

Media Policy

Target Group: Cleveland Clinic Enterprise		Original Date of Issue: 02/01/2009	Version 2
Approved by: Board of Directors- Main, Yvonne Wolters	Date Last Approved/Reviewed: 01/23/2019	Prepared by: Eileen Sheil (Executive Director Media Relations)	Effective Date 04/27/2016
Euclid Hospital: MEC approval date: Board approval date: 5/18/2016 Effective Date: 5/18/2016		Fairview Hospital: MEC approval date: Board approval date: 5/18/2016 Effective Date: 5/18/2016	
Hillcrest Hospital: MEC approval date: Board approval date: 5/18/2016 Effective Date: 5/18/2016		Avon Hospital: MEC approval date: Board approval date: 5/18/2016 Effective Date: 5/18/2016	
Lutheran Hospital: MEC approval date: Board approval date: 5/18/2016 Effective Date: 5/18/2016		Marymount Hospital: MEC approval date: Board approval date: 5/18/2016 Effective Date: 5/18/2016	
Medina Hospital: MEC approval date: Board approval date: 5/18/2016 Effective Date: 5/18/2016		South Pointe Hospital: MEC approval date: Board approval date: 5/18/2016 Effective Date: 5/18/2016	
CCCHR: MEC approval date: 6/3/2016 Board approval date: 6/3/2016 Effective Date: 6/3/2016		Weston, Florida: MEC approval date: Board approval date: Effective Date:	
Canada: Date Sent:5/5/2016		Abu Dhabi: Date Sent:5/5/2016	

Printed copies are for reference only. Please refer to the electronic copy for the latest version.

IMPORTANT NOTE FOR DOCUMENT OWNERS:

If your document impacts caregivers working at any of our Regional Hospitals AND requires MEC approval, you are required to complete a [Document Summary Form](#) and attach it to this document.

Purpose

To provide criteria for handling inquiries from the news media.

Policy Statement

Any event or inquiry from the news media that affects or is likely to affect the overall reputation of Cleveland Clinic must be routed to Main Campus Corporate Communications.

Definitions

Cleveland Clinic Enterprise: Includes the main campus, Avon, Euclid, Fairview, Hillcrest, Lutheran, Marymount, Medina, South Pointe, Children's Hospital for Rehabilitation, Cleveland Clinic Florida Hospital, Cleveland Clinic Hospital (Weston) Cleveland Clinic Canada, Abu Dhabi, SKMC and all Family Health Centers, Physician practice sites, Nevada practice sites, Emergency Departments, Urgent Care Centers and Ambulatory Surgical Centers reporting to these facilities.

Policy Implementation

General Media Policies

Cleveland Clinic strives to accommodate media requests quickly and efficiently with little or no disruption of patient care. To expedite requests, journalists are required to follow these criteria when seeking to contact Cleveland Clinic patients or personnel:

1. All media requests must be coordinated by a Corporate Communications representative. Each hospital has a designated Corporate Communications representative available at all times to facilitate requests. (Cleveland Clinic contact information is included at the end of this policy.) Media calls placed to other employees within the organization will be channeled to the Corporate Communications Department.
2. All journalists must be cleared by Corporate Communications to work on Cleveland Clinic property and must be escorted by a staff member while inside Cleveland Clinic buildings.

Only a Corporate Communications representative may issue this clearance. Security personnel will detain news personnel who enter Cleveland Clinic facilities without Corporate Communications clearance until the journalist's credentials can be verified and proper clearance obtained.

3. To ensure confidentiality and privacy, patients may not be interviewed, photographed or filmed on Cleveland Clinic property without their having provided written consent to a member of the Corporate Communications staff. Signed media consent forms will be kept on file in the Corporate Communications Department. If the patient is a minor, permission must be obtained from a parent or verifiable legal guardian.

4. Patient well-being takes precedence in every situation. Hospitals may deny the media access to any patient if a physician determines that the media's presence would aggravate the patient's condition or interfere with appropriate clinical care.

Regulatory Requirement/References

Rules for Releasing Patient Information to the Media / HIPAA Compliance

1. The Federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) mandates regulations that govern privacy, security and administrative simplification standards for healthcare information. HIPAA sets forth minimum standards that hospitals must follow with regard to the release of patient information. Any Cleveland Clinic policy that is more restrictive than mandated by HIPAA takes precedence over the federal regulations.
2. HIPAA restricts the information that healthcare providers are permitted to include in a patient directory for release to the public, including the news media. These criteria apply to public officials and public personalities just as they do to private citizens. Directory information is limited to four elements, and patients have the right to further restrict the release of their directory information. The directory elements are:

See the [HIPAA Directories Policy](#)

- a. **Name.** This information will be released only to those, including the media, who ask about a patient by name and only if the patient has not restricted its release.
- b. **Condition.** The condition provided and its medical description is in accordance with American Hospital Association guidelines. The terms – undetermined, good, fair, serious and critical – are defined within the American Hospital Association guidelines.
- c. **Location within the hospital.** This information will be provided only if it does not reveal legally protected patient information regarding the nature of treatment being provided.
- d. **Religion.** This information is available only to verifiable, credentialed clergy members.

NOTES:

- a. While HIPAA privacy regulations restrict the information that healthcare providers may release, patients are free to release their own personal information or to consent to media interviews provided that their actions do not interfere with their medical treatment. Furthermore, Cleveland Clinic may choose not to release such requested information if Cleveland Clinic believes that it is in the best interest of the patient.
- b. If patients are unable to “opt out” of the facility directory listing because of incapacity or emergency treatment, Cleveland Clinic will not release information until the patient or legal guardian is able to provide consent.

- c. The fact that a hospital has an obligation to report certain confidential information to a governmental agency does not make that information public and available to news reporters. In these situations, reporters must contact the appropriate local, state, or federal agency. The public entity will be guided by applicable statute as to whether it can release any or all of the information it receives.

Oversight and Responsibility

Corporate Communications is responsible to review, revise, update, and operationalize this policy to maintain compliance with regulatory or other requirements.

It is the responsibility of each hospital, institute, department and discipline to implement the policy and to draft and operationalize related procedures to the policy if applicable.

Appendices

- a. See Cleveland Clinic HREW [Social Media Use Policy](#)
- b. For all locations, Corporate Communications can be reached at 216.444.0141 during regular business hours, 8am-5pm ET.
- c. Caregivers from all locations can page a representative anytime at 216.818.0223.