

THE PRESS IS CALLING!

Guidelines for ACEP Spokespersons



GENERAL TIPS

- **Don't get blindsided.** Negotiate ground rules in advance. Set a time limit. Ask about the angle of the story, the deadline and who else is being interviewed.
- **Set the agenda.** Try to identify the reporter's angle, stay on message. Be prepared to drive home a few main points, supported by one or two strong statistics and a personal story. Use ACEP's talking points as a resource.
- **Relax, be personable but not too casual.** Build a relationship, but remember everything is on the record, unless you both agree it is not.
- **Use plain English.** Avoid medical jargon.
- **Put a human face on the issues.** Tell a story. Talk about the issue's affect on your patients.
- **Always respond in a positive way.** Don't repeat negative words. Defensive: "Our emergency department does NOT provide poor service." Stronger: "Our emergency staff are dedicated to providing the best care for our patients."
- **Use effective body language.** Don't distract people from your words by folding your arms, rocking, or placing hands in pockets. Avoid sympathetic nodding.
- **Make comments worthy of sound bites.** For TV or radio news stories, you might have 7 to 10 seconds at most to make your point.
- **If you are being interviewed on the telephone,** stand up rather than stay seated. It will energize you and your voice.

For media assistance, contact
ACEP's Public Relations Department at
800-320-0610, ext. 3008

Visit the spokespersons'
page on ACEP's Web site at
www.acep.org/spokesperson

GUIDELINES FOR ACEP SPOKESPERSONS

- **Respond quickly.**
Most reporters are on deadline. You must be reliable and accessible to conduct media relations. Consider e-mailing local reporters about your availability as a resource — contact pr@acep.org if you need e-mail addresses.
- **Identify yourself as an ACEP spokesperson.**
If ACEP coordinates the interview, identify yourself as a spokesperson for ACEP or your Chapter. If your hospital coordinates the interview, try to mention ACEP during the interview.
- **Keep your messages consistent with ACEP's messages.**
This is especially important on policy issues. Before the interview, visit the spokespersons' page at www.acep.org/spokesperson. It increases the specialty's effectiveness in advocacy when emergency physicians repeat key messages at national, state and local levels.
- **Participate in training.**
ACEP offers media training and presentation training at Scientific Assembly and the Leadership & Advocacy Conference. ACEP spokespersons are required to take at least one media training class.
- **Call ACEP's PR Department for help at 800-320-0610, ext 3008.**
PR staff are available to help you with talking points, as well as to provide advice on crisis communications. If you are contacted by a national reporter, be aware that ACEP's President may want to handle the call or may have designated a specific ACEP member to handle the topic.
- **Coordinate with your hospital.**
Learn your hospital's rules for conducting media relations. Develop relationships with the PR staff and coordinate with them. Make them aware that you are media trained, are serving as an ACEP spokesperson and are interested in doing interviews.

