



## Emergency docs fire back at Cigna's ad campaign

By [Leslie Small](#) Nov 15, 2016 04:05pm



*Pictured from left: Jay Kaplan, M.D., immediate past president of American College of Emergency Physicians; Sudip Bose, M.D.; Alison Haddock, M.D.; Jose Torradas, M.D.; and Ryan Stanton, M.D. (Credit: American College of Emergency Physicians)*

Cigna's recent "TV doctors" ad campaign may use humor to encourage Americans to get annual checkups, but some emergency physicians are not amused.

The \$9 million Cigna spent on the campaign, which featured well-known actors such as Patrick Dempsey and Alan Alda poking fun at their roles on medical shows, "would be better spent on patients" by increasing reimbursement for emergency medical care, according to the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP).

By narrowing networks and raising deductibles and premiums, Cigna and other insurers are "exploiting" federal law that requires emergency departments to treat all patients, regardless

of their ability to pay, ACEP President Rebecca Parker, M.D., said in an announcement. "Emergency physicians are there for their patients 24 hours a day, every day of the year. We can't say the same for the insurance industry."

To drive home the point, ACEP created its own video (below) parodying Cigna's. While in Cigna's ad the actors joke that they are clueless about medical practice in real life, the real-life emergency physicians emphasize the opposite.

"If I had to treat a bleeding patient, it wouldn't faze me a bit," a doctor says in the video. "Nothing does. Except maybe insurance companies—they're the worst."

Because of insurers, "emergency care is covered less and less, and patients are paying more and more," another doctor adds.

Cigna did not respond to a request for comment from *FierceHealthPayer*.

This is not the first time ACEP has taken aim at public and private payers. In May, the organization sued the Department of Health and Human Services over federal rules that it claims would lead to insufficient payments for out-of-network emergency care. It has also conducted research that indicates insured patients delay care due to high out-of-pocket costs and subsequently end up in the ER.

<https://www.fiercehealthcare.com/payer/emergency-docs-hit-back-at-cigna-s-ad-campaign>