

BOARD MANUAL

SUBJECT: Communications Policy		NUMBER: 2-D-11	
SECTION: Board Processes		APPROVED BY: Board of Directors	
DATE: February 22, 2012		REVISED/REVIEWED: May 12, 2015, Sept 30, 2015, April 24, 2019, April 27, 2022	

This policy is identical to [Corporate Manual Policy 4-401](#). The Board endorses and adheres to the corporate communications policy 4-401.

Policy:

One important responsibility of Cambridge Memorial Hospital (the “Hospital” or CMH) is to properly communicate with its stakeholders. This policy provides guidelines and standards for communicating information to both internal and external stakeholder groups.

Principles:

Communication at CMH will be guided by the following principles. It will:

- Be consistent with the Hospital’s mission, vision, values, Patient Declaration of Values and Code of Conduct
- Be consistent with guidelines set out by each profession’s standards and practices
- Use communication initiatives to share information in an appropriate, timely, effective and transparent manner
- Comply with the Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA), the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) legislation and may be amended from time to time and other relevant Acts or legislation.
- Promote a work culture where opinions are expressed and concerns addressed
- Promote a positive reputation for the Hospital
- Protect the CMH brand

General Communications:

Public Affairs and Communications (PAC) is the primary point of contact for all corporate requests and requests for comments (e.g., media, internal questions), including requests related to CMH policies, decisions and positions. Refer to 4-60 *Media Requests and Patient Condition Update Policy* when contacted by the media.

Requests will be directed by PAC to the most appropriate spokesperson who will speak on behalf of CMH.

The Board Chair will be the primary spokesperson on all matters relating to Board governance and accountability. A Board member may act as spokesperson, when authorized by the Board Chair.

The President and CEO may designate a clinician, administrator, staff, or person to act as spokesperson for CMH.

PAC will provide communication support to the spokesperson according to need and is available to clarify this policy for hospital staff, physicians and volunteers.

PAC may issue generic statements under special circumstances or when the impact to the organization is minimal (e.g., fact checking by media).

Communication methods:

CMH will use the most appropriate methods to communicate with its audience including interpersonal, digital, social media, electronic and print media.

Communicating to staff, physicians and volunteers:

CMH will ensure that its staff, physicians and volunteers are kept informed to the maximum extent possible of all on-going programs or activities or planned developments that may affect their roles and working environment or stories that may appear in media. PAC will act as a central communication point for all corporate messages.

CMH encourages feedback from the public through open communication with staff, Patient Relations and social media.

Communicating to the public:

CMH will ensure the public has access to information that needs to be shared in compliance with legislation and regulations (e.g., infection rates, etc.). It will endeavour to inform the public of projects or circumstances that may impact care at the Hospital (e.g., accessibility impacts, reduced services due to inclement weather, etc.). The public will also have access to electronic documents that highlight the business and the achievements of the Hospital (minutes of Board meetings, annual reports, media releases, etc.).

Members of the public will have the means to provide feedback to both administration and the Board of Directors. Contact information is provided on the CMH website. The process to address the Board is also posted to CMH's website.

The public will have opportunity to interact with the Board and/or senior administration through events that are planned at the hospital or in public spaces.

Compliments or complaints made by a member of the general public may be directed to Public Affairs and Communication or through the Whistleblower process as outlined in the [Whistleblower policy](#).

CMH encourages feedback from the public through open communication with staff, Patient Relations and social media.

Communicating to patients

Communication with patients is guided by staff's professional college or affiliation guidelines, by the Hospital's Code of Conduct and the Patient Declaration of Values.

Health information that is distributed to patients in print or digital format will be vetted and approved by CMH staff, physicians and leadership.

CMH encourages feedback from patients through multiple methods including open communication with staff, surveys as well as feedback received from compliments and concerns.

If a patient concern is expressed with the intent to involve media, implied or otherwise, PAC or the Manager on-call must be notified.

Communication sent to the Board:

All communication directed to the Board or a member of the Board, will first be reviewed by the Board Chair, before distribution.

Communicating private views and opinions:

CMH does not regulate, restrict, or redirect the private or personal views or opinions of individuals. This includes individuals speaking on behalf of their profession or professional affiliation.

Staff, physicians and volunteers expressing personal or private views and opinions on behalf of another organization or profession must clearly indicate the statements as their own. By making this distinction, employees, physicians and volunteers can speak in this capacity.

This provision does not protect staff, physicians and volunteers who break or violate privacy, confidentiality and non-disclosure agreements, code of conduct and/or harassment policies.

On-line communication and social media:

Refer to policy [Electronic Devices in the Workplace](#) for acceptable usage standards.

Using the CMH brand:

Internal stakeholders will work with PAC to create messages (e.g., patient information) that properly display and promote the CMH brand.

CMH's name and logo cannot be used to promote a product, external service, opinion, cause or political candidate without prior approval from PAC.

Please refer to policy [4-50 Brand Management/Use of Logo](#).

Other related policies:

2-111 Accessibility - Patient Feedback

2-99 Privacy and Confidentiality

4-05 Electronic Devices and Social Media

4-60 Media Requests and Patient Condition Update Policy

12-90 Release of Information

4-50 Brand Management/Use of Logo

Board Manual - 2-D-9 Procedure for members of the public addressing the Board

Developed in consultation with:

President & CEO

Public Affairs & Communications

Chief Privacy Officer