

American Society of Anesthesiologists



Hosting a Site Visit Program Guide

Introduction

In today's rapidly changing health care environment, anesthesiologists must respond to public as well as governmental concerns by establishing ongoing and open communications. The American Society of Anesthesiologists' (ASA) Site Visit Program is an effort to achieve these improved interactions by allowing selected participants to experience firsthand the daily activities and responsibilities of anesthesiologists. It also provides the participating physicians with input from a broad spectrum of community representatives. Participants may include community leaders in business, media, local organizations, elected officials and other policymakers.

The ultimate goals of the Site Visit Program are to create or enhance relationships between legislators and anesthesiologists, and to ensure that legislators have a better understanding of anesthesiology as the practice of medicine.

The Site Visit Program has been conducted successfully by numerous component societies, both large and small. State component societies often have different resources in terms of staff, membership size, and activity level. However, every component society can and should conduct some version of the Site Visit Program. While there are few "hard and fast rules" for a successful Site Visit Program, this guide will provide tips on how to construct your program, as well as sample forms and letters.

Before the Site Visit:

Choose your site:

- ★ The Site Visit Program can be held in a hospital or free-standing ambulatory surgical center.
- ★ If the participant is a legislator, keep in mind that the legislator will be most interested in visiting a facility in his or her Congressional District.
- ★ Determine if a facility and the anesthesiologists are agreeable to hosting a Site Visit, and identify the best facility to host the program.
- ★ Be prepared to explain to the facility administration and public relations staff the advantages this program provides for the facility as well as its physicians and patients.
 - ☆ Be flexible: the Site Visit can be adjusted to meet the time limitations of the facility and the participants. Generally, four hours is sufficient time for participants to see anesthesiologists, meet with patients, review medical records, develop an anesthesia plan, consult with other physicians on staff, conduct rounds, administer anesthesia, and care for patients in the Post Anesthesia Care Unit and the Pain Clinic.
- ★ Be mindful of the participants' schedule: Even with limited time, participants can gain an understanding of anesthesiology if the visit is planned thoughtfully.

Create a Site Visit kit:

Sample items that can be included in the kit are provided in the Resources Section of this guide:

- ★ Introductory participant letter
- ★ Agenda of the day's activities
- ★ Guidelines for the Site Visit
- ★ Tips for hosting a successful Site Visit
- ★ Biographies of participating anesthesiologists
- ★ Background information on the component society
- ★ Fact sheets on relevant state and/or federal legislative and regulatory issues (the component society or ASA Washington office can provide assistance)
- ★ Copies of your component society newsletter or any other materials that would orient the participant to the practice of anesthesiology.

Keep it legal:

- ★ Maintain compliance with federal and state laws as well as facility bylaws:
 - ☆ Ask the host facility to provide release forms for patients, participants and staff participating in the Site Visit.
 - ☆ Be aware of HIPAA privacy rules and comply with the particular policies and procedures that the hospital has in place.
- ★ Work with the facility's Public Relations department to ensure that all media releases as well as other required clearances are obtained from all participants.

Select your team:

- ★ Select one anesthesiologist to serve as the “host” of the program.
 - ☆ The Chair of the Department of Anesthesiology at the participating facility or a senior member of the anesthesiology staff who has participated in ASA's Leadership Spokesperson Training Program would be excellent hosts.

The host anesthesiologist should work with the Public Relations department of the facility to choose both suitable patients and faculty anesthesiologists (see the Resources Section for sample letters and forms) for interaction with the participant.

Work with your facility's Public Relations department:

- ★ The host anesthesiologist will be the spokesperson on the day of the event and should be well prepared to discuss the role of the anesthesiologist within the overall medical care of the patient.
- ★ The medical facility, component society, or participant may want to invite print, radio or television reporters to cover the Site Visit Program. This effort should be coordinated through the Public Relations department of the host facility. ASA's Communications division can also provide assistance with the media effort.
- ★ Invited participants should be made aware of any invitations extended to the press. In all likelihood, the legislator will be pleased to have press coverage and may assist in efforts to publicize the event.

Select a participant:

- ★ Remember to select your candidates for participants carefully – they all have different backgrounds and agendas.
- ★ Consult with your lobbyist, the state component lobbyist, or the ASA Washington office to determine which legislators to invite.
- ★ Although an ideal participant is a legislator who has influence over health issues, all legislators can benefit from this program regardless of their committee assignments.

