

Hospital-wide		Administrative
SUBJECT:	Media Relations	
Reviewed:		
Revised:	4/02, 6/02, 1/11, 10/16*, 2/20*, 7/22	
Approved:	Leadership Council 6/02 Management Council 2/11, 8/11 System Management Team 8/11 * Revised with no substantial changes.	

I. Policy

University Health System, Inc. (The University of Tennessee Medical Center) has developed a Media Relations policy to provide consistent, timely, and appropriate venues and outlets for coverage of medical Center related events and activities. Copies of the Media Relations policy are maintained in the Marketing Services Office (305-6845) and are available for review upon request.

The major objectives of the policy are:

1. to protect the well-being of patients.
2. to safeguard the privacy of individuals.
3. to allow the normal process for patient care to continue uninterrupted.
4. to protect the integrity of the medical center as well as its policies, procedures and protocols.
5. to report news accurately, authoritatively, and promptly.
6. to cooperate sincerely.

Members of the Marketing Services team comprise Media Relations and serve as the official spokespersons of the medical center. The media is expected to seek information through these official spokespersons. Team members and representatives of the organization are expected to cooperate with these spokespersons in the process of obtaining information for release. Representatives of Media Relations are on-call 24 hours a day and may be reached through the hospital operator after normal business hours at 305-9000.

It is against organizational policy for any team member or representative of UHS, UT Medical Center, the College of Pharmacy or the Graduate School of Medicine to communicate with the media, arrange interviews, or release any patient or medical center information without the expressed permission of and in consultation with the Media Relations.

Representatives of the media are required to receive permission through Media Relations prior to arranging interviews, photographs or videos of patients, family members, team members, representatives or facilities of UHS, UT Medical Center, the College of Pharmacy and the Graduate School of Medicine.

Following requests from the media Media Relations will seek appropriate approvals from the patient, the patient's family, and/or the attending physician(s) or the appropriate faculty or staff member before interviews, photographs or videos are granted.

Media Relations will need a reasonable amount of time to respond to requests from the media.

II. Procedure

Although it is necessary to develop policies regarding our relationship with the news media, these policies and procedures are not intended to discourage team members or medical center representatives from making suggestions and/or recommendations regarding activities that might appropriately be of interest to or discussed with the media. The medical center strongly encourages all team members and representatives of UHS to share with Media Relations ideas, projects or activities that may have public interest value or are newsworthy.

1. Nursing Supervisors and Media Relations are the **only** persons authorized to release patient information to the media. All media calls requesting patient information should be referred to Media Relations Monday-Friday, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, at 305-6845. After hours, nights, weekends and holidays, calls should be sent to the Nursing Supervisors or the on-call Media Relations representative, through the hospital operator.
2. During a disaster/incident the Public Information Officer will be activated in HICS to be the contact point for all media communications.
3. Any team member who receives a call from the media should transfer or refer the call to Media Relations. Reporters and photographers are required to receive clearance through Media Relations prior to arranging interviews, photographs or videos of patients, family members, and/or medical center representatives. All media representatives shall be accompanied at all times by a member of the Media Relations team. Team members encountering any media representatives at the facility without a member of Media Relations are requested to contact Security at 305-9540 immediately.

Media Relations generates any and all news releases from the medical center, UHS, the College of Pharmacy or the Graduate School of Medicine.

From time to time, the medical center works with outside companies and other healthcare facilities on joint projects. Any news releases generated by outside companies or vendors which include information about or references to the medical center, UHS, the College of Pharmacy or the Graduate School of Medicine, must be approved by Media Relations. If team members are contacted about approving such releases, employees should forward the release or release materials to Media Relations for approval.

Link to: [Newsroom – Media Guidelines](#).