

Public Relations / Media Contact

SUBJECT: Public Relations / Media Contact	PREPARED BY: Elizabeth Rodgers, Sr. Mgr Brands and Campaigns, CNE	EFFECTIVE DATE: 03/26/2021	POLICY NUMBER: CNE-MC-001
PAGE: 1 of 3	REVIEWED BY: Raina Smith, Director of PR and Media Relations, CNE	APPROVED BY: Jessica J. McCarthy VP Marketing, PR and Communications	REPLACES:

- I. **Purpose.** The purpose of this *Public Relations / Media Contact Policy* (this “**Policy**”) is to help preserve confidentiality of patient information, and to provide media outlets accurate and timely access to information. This policy governs media relations for Care New England and its member organizations, including outreach and response to the media. It enables Care New England and its member organizations to comply with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996, which governs privacy standards for health care information.
- II. **Scope.** This Policy applies to Care New England (“CNE”) and all Care New England hospitals, Care New England healthcare entities, and each other Care New England entity that is a direct or indirect subsidiary of Care New England (each a “CNE Affiliate” and collectively, “CNE Affiliates”).
- III. **Policy.** It is the policy of Care New England and each CNE Affiliate shall comply with this Policy. It is the responsibility of Care New England’s Marketing Communications Department to coordinate all proactive and reactive statements to and interactions with the news media on behalf of member organizations, its employees and its physicians, as well as its patients. It is the policy of Care New England that media representatives not be present on any CNE campus without prior approval from the Marketing Department and be accompanied by a member of Marketing Communications or Security at all times.
- IV. **Definitions.** Terms not already defined in this Policy have the following meanings: N/A
- V. **Procedure.**
 - (a) All information requests, interviews, photographs or videos involving patients, their families or visitors to the hospital require advance consent and completion of the Photography/Media Release Form, which, in the case of patients, should be filed in the patient's medical record. For newborn, minor or incompetent patients, parental/legal guardian consent and signature are required.
 - (b) Information about the condition of an inpatient, outpatient or emergency department patient may be released *only if the inquiry specifically contains the patient's name and as long as the patient has not requested that information be withheld*. If these conditions are met, the patient's one- word condition may be released without obtaining prior patient authorization. Patient condition responses should be limited, as outlined below:
 - (1) **Undetermined:** Patient awaiting physician and assessment.

- (2) **Good:** Vital signs are stable and within normal limits. Patient is conscious and comfortable. Indicators are excellent.
- (3) **Fair:** Vital signs are stable and within normal limits. Patient is conscious, but may be uncomfortable. Indicators are favorable.
- (4) **Serious:** Vital signs may be unstable and not within normal limits. Patient is acutely ill. Indicators are questionable.
- (5) **Critical:** Vital signs are unstable and not within normal limits. Patient may be unconscious. Indicators are unfavorable.

In the case of obstetrics patients, condition will typically be reported as "good" or "fair" - no further information, including whether a baby has been delivered, the gender or condition of the baby, should be given.

- (c) Before providing any information verbally to the media about the patient, birth status, condition or gender of the baby the patient/patient's representative must sign an Authorization to Release Health Information (form #10136). Any other detailed information that goes beyond the patient's one-word condition requires the patient/patient's representative to sign the Authorization to Release Health Information and the Photography/Media Release Form.

When the media are in a patient care area of a CNE Affiliate, all patients in the area that will be observable to the media company must agree to and sign Authorization for Use and Public Disclosure of Patient Medical Information (form #10173) and complete the Photography/ Media Release Form. Any patient who refuses to sign the Authorization and Media Release form must not be present or observable to the media company and must not be recorded in audio or video by the media.

All media personnel that will be visiting patient care areas are requested to sign the Visitor Confidentiality Agreement. The media company will be requested to sign the Media On Location Agreement.

- (d) It is the responsibility of the Marketing Communications Department to issue news advisories/releases, interface with the media, obtain any necessary administrative/department clearance for media visits/interviews, accompany the hospital's resources during the interview, and advise, as appropriate, the switchboard, Security Department and other personnel in advance of a media visit.
- (e) It is the responsibility of employees or physicians seeking to involve the news media or independent video, film or publication representatives in filming, photographing or interviewing patients, employees, physicians or hospital facilities to coordinate these activities through the Marketing Communications Department with as much advance notice as possible.
- (f) It is the responsibility of employees or physicians contacted by the news media during regular business hours to immediately refer the call to the Marketing Communications Department. During evening, night or weekend hours, media calls should be immediately referred to the nursing supervisor who will be responsible for fielding the inquiry, determining the need to contact a designate of the Marketing Communications Department and, in the event of an interview, photograph or video, obtaining the appropriate patient consents and release form(s) signatures.

- (g) It is requested that any public figure or special interest case which could result in media interest be conveyed at the earliest convenience to the Marketing Communications Department.
- (h) Media representatives must be accompanied by a member of Marketing Communications or Security at all times. Upon arrival, all media representatives must check in with either Marketing Communications or Security. They should be properly credentialed and display an ID badge at all times. Unsanctioned video, photography, and voice recording is not permitted. Permission to film from a third party (e.g. EMS, Police, Patient) does not supersede this policy.

REFERENCES:

N/A

APPROVAL/REVISION:

03/16/2017: Initial Version of Policy approved by Elizabeth Rodgers, Sr. Mgr. Branding & Campaigns, CNE

03/16/2017: Revision approved by Raina Smith, Director of PR and Communications; Approved prior to Converge Point Upload

03/17/2017: Revision approved by Jessica McCarthy, VP Marketing, PR and Communications

REPLACES:

N/A