Once your participant has been selected:

- ★ Extend a personal invitation to participate in the Site Visit Program.
- ★ If the participant is a legislator, call the legislative office and follow-up with a written invitation outlining details of the program.
- ★ Invite the legislator's key health aide to participate as well.
- ★ Send a “Site Visit kit” with a cover letter to the participant as part of the initial invitation or after acceptance as a reminder of the upcoming program.
- ★ Recognize that legislators like physicians, are extremely busy and their schedules change daily.
- ★ If the participant is a legislator, it may be more convenient to schedule the event when the legislature is out of session.

Tips for hosting a successful Site Visit:

During the Site Visit:

- ★ Begin the program with an introduction by the participating anesthesiologists and an overview of what the participant will observe.
- ★ Remind the participants of the guidelines of the Site Visit (see sample guidelines in the Resources section)
- ★ Introduce the participant to the participating patients and help to establish a comfortable environment for everyone.
- ★ Encourage questions and remember to answer using terms that a layperson can comprehend.
- ★ Take every opportunity to discuss the issues important to your component society.
- ★ Do not force the legislator to commit to a position on your issues.
- ★ Use the time to show the participant why and how the component society's issues affect patient care.
- ★ Use specific procedures or patient interactions to highlight issues such as physician involvement in preoperative evaluations, the anesthesia plan, the most demanding portions of procedures, and postoperative recovery.
- ★ An anesthesiologist should accompany the participant at all times and encourage discussion regarding the day's events.
- ★ Schedule some time at the end of the program to respond to any questions the participant may have, and to recap the procedures observed during the visit.
 - ☆ This may be a one-on-one session between the host anesthesiologist and the legislator, or it may be a group discussion with available members of the anesthesia department.

After the Site Visit:

- ★ Send a thank you note to the participant and physicians who participated in the program.
- ★ Provide a certificate of completion to the participant as a reminder of the program.
- ★ Send the participant copies of any photographs or press clippings about his or her participation in the program.
- ★ Provide an evaluation form for participants that assist the component society in planning the next program.

Remember that the goal of the Site Visit Program is to build stronger relationships between elected officials, community leaders and anesthesiologists, and to ensure that the participant has a better understanding of anesthesiology as the practice of medicine.

Resource #1:

Sample Host Letter

Date

Jon Doe, MD
Address

Dear Dr. Doe:

Thank you for agreeing to host a participant during the Site Visit Program on (date). I am confident that the event will be productive and informative.

You are scheduled to host (participant name), on (date/time). (Participant name) will meet you at (location) and has been instructed to contact you at (phone number).

The participant will meet you at (time) for an orientation at (location) followed by meeting their physician hosts. They will be with their faculty anesthesiologists for approximately 4 hours or as the participant's schedule permits.

At (time), all physician hosts and participants will hold a debriefing meeting at (location/phone number). This meeting provides a unique opportunity for participants and physicians to discuss their experiences, evaluate the program, and share perspectives on health care delivery. To maximize this experience as a genuine two-way communication effort, your attendance is strongly encouraged.

Please fax back the following signed documents to (fax number) by (date):

1. Physician Response form
2. HIPAA Compliance Form
3. Medical Facility agreement

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (phone number). I look forward to seeing you during the Site Visit Program. Thanks again for participating.

Sincerely,

Resource #2:

Sample Anesthesia Faculty Letter

Date

Jon Doe, MD
Address

Dear Dr. Doe:

The (sponsoring state) Society of Anesthesiologists invites you to serve as a physician “faculty member” for our Site Visit Program on (date). Please review your schedule and complete the enclosed form and fax it to (fax number).

The Site Visit Program allows individuals directly involved in health care policy to experience the practice of anesthesiology firsthand by spending time with different anesthesiologists. Our primary objective for this program is to spotlight the patient/physician relationship and to open the lines of communication between the medical community and the community at large.

As a faculty member, you will be assigned a participant on (date). You are expected to make arrangements with your facility departments or medical staff directors at the facilities you plan to use for the Site Visit. The participant will accompany you while you follow your daily routine, which may include rounds, surgical anesthesia, emergency care, or administrative work. The participants are encouraged to ask questions and openly discuss their concerns with the physician faculty member at appointed times.

The Site Visit ends with a debriefing meeting at (date/time) at a (location/phone number). At the meeting, physicians and participants have the opportunity to discuss their experiences and ask more questions. We invite you as a “faculty member” to participate in the debriefing meeting.

