

CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS FLASH SHEET

COLOR KEY CODE

<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <div style="width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: blue; margin-right: 5px;"></div> Crisis Communication Response Team </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <div style="width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: gray; margin-right: 5px;"></div> HIPAA Regulations </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: orange; margin-right: 5px;"></div> Sample Media "Holding" Statement </div> </div> </div>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <div style="width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: green; margin-right: 5px;"></div> Establishing the Public Information Area </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <div style="width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: magenta; margin-right: 5px;"></div> Unannounced Media Visit </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: yellow; margin-right: 5px;"></div> Ready-Reference: Communications Templates </div> </div> </div>
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CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS RESPONSE TEAM – KEY CONTACTS

NOTE: In the event of a crisis communications event, team leader or alternate should be contacted immediately. Team leader(s) will decide which members of the crisis team are required for effective crisis response.

Administration: Jane Smith (team leader) Office (123) 456-7890; Cell (123) 456-7890; jsmith@abchosp.com
 John Jones (alternate): Office (123) 456-7890; Cell (123) 456-7890; jsmith@abchosp.com
 Pat Adams (public relations): Office (123) 456-7890; Cell (123) 456-7890; padams@abchosp.com

Legal: Clarence Darrow: Office (123) 456-7890; Cell (123) 456-7890; cdarrow@biglaw.com
PR Firm: Ann Apple: Office (212) 683-81XX; Cell (917) 555-XXXX; prteam@prcg.com
 Bob Cobb: Office: (212) 683-81XX; Cell: (917) 555-XXXX; Email prteam@prcg.com

ESTABLISHING THE PUBLIC INFORMATION AREA

In the event of a natural disaster, major accident or similar crisis situation, ABC Hospital's Crisis Management Plan requires the creation of a public information area for media and other public audiences. The Public Information area will be located in the hospital administration building across Main Street from the main hospital building.

- Depending upon the severity of the event and the number of media representatives (and potentially others) looking for information, media should be directed to either the large Second Floor conference facility (Room XXX), or the small first floor Conference Room directly across from the entrance to the building.
- Public Information Areas should be pre-stocked with the following equipment and supplies:
 - 3-5 operable phone lines
 - An operable fax machine
 - Wifi, Ethernet cables and adequate ports for Internet communications
 - Appropriate tables and chairs
 - A podium or lectern for disseminating important information.
 - Easel and whiteboard to display information
 - 3-5 surge protectors for plugging in additional electrical equipment
 - Pens, pencils and notepads
- Media should be properly monitored by hospital public relations or security personnel.
- ABC Hospital's Crisis Communications Team should be stationed in a nearby office for confidential communications, exchange of information and the preparation of media statements, press releases and other background materials.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, Consult **Section XX** of the *Crisis Communication Handbook*: "Public Information Area"

HIPAA REGULATIONS

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) greatly restricts the information that can be made public regarding a hospital patient, condition or admission.

- Hospitals that maintain a patient directory can tell those who ask about specific individuals whether the individual is at the facility, their location in the facility, and a one-word description of general condition:
 - Undetermined
 - Good
 - Fair
 - Serious
 - Critical

This information can be made available only if the caller asks about the person by name. **NOTE: "Stable" is never an appropriate description of condition.** The hospital may also disclose that a patient has been "treated and released," or that a patient has died. Patients have the right to restrict such information and how it is disclosed.

- In the event of an accident or other emergency or crisis situation with multiple injuries or patients, the hospital can disclose, in general terms, information about the number of patients, age group, gender and condition.
- The hospital can share patient information with anyone, including media, to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the health and safety of a person or the public.
- The hospital can also share patient information, including through the media, to identify, locate, and notify family members, guardians, or anyone else responsible for an individual's care.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, Consult **Section XX** of the *Crisis Communication Handbook*: "HIPAA Privacy Laws"

UNANNOUNCED MEDIA VISIT

NOTE: In the event of an unannounced media visit – particularly a television news crew – it is important to do everything possible to avoid confrontation, including physically ejecting a news crew or otherwise causing a scene. This is exactly the type of response the “ambush” interviewer is looking to incite.

Checklist

- ❑ Hospital PR representative should meet the media as close to the front entrance of the facility as possible.
- ❑ Politely inform video crew that it is a violation of federal privacy law to shoot interior video of hospital.
- ❑ Explain that it is hospital policy not to grant interviews without an appointment. If the reporter or crew would like to arrange an appointment, you can take their information and make the proper arrangements.

Depending upon the nature of the pending crisis, the media representative may demand an interview immediately. In this case:

- ❑ Most importantly, be polite and understanding as to media needs.
- ❑ Suggest the reporter or news crew move to the Public Information Area in the hospital administration building (see **green** section).
- ❑ Walk with the crew to the hospital administration building.
- ❑ Explain that given the lack of notice, it might take some time to arrange an appropriate response. Ask the reporter’s deadline and if a written statement from the hospital will suffice.
- ❑ Offer coffee, water or soft drinks and ask the crew to make themselves comfortable.
- ❑ From the Public Information Area, arrange that the news crew be monitored, by security if necessary.
- ❑ Take appropriate time to arrange a statement or interview by a hospital spokesperson, using templates contained in the Crisis Communications CD-ROM.
- ❑ For in-person interviews, spokesperson should take some time to memorize their statement or talking points before entering the interview room.

SAMPLE MEDIA “HOLDING” STATEMENT (Crisis Handbook, Section XX)

Statement of [Hospital Spokesperson]
[Title]

DATE -- [Optional Paragraph: Express sympathy, if appropriate, for loss].

[Paragraph 1: A short factual statement of what has happened – as much information as is known. Do not speculate, and remind media that you are still collecting relevant information].

[Paragraph 2: Explain as much as is known about what will happen next, e.g. “As we learn more, we will immediately...”]

[Paragraph 3: Reiterate ABC Hospital's commitment to the community and to safety/security/best practices]

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NOTE: The above is designed for dissemination to media. Communication can be adapted for other constituencies – through email, memo, letter, or in-person using talking points.

Ready Reference: Communication Templates

Your Crisis Communications Handbook and accompanying CD-ROM contains numerous communication templates for the following crisis situations. Time permitting, please consult the crisis communications handbook for specific responses to various crisis situations, along with detailed strategies for managing media, employees, public officials and other important public audiences:

Medical Error/Negligence Allegation	Section XX	Accident With Multiple Injuries	Section XX
Patient Abuse Allegation	Section XX	Biological Spill/Contamination	Section XX
Escaped Patient	Section XX	Hospital Facilities Failure/Accident	Section XX
Workplace Violence	Section XX	Dangerous Person on property	Section XX
Labor/Employment Claim	Section XX	IT Breach	Section XX
Natural Disaster	Section XX	Medical Records Problem	Section XX
Terrorism	Section XX	Stolen Narcotics/Other Medications	Section XX
Epidemic/Pandemic	Section XX	John or Jane Doe Admission	Section XX
Employee Injury/Death	Section XX	Demonstration or Protest	Section XX