



ACEP Spokesperson Toolkit: COVID-19

April 2020



COVID-19

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General Messaging Guidance

As emergency physicians rapidly adapt their efforts to manage outbreaks of COVID-19, ACEP's official messaging may change as well. The following talking points provide guidance on our priority messages, but it's not script—it's best when put you these messages into your own words.

The facts about COVID-19 are changing quickly but what's steady during these challenging times, and what's important for any reporter to come away with, is a sense of:

- Your commitment to treat anyone, anytime.
- Your perspective on the frontlines.
- Your challenge. You train for this, but you are insufficiently protected and equipped.
- Your efforts. What are you personally doing to address these hurdles head on?

As you read the talking points below, think about how they apply to your own experience and personalize the bullet points, putting whomever you speak with in your shoes. The most powerful tool you have as communicators is your own stories. Policymakers and the public need to hear what's happening on the ground, and no one can share that story better than you.

Gather your thoughts in advance of any conversation and seek opportunities to weave in your own experience. Explain the toll this virus is taking on your physical and mental health, your family, and how it may be disrupting your life and your ability to care for the rest of your patients.

Be sure to check www.emergencyphysicians.org for the latest patient information and reach out to PR@acep.org should you have any questions.

ACEP COVID-19 Resources

The American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) is regularly updating information for patients at: www.emergencyphysicians.org/COVID19 and providing clinical and policy guidance at: www.acep.org/COVID-19.

PATIENT RESOURCES

[Stop the Spread: A Patient Guide to the Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

A comprehensive patient guide that includes tips on how to minimize the risk of contracting the virus and when to go to the emergency department.

[COVID-19: Protect Your Family and Your Home](#)

A one-page tip sheet on how to reduce the risk of contracting the virus—including whether people should wear a face mask.

[COVID-19: Know When to Go](#)

A one-pager that outlines what to do if you think you're sick with COVID-19, including information about getting tested, and how to know when to go to the emergency department.

FEDERAL ADVOCACY & CLINICAL GUIDANCE

[Clinical Guidance and ACEP Member Network](#)

ACEP COVID-19 website a virtual hub that provides the latest clinical guidance and peer network for emergency physicians to support and troubleshoot challenges with your peers.

[Federal Policy Guidance and Announcements](#)

ACEP is tracking the latest policy changes and guidance from the federal government, including changes to EMTALA, telehealth and reimbursement.

[ACEP's Current Federal Policy Requests](#)

A concise overview of ACEP's current federal policy request and recommendations to ensure emergency physicians have the resources and support they need.

Follow the Conversation on Social Media

ACEP's Public Relations Department is running three social media campaigns to raise awareness, support and resources for emergency physicians and other frontline health care workers. Use #StayHomeSaveLives, #GetUsPPE, and #HealthCareHeroes to join the conversation, and share an image including our health care heroes camera filter on [Facebook!](#)

#StayHomeSaveLives

Overview

#StayHomeSaveLives is a campaign aimed at the public to encourage them to do their part in slowing the spread of the virus by practicing social distancing and staying home as much as possible. ACEP is creating a Facebook frame for the public and is encouraging people to take a photo of themselves with a sign that reads, “I stay home for [loved one(s)’ name],” and post it on their social media channels.

How can you engage?

- Take a photo of yourself at work with the sign that reads, “I stay at work for you. You stay at home for us.” Post it on your social media channels.
- Share #StayHomeSaveLives posts from @EmergencyDocs.
- Use the ACEP #StayHomeSaveLives Facebook frame.

Hashtags & Tags

#StayHomeSaveLives
#HealthCareHeroes
@EmergencyDocs

#GetUsPPE

Overview

ACEP is highlighting the dire need for personal protective equipment (PPE) and amplifying efforts of our partners at [GetUsPPE.org](https://p2a.co/GetUsPPE.org) through the #GetUsPPE campaign. ACEP is creating a Facebook frame and is encouraging members to take a photo of themselves with a sign that reads, “I stay home for [loved one(s)’ name],” and post it on their social media channels.

How can you engage?

- Take a photo of yourself in your PPE and share using #GetUsPPE
- Support ACEP’s legislative asks, by encouraging members of the public to contact Congress about the need for PPE using this link: <https://p2a.co/LPxXH7j>
- Encourage people and companies to donate at [GetUsPPE.org](https://p2a.co/GetUsPPE.org)
- Use the ACEP #GetUsPPE Facebook frame

Hashtags & Tags

#GetUsPPE
#HealthCareHeroes
@EmergencyDocs

#HealthCareHeroes

Overview

ACEP is building support for our emergency physicians, hospital staff, EMS professionals, and other health care providers as they continue to battle the pandemic. ACEP is creating a Facebook frame and encouraging members of the public do their part while at home and share video messages of support to their #HealthCareHeroes.

How can you engage?

- Like or retweet posts from @EmergencyDocs and the public sharing video of support.
- Create your video or post of support for your own Health care hero.

Hashtags & Tags
#HealthCareHeroes
@EmergencyDocs

Talking Points

PATIENT

The following are talking points to use in conversations, interviews and social media with the **general public**. Feel free to use #StayHomeSaveLives and #GetUsPPE when sharing these messages on social media.

