



## 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



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