Public Relations Committee

Chair: Ryan Stanton, MD, FACEP  
Board Liaison: William P. Jaquis, MD, FACEP  
Staff Liaison: Laura Gore

1. Provide direction to public relations staff on promoting the specialty of emergency medicine, focusing on ACEP’s priority issues and key messages, including:

- promoting the interests of emergency physicians and emergency patients as health care reforms are implemented.
- increasing ACEP’s name recognition (branding) and relevancy of emergency medicine among its public audiences (advocacy)
- mobilizing public support for funding emergency care and promoting the need for tort reform
- refuting myths about emergency medicine and advocating to reduce “boarding”
- communicating the need to protect access to emergency care as regulations are developed to implement the health care reform legislation and deflect efforts to harm the prudent layperson
- developing and reviewing public relations materials distributed to the news media and the general public
- promoting the value of emergency medicine and positive stories about emergency physicians caring for patients of all ages. Incorporate directives from Amended Resolution 24(13) Promulgation of Emergency Medicine as applicable.
- promoting placement of ACEP spokespersons in media roles, such as medical correspondents, to help represent emergency physicians to the public.

**Outcome:** Committee members provided significant strategic input on the messaging for the two major ACEP campaigns in 2015-16 that were designed to promote the interest of emergency physicians as health care reforms are implemented: 1) Fair Coverage campaign about out-of-network issues. This campaign and its website positioned ACEP as a leader on this issue among medical specialty organizations. 2) Campaign to counter health insurance industry statements about “surprise billing” and portraying medical providers as “predatory billers.” Committee members provided medical review of all ACEP consumer press releases on health and safety topics. These education pieces promoted the value of emergency medicine and portrayed emergency physicians as experts, contributing to a “white hat” environment in which ACEP can advocate on the policy issues.

Committee members conducted scores of news interviews in the past year, many promoting the value of emergency medicine and contributing to the more than 50,000 media hits ACEP achieved from July 1, 2015, to June 30, 2016. Each week, members week offer advice and information in breaking news situations to help public relations staff refute myths and correct misinformation. Additionally, many committee members participated in a letters to the editor campaign promoting ACEP’s key messages and expanded their roles as medical correspondents to the media.


**Outcome:** A subcommittee, working with public relations staff, held monthly conference calls to discuss upcoming new research in the journal and to determine which ones to promote. Based on the discussions, 26 press releases were developed and distributed promoting Annals studies and papers and generated media coverage in news organizations including TIME magazine, USA Today, MSN, NPR, Consumer Reports, Yahoo News, Slate, Huffington Post, Politico, Forbes, Associated Press, the Wall Street Journal, CBS News, NBC News and Reuters. Committee efforts contributed to an impact score of 5.008, its highest-ever score, representing a 6.67% increase over last year’s record score of 4.695.

3. Provide oversight to the ACEP Journalism Awards Program.

**Outcome:** A subcommittee reviewed the candidates and selected three recipients that were approved and recognized during ACEP’s Leadership & Advocacy Conference as 2016 Journalism of Excellence Award recipients.
Liz Szabo, reporter, and Dennis Kelly, former editor for a USA Today special series “The Cost of Not Caring: The Financial and Human Toll for Neglecting the Mentally Ill.”

Dr. Kevin Pho of KevinMD.com for publishing a series of fair and balanced blog articles over the past two years on emergency medicine issues, including fair payment and balance billing, the effects of the Affordable Care Act on emergency departments and the value of emergency medicine.

KRQE-TV in Albuquerque, NM and reporter Larry Barker, producer Mark Corey, and editor Ron Romero, for an investigative report on emergency department wait times.

4. Expand and further unify the spokesperson network to more effectively deliver messages at the local level and continue to expand public education efforts to Spanish-speaking Americans.

**Outcome:** More than 200 emergency physicians received media training in the past year during ACEP15 and ACEP’s Leadership & Advocacy Conference. Committee members provided input on expanding ACEP’s presence among Spanish-speaking Americans. Spanish-speaking spokespersons grew from 17 to 24 media-trained emergency physicians. Public relations staff continued to send press releases in Spanish to the Spanish spokespersons and Spanish media.

5. Provide input into promoting and using social media.

**Outcome:** The committee’s “Tweet Team” efforts contributed to an increase in ACEP’s overall Twitter impressions to 1,232,600 since July 1, 2015. The number of external Twitter followers increased by 1,539 to more than 10,600—a 15.7% increase. Additionally, committee members posted many articles to ACEP’s new DocBlog on www.EmergencyCareforYou.org, ACEP’s website for the general public. In the past year, ACEP posted and promoted 39 blogs, many written by committee members, on topics including Zika and vaccines.

6. Provide input into the implementation of the comprehensive public relations plan, including internal and external messaging.

**Outcome:** Committee members continued to work toward integration of external and internal communications and engaged in several discussions about ACEP members who communicate messages that are in conflict with ACEP messages and how to resolve those conflicts. Committee members provided important insights to staff on messaging for a variety of issues, including firearms.

7. Provide guidance on messaging about reimbursement issues to avoid perceptions by policymakers that ACEP’s focus is primarily about reimbursement.

**Outcome:** Committee members discussed messaging for policymakers to reframe out-of-network issues as patient access problems and style emergency physicians as patient advocates in the Fair Coverage Campaign and the campaign to counter health plan statements on “surprise billing.”

8. Work with the Emergency Medicine Practice as needed in the development of an information paper on the role and value of emergency medicine. (EM Practice is the lead committee.)

**Outcome:** The committee provided input to the Emergency Medicine Practice Committee as requested. The draft information paper will be submitted to the ACEP Board for review in October 2016. Once finalized, the Public Relations Committee will promote it.

9. Update the Saving Millions infographic and promote it to chapters and all ACEP members.

**Outcome:** The infographic was updated and promoted by email to chapters and the Spokespersons’ Network. It was also promoted to ACEP members during ACEP15 and through ACEP.org. ACEP’s Saving Millions campaign is being
updated with new high-value messages in 2016 to promote the value of emergency medicine. The infographic will be updated and promoted when new messages are developed.

10. Develop public media campaign materials to increase the use of advance directives on drivers’ licenses (Amended Resolution 22-15).

*Outcome:* The committee provided medial review for a press release on advance directives and an article on ACEP’s public website [www.EmergencyCareforYou.org](http://www.EmergencyCareforYou.org).