Stay Home, Save Lives

- Emergency physicians have a request of the American people: stay home and save lives.
 - As health care workers on the frontlines risk their lives to battle the worldwide pandemic COVID-19, you can play your part by staying home as much as possible.
 - We have to do everything we can to stop the virus from spreading.
- Emergency physicians are known to be unflappable, but this pandemic has us scared.
 - The virus is spread exponentially, and it is not going away any time soon.
 - We have a narrow window to take meaningful action, and that time is now.
- Practicing “social distancing” and staying home as much as possible is the best way to slow the virus and to prevent overwhelming our health care system.
 - Young people, older people and everyone in between needs to follow the recommended steps for social distancing.
 - The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) recommends](#) putting distance (about six feet) between yourself and others. Guidelines to shelter in place, or stay at home, vary based on location.
- People of all ages can contract COVID-19.
 - No one is immune, and there is currently no cure.
 - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently noted that nearly 40 percent of patients sick enough to be hospitalized were 20- to 54-years old.
- Some may have mild symptoms and could be contagious before they know they are sick— inadvertently spreading the virus and putting others at risk.
 - The “silent transmission” of COVID-19 is one factor contributing to the spread.
 - Even if you think you are healthy, spending time in groups or in public could spread the virus to people you are close with.
- Make sure you are getting health information from reliable sources such as your doctor, public health department or local leaders.
 - Conditions where you live are likely changing rapidly.
 - You can find ACEP’s patient resources at www.emergencyphysicians.org/COVID19.

Get Us PPE

- Emergency physicians and health systems are facing severe shortages of personal protective equipment (PPE)—like N95 masks, gowns, face shields and eye wear—leaving millions of health care workers at risk in the midst of this outbreak.
- Emergency physicians are known to be unflappable, but this pandemic has us scared.
 - As emergency physicians, we know the risks of the job we signed up for, but we are on the frontlines in this historic war against COVID-19 with insufficient protection.
- We can't afford for emergency physicians and other frontline health care providers to get sick due to PPE shortages.
 - Now more than ever, patients need access to America's emergency care safety net.
- While PPE production is ramping up, there are dire shortages in emergency departments across the country, and we don't see significant relief in the near future.
- We urge the federal government to exhaust every option available to rapidly increase PPE production and prioritize distribution to emergency physicians and other frontline health care providers.
- ACEP is working with corporate and nonprofit partners to help expedite the production and delivery of personal protective equipment (PPE) to America's frontline health workers.
- You can take action at [GetUsPPE.org](https://www.getusppe.org), a website developed by emergency physicians that includes donation information.
- Follow the conversation on social media via the hashtag #GetUsPPE.

FEDERAL POLICY AND ADVOCACY

The following are talking points to use in conversations, interviews and social media about ACEP's **federal advocacy** around COVID-19.

- As emergency physicians remain on the frontlines of caring for those affected, there is a continued need for policymakers to implement changes to effectively combat COVID-19
- At a federal level, the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) is focused on protecting patients' access to care, securing the health care workforce, and ensuring adequate resource allocation during this growing public health emergency.
- We urge the federal government to exhaust every option available to rapidly increase PPE production and prioritize distribution to emergency physicians and other frontline health care providers.

Protecting Access for Patients

- Congress should ensure that insurance companies fully cover the cost of testing, diagnosis, and treatment provided, without patient cost sharing.

- Beyond just boosting production of necessary medications and equipment, we must prioritize distribution to health care facilities.
- The federal government should foster opportunities to advance telehealth and technology that enables care delivery from alternative settings, such as drive through testing.
 - Giving people more options to receive appropriate care and advice can lead to faster, more cost-effective testing while freeing up hospital capacity for those who need it most.
 - Telehealth also allows a person that suspects they have COVID-19 to remain at appropriate social distance or quarantined.

Securing the health care workforce

- ACEP is working to ensure health workers have prompt access to treatment and testing and is calling for other on-the-job protections. These include:
 - Removing barriers that impede physicians from working across state lines.
 - Clarifying the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance on the quarantining of health care professionals exposed to COVID-19.
 - Extending all Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and other regulatory deadlines by at least 30 days so that emergency physicians and other health care professionals can keep their focus on patients instead of paperwork

Ensuring adequate resource allocation

- ACEP is taking steps to secure federal and state emergency funding for hospitals and EMS, emergency physicians, and other relevant hospital-based specialty physicians who are not hospital-employed.
- ACEP is working with CMS and others so that rules and guidance reflect changing situations on the ground. Emergency physicians must be able to treat patients, maintain readiness, and be fully prepared for patient surges.

Get Us PPE

- Now is the time to use every weapon in our arsenal as we try to manage and stop the spread of COVID-19.
 - We need to take action now to fill this gap with every resource we have available, including from the Strategic National Stockpile.
- We also need clarity from the CDC on what PPE should be used in general when treating patients in the emergency department—beyond the existing guidance for treating individuals with suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19.
- Best practices for many types of PPE include instructions for taking gear on and off and using items once. Under current circumstances, these practices are being adapted or worked around in as safe a manner as possible.

- It is imperative that we not only make sure emergency physicians and other frontline workers get PPE, but they must have their rights protected to wear it.
- ACEP strongly opposes efforts to silence, penalize or unjustly terminate health workers simply for wearing their own makeshift PPE or speaking out about their unsafe working conditions.
 - ACEP will continue to fight for its members and stand in full force behind its [statements on PPE and physician protections](#).
- ACEP is working with corporate and nonprofit partners to help expedite the production and delivery of personal protective equipment (PPE) to America's frontline health workers. You can take action at [GetUsPPE.org](#) a website developed by emergency physicians that includes donation information. Follow the conversation on Twitter via the hashtag #GetUsPPE