We sincerely hope you will take part in this important project. If you have any questions, please call me at (phone number). Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Resource #3:

Sample Site Visit Program Participating Faculty Response Form

(Date/location of Site Visit)

Your name (please print): _____

_____ **Yes**, I will serve as a faculty member in the Site Visit Program.

_____ **No**, I am unable to participate this year.

Contact person in your office: _____

Contact number: _____

E-mail: _____

Pager number: _____

My practice has (Please select all that apply):

_____ Medicare

_____ Medicare HMO

_____ Medicaid

_____ Commercial (managed care and/or indemnity)

_____ Workers' compensation

_____ Other (please specify): _____

Resource #4:

Site Visit Program Guidelines

Thank you for your participation in a Site Visit at (host location). During the event, we ask that you please:

1. Maintain respect for patient confidentiality. Participants agree not to discuss any patients by name and to limit discussion of cases to the Site Visit forums. Participants also agree to respect the patient's right to refuse their presence during exams, consultations or treatments.
2. Adhere to the arranged schedule. Failure to do so can cause delays in surgeries and other procedures.
3. Ask questions and offer comments thoughtfully while accompanying physicians through their routine.
4. Provide input and help evaluate the Site Visit Program during and after the debriefing.
5. Refrain from using your participation in the program for self-promotion (to advance oneself personally or to boost one's business). Individuals are prohibited from printing or making any statements which can be construed as promoting themselves or their businesses.
6. Obtain consent from the Site Visit Program host before contacting media about participation in this program.

Resource #5:

Sample Site Visit Program Agenda

(Date)

Schedule

- 11 a.m. Orientation, (location/address)**
(Follow with other specific directions). Meet (name/number)
Urgent Contact (phone number)
- 1200 p.m. Jayne Doe, MD (Anesthesiology)**
Meet Dr. Doe at her office in the Facility.
(Give specific directions, or who will meet and direct the participant)
Office contact: (contact name/phone number)
- 1:30 p.m. Jim Smith, MD (Anesthesiology)**
Meet Dr. Smith at (Specific Location and directions).
Upon arrival, please contact (contact name/phone number)
- 6 p.m. Debriefing meeting, (Location)**
(Location) is at (address)
(Contact name/phone number)

*****If you have any questions, please call (contact name/phone number) *****

Resource #6:

Site Visit Program Practical Tips for Participants

- ★ Wear comfortable shoes. You may be walking or on your feet for long periods of time.
- ★ Wear comfortable clothing (business casual, no jeans or shorts). Remember that you will be wearing a surgical cover-all or operating room scrubs over your clothing.
- ★ Women should pull long hair into a ponytail if possible.
- ★ If you have any questions, please contact (contact information)

Resource #7

Sponsoring Component Society Site Visit Program

(Sample Physician Bios)

(Date)

Jayne Doe, MD (Host)

Dr. Doe specializes in Cardiac Anesthesia and is the Chairman of the Department of Anesthesiology. She is board certified by the American Board of Anesthesiology. Dr. Doe received a bachelor's degree in biology from the University of Kentucky in 1972. She graduated from the University of Kentucky College of Medicine in 1976 and completed her residency at the University of Louisville. Dr. Doe is an avid Kentucky basketball fan and currently resides with her family in Richmond, KY.

Jon Doe, DO

Dr. Doe specializes in Anesthesiology and Pain Management and is board certified by the American Board of Anesthesiology. (If appropriate, include information about the physician's education, interests.)

Jan Jones, MD

Dr. Jones specializes in Pediatric Anesthesiology and is board certified by the American Board of Anesthesiology. (If appropriate, include information about the physician's education, interests.)

Jim Smith, MD

Dr. Smith specializes in Anesthesiology and is board certified by the American Board of Anesthesiology. (If appropriate, include information about the physician's education, interests.)

Resource #8:

Sample Participant Letter

Date

Jon Doe Legislator
Address

Dear (Legislator) Doe:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in our Site Visit Program at (location) on (date). I am confident that you will find the experience informative and thought-provoking.

You are scheduled to shadow (anesthesiologist name/contact numbers), on (date/time). Dr (anesthesiologist name) will meet you at (time/location) and has been instructed to contact you at (phone number).

The participants will meet for an orientation at (location) followed by meeting their physician hosts.

At (time), all physician hosts and participants will meet at (location) for a debriefing meeting. This meeting provides a unique opportunity for participants and physicians to discuss their experiences evaluate the program and share perspectives on health care delivery. We hope you can join us.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (phone number). I look forward to seeing you during the Site Visit Program. Thank you again for participating.

Sincerely,

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