

## **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.