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Communications Policy			
Date Issued: Date Review/Revised: 2024-02-22 Next Review Date: March 2025			
Owner: Common Board of Directors (Common Board)	Reviewer(s): Governance and Nominating Committee	Approver: Governance and Nominating Committee	

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Except as expressly stated to the contrary herein, these Terms of Reference apply to both the Alexandra Marine & General Hospital (AMGH) and the South Huron Hospital (SHH). AMGH and SHH are referred to individually and collectively as the Hospital.

Policy

Governance Responsibility: Transparency, including communicating to members, stakeholders and the public and making information available upon request.

Objective

To establish the policy for communicating and receiving feedback from the general public and stakeholders and to respond appropriately to requests for information. HHS adheres to legislation and principles of confidentiality when releasing patient/client information. The following policy has been developed to ensure the media, and subsequently, the public receive accurate information while protecting the confidentiality and safety of the patients, staff, and physicians.

Identification of Stakeholders

The Huron Health System (HHS) has identified its stakeholders to include the following:

- Patients and families / Patient Family Advisory Committee (PFAC)
- Residents of our catchment area community and beyond
- Employees
- Physicians and other health care providers
- Volunteers / Auxiliaries
- Donors / Foundations
- Huron Perth & Area Ontario Health Team (HP&A OHT)
- Ministry of Health
- Ontario Health West
- Politicians representing municipal, provincial, and federal governments
- Hospital tenants (i.e. Medishare, SHH Medical Clinic)

Communications Principles

There are three spokespersons authorized to speak on behalf of HHS:

- Board Chair
- President & CEO (or delegate(s))
- Chief of Staffs

The hospitals shall coordinate communications as necessary.

The HHS adopts the following as its governing communications principles:

- a. The HHS is accountable to its stakeholders, subject to the principles set out in this policy.
- b. The HHS will implement this policy by:
 - i. Producing an annual report for the HHS detailing the mission, vision, values, and significant developments. The annual report shall identify the Hospital directors and senior management, and advise stakeholders on how they may communicate with the hospital.
 - ii. Ensuring that there is a regular forum for stakeholders to express concerns and offer suggestions, criticism, and praise.
 - iii. Ensuring that the Common Board of Directors is provided in advance with information relating to issues to be discussed at meetings. Where possible, all material provided to the Common Board shall be trended, action-oriented, and summarized.
 - iv. Ensuring that, between Common Board meetings, members will be provided with relevant press releases, President & CEO speeches and announcements, and other information they should be aware of to fulfill their responsibilities.
 - v. Utilization of the HHS website and electronic media for the distribution of information. All social media will conform to requirements as contained within the HHS Social Media Policy

Transparency

- a. The HHS will be accessible and responsive to its stakeholders. The Hospital will provide stakeholders who express an interest in its affairs with a meaningful opportunity to communicate with an appropriate representative of the organization.
- b. The HHS will implement this policy by:
 - i. Inviting guests from time to time to regular Common Board meetings.
 - ii. Inviting stakeholders wishing to raise an issue with the Common Board to submit a written request to the President & CEO at least 10 days in advance of the Board meeting. The CEO and Executive and Resources Committee of the Common Board will jointly review the

request to determine its appropriateness as a Board matter and decide how the issue should be addressed.

- iii. Advertising for new candidates for the HHS Common Board, as required.

Authorization to Represent

- If any staff member wishes to express his/her own opinion regarding a community situation, either in writing or verbally, s/he MUST do so NOT as a representative of HHS but as members of the public. Only with the President & CEO's authorization can a staff member represent themselves as a staff member.
- In no case should HHS letterhead be used, nor the individual's position at the hospital be indicated when expressing personal opinions unless prior approval has been given by the President & CEO or the designated representative.
- As a matter of hospital record, the office of the President & CEO should be notified of such staff activities as invitations to speak at special groups, presentation of papers or articles to the professional press, etc. This is important as many subjects of interest to the profession are picked up by the media, and the hospital should know the original presentations to assist in responding to any inquiries.

ToR Approval Process	Governance & Nominating Committee:	2023-XX-XX
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