



Media Relations Guide

Every interview is an **opportunity to relay your key messages to the public.**

During the interview

Speak in headlines - Main point followed by supporting ideas.

Answer the question and **bridge to your main messages.**

Don't speculate.

Keep your answers short and simple. Avoid technical terminology.

Never say "no comment." Instead offer to get back to them with an answer.

Don't assume any comment is "off the record." Remember, **the microphone is always on.**

You are the expert. Smile if appropriate, but do not use humor.

Don't step on the reporter's questions, but watch out for interview traps including:

- Either/or questions
- Interrupting
- Incorrectly summarizing your comments
- Asking a hypothetical question
- Hostile questions

Answer the question; then stop talking.

Be honest. **Never lie to a reporter.**

During a Crisis

Take charge. Tell reporters the ground rules; where to stage, and what they can/cannot shoot. Provide water and/or snacks during long engagements.

Assign one person to manage the press (not the same person in charge of the crisis) and provide regular updates on the incident.

Give out **only the facts** as you know them. If the information is preliminary - say so.

Use written updates if possible to avoid reporter error.

Pledge to "do the right thing," but don't promise specific corrective action.

Be open to questions. Show concern and empathy.

Use social media like Twitter and Facebook to keep families up-to-date.

Remain positive. Focus on fixing the problem, not on blame.

Prepare for the worst - if you dread it, you will get it!

Successful interview tips

Plant your feet firmly so you don't rock back and forth.

Maintain steady eye contact.

Use natural facial expressions and hand gestures.

Remember:
Remain Calm,
Confident
and in
Control

CALIFORNIA
ASSOCIATION OF
HEALTH FACILITIES



For more information contact CAHF at (916) 441-6400
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