

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) mandates regulations that govern privacy standards for healthcare information. The privacy and safety of our patients is our top priority, and Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center follows all legal requirements for protected health information.

#### **Patient Condition/Status Media Inquiry Guidelines:**

- Media inquiries must be made through a written request to the Marketing & Public Relations Department with the **patient's name and exact spelling**.
- It is at the hospital's discretion to release the name of the hospital and the patient's condition without obtaining prior written patient authorization. Please note that the patient has the option to expressly state that they do not want information released, including confirmation of their presence in the facility.
- Written authorization by the patient or patient's legal representative is required for the hospital to release any medical information beyond the status/condition.
- Any request for access to persons on Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center property for media purposes must be submitted to the Marketing & Public Relations Department.\
- Please note that the hospital will not commonly approach a patient's relatives or friends for media participation on the day of their admission.
- Media representatives are not permitted to enter hospital property to find and approach family or friends of patients without prior approval from the Marketing & Public Relations Department. If approval has been obtained, the visit must be overseen by a Marketing & Public Relations Department representative.
- *Public agencies such as law enforcement, as well as designated family members, are not considered covered entities under HIPAA.*

#### **Hospital Directory**

*Federal patient privacy laws allow hospitals to release to the media only the information maintained in a hospital's directory.*

Information may not appear in the directory or may not be available, if:

- The person is not a patient at the facility.
- The person was treated and released.
- The person is not yet formally admitted into the system, is being transferred within the health system or is in treatment and a condition report is unavailable.
- The person was transferred to another facility.
- The person or the person's next-of-kin has requested that no information be released about them, including verifying that they are at the facility.

- The person was admitted to the facility under an alias, so the patient does not show up in any records by his or her name.
- The patient is deceased and does not appear in the hospital directory.
- The patient is incapacitated or under an emergency treatment circumstance.

### **Patient Conditions**

Per the American Hospital Association, if HIPAA privacy standards are met, general-condition information may be provided that does not communicate specific information about the individual.

When providing a patient condition, we categorize the condition using the following descriptors:

- **Undetermined:** Patient awaiting physician and assessment.
- **Good/Stable:** Vital signs are stable and within normal limits. Patient is conscious and comfortable. Indicators are excellent.
- **Fair:** Vital signs are stable and within normal limits. Patient is conscious but may be uncomfortable. Indicators are favorable.
- **Serious:** Vital signs may be unstable and not within normal limits. Patient is acutely ill. Indicators are questionable.
- **Critical:** Vital signs are unstable and not within normal limits. Patient may be unconscious. Indicators are unfavorable.
- **Treated and Released:** Patient received treatment but was not admitted.
- **Treated and Transferred:** Received treatment. Transferred to a different facility. (Although a hospital may disclose that a patient was treated and released, it may not release information regarding the date of release or where the patient went upon release without patient authorization.)

Confirming patient deaths – it is at the hospital’s discretion to confirm the death of a patient, and only after we have confirmed that the deceased’s family or next of kin is aware.

Without express consent, the hospital is not able to provide information about a patient’s age; city of residence; injuries; illness or prognosis; about surgical intervention or procedures; or about where a patient is located within the hospital.

For more information, contact the Marketing & Public Relations Department at Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center at 909.865.9129.