

Transcript Details

This is a transcript of an educational program. Details about the program and additional media formats for the program are accessible by visiting: <https://reachmd.com/programs/clinicians-roundtable/evolving-science-patient-understanding/48847/>

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Bridging the Gap Between Evolving Science and Patient Understanding

ReachMD Announcer:

This is *Clinician's Roundtable* on ReachMD. On this episode, we'll hear from Dr. Jason Goldman, who's the President of the American College of Physicians as well as their liaison to the CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices. He'll be discussing best practices for communicating scientific uncertainty and building trust with patients.

Here's Dr. Goldman now.

Dr. Goldman:

One of the biggest challenges in communicating scientific uncertainty is just that: the unknown and the uncertainty. People want answers. They want a very concrete "yes" or "no," but sometimes, we don't have that. And we see this not only in science, but in medicine, where things happen to patients, and we don't know what caused it, but we have to deal with the issue. And that's one of the most important things to remember from the pandemic—we did not have all the answers, but we did have to make decisions, and we did have to act quickly.

So the biggest point of communication is honesty and transparency, and explaining to people what we know, what we don't know, and how we got there and where we are. Being able to express that the uncertainty is just that and that we have gaps in information helps to foster trust because it shows that we are looking for answers and not just making assumptions. We're sticking to doctrine but questioning to make sure we find the truth.

Healthcare professionals have a unique role in being able to communicate with their patients and be that trusted voice, so it's really important to be able to have those open and honest communications in explaining how science works, explaining our gaps in knowledge, and understanding the process. It is difficult because this is not something most people do every day, but as physicians, as scientists, and as researchers, this is our bread and butter. This is what we do. We question. We examine. We look for answers. And it really is explaining that process in layman's terms to patients so that they understand and can trust that we are working through the process to find the correct answers.

ReachMD Announcer:

That was Dr. Jason Goldman talking about patient communication strategies around scientific uncertainty. To access this and other episodes in our series, visit *Clinician's Roundtable* on ReachMD.com, where you can Be Part of the Knowledge. Thanks for listening!