

## **MEDIA RELATIONS**

### **PURPOSE:**

- 1) To promote a positive image of Center of Special Care, Inc. and affiliate businesses (collectively “CSC”) in all media stories.
- 2) To ensure the privacy of CSC patients/residents and employees.
- 3) To sustain good and effective relations with the media.

### **POLICY:**

Media inquiries and contacts will be handled by the Senior Vice President, Chief Operating Officer.

When the Emergency Operations Management Plan is in effect, the Public Information Disaster Management Policy will be followed.

### **PROCEDURE:**

- 1.1 All media inquiries should be directed to the Senior Vice President, Chief Operating Officer via phone, email and/or pager. If the Senior Vice President, Chief Operating Officer is not available, the Vice President of External Relations responsible for oversight of marketing/communications may be called with a follow-up by phone/email to the Senior Vice President, Chief Operating Officer. After business hours and on weekends, calls should be directed to the “Administrator On-Call” who will obtain the name and phone number of the reporter, as well as the media source and question to be addressed. The “Administrator On-Call” and/or hospital operator should promptly call the Senior Vice President, Chief Operating Officer. (The hospital operator has home phone numbers, pagers and cell phone numbers).
- 1.2 Every effort should be made to respond to media inquiries promptly. The Senior Vice President, Chief Operating Officer and/or HSC media relations consultant will respond to media or put media in contact with appropriate person to answer questions.
- 1.3 Regarding media inquiries about CSC patients/residents, Corporate Communications may only confirm patient information that would normally be available in the facility directory to persons requesting the patient by name (name, general condition (stable, fair, etc.) and room number). If a patients/resident has requested that this general information not be disclosed, in accordance with the Alias policy or the policy “Patient’s Rights to Request Restrictions, to Object to Certain Uses/Disclosures and to Request Alternative Means of Confidential Communications Related to Protected Health Information,” then information will not be confirmed without written Authorization (compliant with HIPAA) signed by the patient/resident or his/her personal representative.

Any other information related to the patient’s medical condition, unit or treatment may not be disclosed without such signed written Authorization. See “Release of Protected Health Information” policy, “Photographs and Observation, Authorization for; Authorization for Release of Related Information” policy, and “Alias” policy for more information.

Corporate Communications personnel will be responsible for obtaining signature on the appropriate forms authorizing release of information from the patient/resident or the patient’s/resident’s representative in accordance with CSC policies on “Photographs and Observation, Authorization for; Authorization for Release of Related Information” and “Release of Protected Health Information.” Where appropriate, an authorized CSC staff member may be designated to coordinate and take responsibility for requesting/obtaining signature on the forms. A copy of the Authorization is maintained by Corporate Communications.

- 1.4 The rights of a patient/resident to communicate freely will be honored, unless the attending physician feels that media contact with the patient/resident is medically contraindicated in accordance with the Patient Bill of Rights (Connecticut General Statute's 19a-550). The objection should be communicated to the patient/resident or his/her personal representative and clearly documented in the medical record.
- 1.5 Staff members should never speak directly with the media, but instead direct all inquiries to the Senior Vice President, Chief Operating Officer for attention. If a staff member does speak with the media in error, that staff member and manager should report the content of the conversation to the Senior Vice President, Chief Operating Officer immediately.
- 1.6 When an employee, visitor or other individual that is not a patient/resident is included in interviews and/or the taking of photographic images, Corporate Communications is responsible for obtaining signature on the "Release for Photographic Images and Related Information for Employees/Volunteers/Visitors" before any photographic image is used or disclosed, and will maintain a copy of all signed forms.
- 1.7 Senior Vice President, Chief Operating Officer or HSC media relations consultant should make every effort to attend all media interviews with patients and families, unless the patient/resident or his/her family declines to have the Senior Vice President, Chief Operating Officer present.

**Compliance:**

Failure to comply with this policy will result in corrective or disciplinary action including, and up to, termination of employment.

If you have any questions about these guidelines, or any matter related to social media at HSC, please direct them to:

- Senior Vice President, Chief Operating Officer
- Vice President of External Relations