Providing Basic Background to the Media

When ex-NBA star Magic Johnson announced that he was HIV positive, a lot of sports reporters, were suddenly interested in the issue. These reporters were trying to cover a breaking story that had obvious health implications, but their understanding of the medical issues involved was very limited.

When your organization is putting together educational materials for the public about a crisis, it is worthwhile to think and communicate on a very basic level. When a health-related disaster or event occurs, reporters from the non-health/non-science arena will be assigned to cover it. At that point, you will find yourself dealing with people who need basic information about the issue first. Having this background information already developed and ready to share will also prove useful when the reporters begin developing their stories for the general public.