

Dealing With the Media: What's a Medical Manager to Do?



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Most medical practice managers do not aspire to be television, radio or (heaven forbid) YouTube celebrities, but it does happen. Medical practices, hospitals, surgical centers, nursing homes and other medical entities are rich fodder for the news these days. So how do you weather the request for a sound bite without putting your practice in jeopardy? Follow these simple rules and you'll be an asset to your practice in no time.

- 1. The media is your friend, treat them that way.**
Encourage reporters and journalists to call you for updates on your practice (new doctor, new facility, enhanced website, patient appreciation, health fair activities, etc.) AND to comment on new stories.
- 2. Remember that "No comment" translates in the media as "I'm hiding something."** Some information, even if it is a repeat or a rehash, is better than "no comment."
- 3. Have your physicians and other administration agree that there is only one spokesperson** and that they will refer all requests from the media to you.
- 4. If you are asked a question that you cannot or do not want to answer,** probably in relation to something negative about your practice, the format to follow is:
 - Tell them that you are not able to answer that

question,

- Tell them why you can't tell them (I don't have that information at this time OR I've not received the report on this yet OR this matter is still being reviewed/evaluated/investigated at this time),
- Tell them what you can tell them, which might be 'We do know...' OR "What is clear at this time..." OR "What we've been told..."

5. If the media isn't calling you for news, call them!

6. Nothing is off the record and you can't unring that bell. Once you've said it, it is out there.

Don't forget that doctors and healthcare are in the spotlight constantly these days and that negative press is not good for your practice, or the industry at large. Protect your practice by being a confident, competent and knowledgeable practice administrator.

