

## Getting the Word Out

Whether your support group is new and just building your membership, or is an established group that wants to add to its membership, to create more awareness, or gain support, there are proven steps you can take to get the word out about your group and your needs.

First, there are a few basic things you must have in place when starting a new group and want to let potential members know you're there.

### 1. Define your audience/group

- a. Age Range
- b. Fibromyalgia patients and caregivers only
- c. FM & CFIDS
- d. Chronic pain patients
- e. Others

### 2. Define purpose of group

- a. Education
- b. Referral
- c. Support
- d. Information sharing
- e. All of the above

### 3. Determine when & where you are holding group meetings

### 4. Determine who is going to be the primary contact person for your group information. Be sure that you are ready to handle all new members

Once you have made all these decisions, you are ready to begin looking at various ways and resources to get the word out about your group. (These same tactics can work for letting people know about upcoming events too.)

#### 1. Contact The National Fibromyalgia & Chronic Pain Association to:

- a. Register your group in our online directory that list support groups by state at <http://www.fmcpaware.org/support-groups/add-support-group.html>
- b. Visit our website for information on starting a group and ideas for support group meetings.  
<http://www.fmcpaware.org/support-groups.html>

#### 2. Contact your city and surrounding cities' community services department to:

- a. Post announcements in their online community services calendar
- b. Place announcement in their community services/resources brochures
- c. Post flyers at city:
  - i. Community/recreation centers
  - ii. Libraries

**3. Contact local medical/health care facilities:**

- a. Hospital newsletter and calendars sent out to its members
- b. Bulletin boards
- c. Physician newsletters
- d. Doctors' offices
- e. Chiropractic office
- f. Physical therapy offices
- g. Medical clinics
- h. Counseling offices

**4. Post flyers at:**

- a. Local YMCAs
- b. Health related retailers
- c. Senior Centers
- d. Grocery store bulletin boards
- e. University/college information bulletin boards, especially in health centers

**5. Local and regional newspapers:**

- a. Introduce yourself to in the community and health sections
- b. Send announcement to their calendar and listings of support groups listings (especially if you are a new group)
- c. Always send press release or media alert for all upcoming events
- d. After event send write-up a with pictures especially to smaller community-focused publications

**6. Other online sites to register your support group:**

- a. 2-1-1 is an easy-to-remember telephone number that, where available, connects people with important community services and volunteer opportunities. Go to the site to determine if your state, county or city has implemented this program, and to find out how to register your support group [www.211.org](http://www.211.org)
- b. ProHealth has an online directory where you can register your group: <http://www.prohealth.com/fibromyalgia/supportgroups/index.cfm>

The above information is just a starting point for you and your group to develop a plan on how you are going to get the word out and build your group's membership and reputation in your community and surrounding areas. There are additional places within your community and also online that we do not have the space to list here. So I encourage you to network with other nonprofit organizations and associations to learn more about available resources and communication channels.