

ADMINISTRATIVE MANUAL - POLICY

Title	Media Relations
Number	1.B.70
Policy Area	Organizational Culture – Communications (Tools and Protocols)
Policy Statement	<p>The following will guide Peterborough Regional Health Centre staff members in their contact with the news media. The Hospital believes in open and honest communications with the media. PRHC will endeavor to provide prompt and forthright answers to media inquiries, in addition to the timely release of information that is of public interest or importance, where it is not limited by its obligation to uphold the protection of patient privacy in compliance with the Personal Health Information Privacy Act (PHIPA).</p> <p>Any and all statements made concerning PRHC should be regarded as public statements and are governed by this policy.</p>
Implementation:	<p>MEDIA INQUIRIES</p> <p>All general media inquiries are to be directed to the hospital’s Communications Department, where the proper channel for follow-up will be given. To provide media with extended access to hospital administration after hours, media inquiries should be directed to the Director on Call, who can be contacted through Switchboard.</p> <p>DESIGNATED SPOKESPERSONS</p> <p>Designated spokespeople for Peterborough Regional Health Centre are the President& CEO, or his/her delegate.</p> <p>INFORMATION REQUESTS</p> <p>Urgent Requests: An urgent media request, requiring information beyond the condition of a patient, should be forwarded to the Communications Department. After hours, the request should be forwarded to the Director on Call.</p> <p>Patient Information: Personal health information is private and confidential, and cannot be released without the patient’s permission, except where the release involves a matter of public record. Public record refers to situations that are reportable, by law, to public authorities such as the Police, Coroner or Public Health Officer.</p>

Implementation
(cont'd)

When it is a matter of public record, *and* the news media already know the patient's full name, *and* the patient or family has granted permission, the only information that can be released for any in-patient is that patient's condition, if determined (please see conditions outlined below).

In all cases, the wishes of the patient and that of the immediate family will determine what and how much information may be released on their behalf.

Condition of Patient: Only a physician can discuss a patient's prognosis. However, the following general, non-clinical terms can be used to describe the patient's condition:

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| Good | Vital signs are stable and within normal limits. Patient is conscious and comfortable. Indicators are excellent. |
| Fair | Vital signs are stable and within normal limits. Patient is conscious but may be uncomfortable. May have minor complications. |
| Serious | Vital signs may be unstable and not within normal limits. Patient is acutely ill. Indicators are questionable. |
| Critical | Vital signs are unstable and not within normal limits. Patient may be unconscious. Indicators are unfavourable. |

REQUESTS TO INTERVIEW, PHOTOGRAPH AND VIDEOTAPE

All news media requests to photograph, videotape or interview patients, staff, volunteers or visitors on hospital property are to be directed to the Communications Department during business hours or, during off hours, the Director on Call.

A dated and signed consent form must be obtained from all patients or the patient's immediate family, prior to the patient being interviewed, photographed or videotaped. The consent then becomes a permanent part of the patient's medical record.

MEDIA AUTHORIZATION

News media wishing to film, photograph or conduct interviews of any persons, including but not limited to staff, former or current patients, family members, volunteers, physicians, or politicians, in any area of the Hospital must be approved in advance through the Communications Department. All reasonable requests will be considered.

Implementation	MEDIA AUTHORIZATION (cont'd)
	<p>The Hospital can, and will, prohibit members of the news media from interviewing, photographing or videotaping patients or staff if the privacy of any individuals at the Hospital is at risk of being breached, or if intervention is requested by any staff, patient or family member.</p> <p>Members of the media must identify themselves as such and from what organization they represent, in advance.</p> <p>Media must consent, when asked, to wear MEDIA ID badges.</p> <p>All members of the media are to be escorted by a staff member of the Communications Department at all times when on Hospital premises.</p>
Cross Reference	"Community Linkages" – Privacy – 2.B.50
Responsibility/ Monitoring	Communications Department
Effective Date	Jun 08;
Original Date	Jul.76
Date Reviewed	Nov.00; Mar.93
Date Revised	Jun 08; Jun.14.06; Feb.04; Dec.12.96; Mar.93; May.87; Dec.86

Replaces Policy:

- PCH: Media Relations (VII.50) – Oct.14.93; revised Dec.12.96
- SJH: Policy for News Media (III-90) - Mar.85; revised May.87, Mar.93
- SJH: Release of Information News Media Policy (I-B-60) - Jul.76; revised Dec.86, reviewed Mar.93