

SECTION: Administration - Board

DIRECTIVE: II-13 Version: 3

SUBJECT: Communications Policy - Governance

AUTHORITY: Board of Governors

EFFECTIVE DATE			REVISED DATE			POLICY	X	PROCEDURE	
MON	DAY	YEAR	MON	DAY	YEAR				
04	25	2005	05	18	2006	Applies to: All			
			01	29	2007				
			05	27	2009				
			10	27	2010				

COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

1.0 **PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY**

1.1 **Governance Responsibility.**

The Hospital Board of Governors believes in open communication with hospital stakeholders and making information available to all concerned.

1.2 **Communications Policy.** To establish a policy for communicating and receiving feedback from stakeholders and to respond appropriately to requests for information.

2.0 **DEFINITIONS**

2.1 **Definitions.** In this Policy, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

- (a) "CEO" means the Chief Executive Officer of the Hospital; and
- (b) "Hospital" means the West Haldimand General Hospital.

3.0 **IDENTIFICATION OF STAKEHOLDERS**

3.1 **Stakeholders.** The Hospital has identified its stakeholders as:

- Employees
- Physicians
- Patients and their families
- Auxiliary membership
- Volunteers
- Residents in catchment area
- Foundation and donors
- Tenants
- Community Advisory Council
- Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
- HNHB LHIN
- Other area health and social services providers

4.0 COMMUNICATIONS PRINCIPLES

The Hospital adopts the following as its governing communications principles:

4.1 Accountability.

- (a) The Hospital is accountable to its stakeholders, subject to the principles set out in this policy.
- (b) The Hospital will implement this policy by:
 - (i) Revisiting the list of Hospital stakeholders on an annual basis to ensure it is complete, inclusive, and up-to-date.
 - (ii) Making available a hospital annual report to the community providing the Hospital's mission, vision, values, and significant developments. The annual report shall identify the Hospital directors and advise stakeholders how they may communicate with the Hospital.
 - (iii) Working with the Community Advisory Council as a forum for stakeholders to express concerns and offer suggestions, criticism and praise.
 - (iv) Ensuring that the Board of the Hospital is provided in advance with information relating to issues to be discussed at meetings.
 - (v) Ensuring that, between Board meetings, members will be provided with relevant media releases, CEO speeches and announcements and other information about which they should be made aware to fulfill their responsibilities.

4.2 Openness.

- (a) The Hospital 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 Hospital will implement this policy by:
 - (i) Inviting stakeholders wishing to raise an issue at a board meeting to submit a written request to the Secretary of the Board at least 14 days in advance of the Board meeting in accordance with the Hospital's by-laws.
 - (ii) The Community Advisory Council is a vehicle for community members to provide input.
 - (iii) Advertising for new candidates for the Hospital Board, at least annually.
 - (iv) Preparing a media policy that clearly sets out who is authorized to make statements on behalf of the Hospital, and detailing how professional staff, security and other employees respond to media queries. (Reference – III-C-141)

4.3 Confidentiality of Personal Information.

- (a) Notwithstanding the principles of accountability and openness above, the Hospital shall at all times respect the confidentiality and integrity of personal information in its possession relating to patients, employees, donors, volunteers and others, unless it has permission to release such information in accordance with applicable laws.
- (b) The Hospital will implement this policy by:
 - (i) Ensuring Hospital administration and Board are familiar with the provisions in the *Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004* limiting disclosure of patient records and all relevant laws affecting the collection, use or disclosure of personal information and personal health information.
 - (ii) Ensuring Hospital administration and Boards are aware of the documents that the *Corporations Act* requires be made available to Corporation members.

4.4 Confidentiality of Specific Board Matters.

- (a) Although openness and accountability are guiding principles of the Hospital, the Board (or committees of the Board) is not required to hold meetings that are open to the media, members, or the community. Identified confidential matters should always be dealt with by the Boards in camera in accordance with the Hospital's by-laws.

5.0 RESPONSIBILITY

The Board shall be responsible for implementing and regularly reviewing the content and effectiveness of this Policy.

6.0 REFERENCES

Administrative Policy Manual

- Communications Plan III-C-141
- Public Relations – Media III-P-120

Emergency Plans Manual

- Crisis Communications Plan

Date: April 25th, 2005