

Media Interaction

The Division of Public Affairs is responsible for handling all media inquiries at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. Public Affairs staff have been assigned specific duties according to the time and severity of the disaster. The Public Affairs telephone number is 4-1100.

Disaster Alert

During normal working hours (hereafter defined as 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday), Public Affairs staff will remain in the office and handle all media inquiries routinely. After hours (hereafter defined as 5 p.m.-8 a.m., weekends and official holidays), Public Affairs on-call staff will handle all media inquiries routinely without coming in to the Medical Center, unless circumstances indicate that the presence of one person is desirable. In that case, the first person on call will come in.

Phase 1

During normal working hours, Barbara Austin, Bruce Coleman or another designee will go to the emergency room/triage area and hospital communications center. Thyrie Bland, Patrice Guilfoyle, Jenny Woodruff and Tena McKenzie will handle all media as assigned. Other staff will remain in the office.

After hours, one runner will be required in addition to Barbara Austin. Bruce Coleman, Thyrie Bland, Patrice Guilfoyle, or Jenny Woodruff will support Barbara Austin. Lynn Griffin, Mary McElroy and Dorothy Singleton will alternate assisting in the office.

Phase 2

During normal working hours, Barbara Austin will staff the emergency room/triage area, Bruce Coleman will staff the communications center, Mary McElroy will staff the Public Affairs office, Thyrie Bland, Patrice Guilfoyle, Jenny Woodruff and Tena McKenzie will handle media as assigned, and other staff will serve as runners. After hours, two runners may be required.

In a prolonged emergency, Tim Irby, Cliff Leverette, Kathia Bryan, and Jay Ferchaud will be assigned as relief and runners as required.

Call-in List

During working hours, the initial call should be to anyone at office extension 4-1100. After hours, Public Affairs staff rotates first- and second - call duty. In all instances, the staff member contacted is responsible for handling division responsibilities and contacting other personnel.

Staff Responsibilities

Staff responsibilities include:

1. Check sources for additional information on the magnitude of the disaster and inform the hospital director and the vice chancellor.
2. When the disaster plan is in effect, Barbara Austin or another designee will notify the vice chancellor, all deans, all associate vice chancellors and the registrar.
3. Barbara Austin or the first person on call will call in the division personnel indicated above.
4. In Phase 1 and Phase 2, Barbara Austin or another designee will go to the emergency room to obtain preliminary information to be telephoned or sent by runner to the Public Affairs office and communications center. Bruce Coleman or another designee will be in the communications center to coordinate information received and transmitted there. Mary McElroy and other office staff will duplicate disaster admission forms for office reference and immediately send or fax originals to Sally Self or her designee in Care Planning (Social Work).

If the electricity is interrupted so the copier is unavailable, notes will be taken by hand and the originals sent forward. Public Affairs will keep a running, updated list of disaster patients for release to the media and appropriate agencies. Names of DOA or patients who expire at the Medical Center will be released only after Social Work has informed the next of kin. Blood appeals and other public messages will be prepared, upon request, and released to the appropriate media after coordinating with Mississippi Blood Services.

If there are media representatives on campus, Public Affairs will assign one or two staff to work directly with them to provide information, give them access to telephone lines not in use for patient care, and attempt to keep them out of patient care areas. Usual Medical Center policies on release of information, pictures, etc., will be observed.

5. The division will transmit the "all clear" signal in the same notification chain as the initial disaster notification.

When the emergency has passed, the division will refine and confirm its information and continue to respond to agency requests as well as media requests.

6. The Public Affairs Officer will provide information to the various radio and local TV stations. Arrangements need to be made to have a battery operated radio in the event of service interruption.