



Ready to go with Discovery cameras rolling.

## Channeling knowledge

No matter how many patients he sees in his lifetime, Justin Casey (M.D., '11) likely won't ever reach a bigger audience than when he blogged recently about the health benefits of wearing flip-flops.

"It had like 40,000 hits the first day and ended up on AOL's home page," Casey said. "I later wrote a more serious piece about steroid use by high school athletes. I did a lot of research and had lots of interesting numbers to support it, but people didn't want that. They wanted flip-flops."

Casey's flip-flop blog was one small part of a six-week "medicine and the media" elective he completed with the Discovery Channel just before his graduation in

May. Competition for the American Medical Association-sponsored elective was intense – the position was advertised with medical schools nationwide.

Casey, though, had an edge: He was the football play-by-play announcer for his college radio station at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, so he knows his way around a microphone.

More likely, the numerous leadership roles he volunteered for with local medical societies, the AMA and Florida Medical Association during four years as a student at the College of Medicine contributed to his selection.

Regardless, Casey didn't hesitate when he learned Discovery Channel was offering the elective.

"The media play such an important role in delivering the message about health," said Casey, who now is a first-year resident in otolaryngology at the University of Colorado. "It was a unique rotation, and to get something in health communications was intriguing to me. With Discovery Channel being as big a brand as it is made it very exciting."

During the elective at company headquarters in Silver Spring, Md., Casey worked under the supervision of Discovery Channel's chief medical expert, Dr. John J. Whyte. Casey developed a script for a continuing medical education program, attended production meetings for health-related programs and developed a greater understanding of how the news media transmit medical information.

"If you watch the nightly news there's always at least one health topic being covered," Casey said. "We've got Dr. Oz, Dr. Phil, The Doctors ... there's a huge desire in the American public for self-improvement information. So it's just a question of how you put that message in a capsule and deliver it."

Receiving media training, learning how to read a teleprompter and getting comfortable in front of a camera was more than just fun for Casey. He said he'll benefit as a physician who is interested in clear communications with patients.

And just as he was at Florida State, Casey intends to be active outside of his practice. "What I learned at Discovery Channel," he said, "will help me take a role in the media to speak out about important health topics."

With his multimedia skills, Casey might even one day become the medical expert you see on the nightly news. In fact, his debut could be coming soon. Casey produced a video about allergies that may appear on a health news show currently being developed by the network.

"I actually learned a lot about building a health message not just for health professionals, but for the common person," he said.

After all, there are a lot more ways to improve your health than just wearing flip-flops.

