First Initiatives — formerly named Employment Policy Group (EPG) — works to increase the financial self-sufficiency of Iowans with disabilities by building Iowa's capacity to promote integrated, community-based employment outcomes. Hanser & Associates was retained in 1997 to call attention to the "abilities" of persons with disabilities and get the message out statewide.

STRATEGY & TACTICS

We created a PR strategy and implemented a statewide PR program that leveraged our strong relationships with Iowa's business leaders, news media and elected officials. Tactics included arranging legislative briefings for Iowa House and Senate leaders in the Iowa State Capitol; conducting news conferences across the state; writing news releases; placing news stories in media; building attendance at UIHC events; conducting statewide media tours for UIHC's staff and clients to announce program initiatives; establishing relationships and dialogue with business leaders that helped increase employment of persons with disabilities; counseling during crises; and creating public service announcements, videos, websites, brochures and more.

RESULTS

Public awareness and perception toward persons with disabilities has improved statewide, employment has increased, and additional state and federal funding was awarded for programs.

Questions? Call us at 515-224-1086.

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ASSOCIATES**
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