

A guide for the Media

On weekdays, you can reach Counties Manukau District Health Board's media and communications consultants on **(09) 378 8433** or (09) 276 0000.

For emergency enquiries after hours and at weekends, please call **(09) 378 8433** or **021 823 590**.

Communications managers can save you time and trouble trying to track down medical staff and researchers who specialise in the subject you are covering. Often we can put you in contact with a busy practitioner who may not otherwise understand the demands of your deadlines.

Our communications consultants are experienced in dealing with the media. Should your enquiry be urgent and you have had no reply within your deadline time, please contact our Communications Manager, Lauren Young, **(09) 378 8433** or email her on lauren.young@middlemore.co.nz.

What we can say:

- **We do not** release any personal information regarding a patient without consent of the adult patient or, where the patient is a child, the consent of the parent or guardian. This consent requirement includes confirmation of admission.
- **We do** release condition updates, but will not confirm other details unless we have consent from the patient or their parent or guardian.
- While we encourage families to allow the media to share information, we respect their right to decide whether to release details.

After obtaining consent, we can confirm admission and provide a condition report for the patient, limited to one of the following:

- **Stable:** condition unchanged
- **Good:** vital signs stable, within normal limits, patient conscious and comfortable, indicators favourable
- **Fair:** vital signs stable and within normal limits, patient conscious but may be uncomfortable, indicators questionable
- **Critical:** Vital signs unstable, not within normal limits, patient may not be conscious, indicators unfavourable.

When patients or their family members decline consent for release of information and request that all information about them or their child remains confidential, we are unable to comment on such patients.

We also will not comment on any specific cases unless we have direct evidence of the patient's consent other than to state the condition of said patient. Please note that unless we are supplied with a patient's name, we may not be able to provide a condition update.

Confirmation of a patient's death occurs only with family consent and after notifying next of kin. Sometimes we will refer you to the police media liaison officer.

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Visiting Counties Manukau hospitals

- The Media and Communications Unit must approve access by the media to any of our hospitals for professional duties.
- Please [let us know](#) your needs in advance. If your plan includes photography of a patient, family or a staff member at our Counties Manukau hospitals, you will also need to obtain photo consent.
- There is a guide for filming in the operating theatre which includes an agreement that needs to be signed to confirm understanding of theatre procedures.
- Media and communications staff can also advise on staff commitments, treatment schedules and requirements for infection control and help to arrange a mutually convenient time and location for your interview.

In the event of a trauma or an internal emergency, the media plays a vital role by providing the community with the latest news and public service announcements. Our disaster response plan includes operation of an on-site media centre to make sure your needs are met.