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## How Real ER Doctors Countered Recent Cigna Ad Using 'TV Doctors'

NOV 15, 2016 @ 6:30 AM

What's the best way to mount a campaign against an insurance giant that has capitalized on narrow networks and higher deductibles, and is now using "TV doctors" from *Grey's Anatomy*, *Scrubs* and even the long running classic *M\*A\*S\*H* to reach out to the public to encourage medical check-ups?

Hint: Use Doctors #IRL, or "in real life," as millennials might say.



Actors Donald Faison and John C. McGinley work on the set of 'Scrubs' on January 17, 2006 in North Hollywood, California. (Photo by Matthew Simmons/Getty Images)

Well today, the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) did just that: It officially responded to Cigna Insurance Company's recent multi-million dollar ad campaign featuring famous "TV doctors" with a video of its own, starring real-life, board-certified emergency physicians.

"We are poking fun at Cigna to highlight a serious issue: the lack of fair coverage for value in emergency medical care," said ACEP's president, Rebecca Parker, MD, FACEP. "Many people don't realize how little insurance coverage they have until they visit the ER, and then they are shocked at how little their insurance company pays."

"The \$9 million Cigna spent on an ad starring well-loved actors playing physicians would have been better spent on patients," urged Parker. "Emergency physicians fight hard for their patients, who are bearing an increasingly large share of the burden for their medical care," she pointed out.

ACEP's video serves as a parody of the script of the Cigna video, but then shifts gears to emphasize that a significant portion of the life-saving care emergency physicians provide to nearly 140 million patients annually remains uncompensated. Tactics employed by the insurance industry—higher deductibles, and premiums and narrow networks to increase profits—have effectively shifted the burden to patients and the physicians who treat them, ACEP argues.

EMTALA, the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act, enacted in 1986, is a federal law mandating that all patients who are seen in emergency departments receive a medical screening exam to determine whether they are having a life-threatening emergency. Subsequent to that exam, it requires that they be stabilized and, if necessary, treated, regardless of their insurance status or ability to pay. After such initial treatment, it is possible that they may not require such high-level care as delivered within the emergency department, but then require referral to an appropriate provider or network based on their medical condition.

"Cigna, and others like them, are exploiting federal law [EMTALA] to reduce coverage for emergency care knowing emergency departments have a federal mandate to care for all patients, regardless of their ability to pay," said Dr. Parker.

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/robertglatter/2016/11/15/how-real-er-doctors-countered-recent-cigna-ad-using-tv-doctors/#10f6bb0a6f40>