

COVID-19 Communications

Best Practices, Current and Emerging Trends and What to Expect Next

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Today's Discussion

- » **Best Practices:** *Ground rules and fundamentals of successful COVID-19 communications.*
- » **Current and Emerging Trends:** *How healthcare providers are pivoting to the latest trends in communications, employee engagement and media relations.*
- » **What to Expect Next:** *Thinking ahead about how to get prepared for the next round of COVID-19 communications needs.*
- » **Questions and Discussion**



Chad Campbell

DIRECTOR COMMUNICATIONS
& DIGITAL STRATEGY



- » 9 hospital system in rural North Carolina
- » 14,000 team members, 550 providers



Sarah Duffey

MEDIA RELATIONS DIRECTOR



- » 2 hospital system on Mississippi's Gulf Coast
- » 2,500 team members, 300 providers

Where Are You Today

Text Poll

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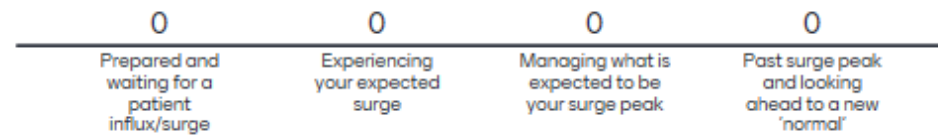
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Where is your organization today in the COVID-19 lifecycle?

- » Prepared and waiting for a patient influx/surge
- » Experiencing your expected surge
- » Managing what is expected to be your surge peak
- » Past surge peak and looking ahead to a new 'normal'

Go to www.menti.com and use the code **65 29 54**

Where is your organization today in the COVID-19 lifecycle?



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Best Practices

Ground rules and fundamentals of successful COVID-19 communications.

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Best Practices



Coordinate Communications

- » Messages and approvals
- » Media strategy
- » Timing aligned across enterprise
- » Shared tone and philosophy
- » Leadership support



Identify the Right Messengers

- » CEO – aspirational, mission-centered messages
- » Clinical leaders – patient care messages
- » HR leaders – employee engagement



Showcase Clinician Spokespeople to Separate Facts from Fear

- » Clinicians have credibility, understand the facts
- » Use existing internal channels to reach employees
- » Use traditional media, social media and online presence

Best Practices



Start Internally

- » Employees are the most important audience
- » Employees are feeling, and will continue to feel, stress
- » Provide timely, transparent updates
- » Personally engage employees
- » Take quick action to address concerns



Build Trust with Responsible Transparency

- » Share information at appropriate time to bring a sense of purpose and confidence
- » Responsibly share information to limit panic and confusion
- » Match the messenger with the message

Best Practices



Have a plan to communicate most likely COVID-19 scenarios

- 1 Patient/Employee Infection/Death**
- 2 Capacity Issues**
- 3 Supply/PPE Shortages**
- 4 Furloughs**
- 5 Reinstatement of Services**

Your plan should include:

- » Strategy for communication timing
- » Core messages: How you have prepared for COVID-19, who you are as an organization, the role you are playing in the COVID-19 pandemic
- » Audiences to reach
- » Tools to reach audiences

Best Practices



Coordinate communications



Identify the right messengers



Showcase clinician spokespeople



Start internally



Build trust with responsible transparency



Have a plan to communicate most likely COVID-19 scenarios

Current and Emerging Trends

How healthcare providers are pivoting to the latest trends in communications, employee engagement and media relations.

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Trends: Employee Engagement

Employees are Stressed and Scared

- » COVID-19 adds pressure to an already stressful profession
- » Trying to stay informed on new processes, perform new tasks
- » Worried about their health, health of their families

Healthcare Providers Can Help to Ease Stress

- » Clear and timely updates
- » Resources to care for employees mental and emotional health
- » Highlight success stories, community support



Trends: **Communications**

Rapid and Ongoing Operational Changes Create Challenges

- » Limiting visitors and guests
- » Implementing new screening policies
- » Canceling elective procedures
- » Leveraging telehealth and virtual health technologies
- » Redeploying employees and physicians to different functions
- » Furloughs/layoffs
- » Post-COVID: What does the new 'normal' look like



Trends: Media Relations

Media Focused on Preparedness

- » Limits in beds, equipment and caregivers could force hospitals to turn away patients
- » Essential to be cautiously confident

COVID-19 is Here to Stay; Creates Opportunities to Showcase Innovation

- » Will be addressing the issue for months, not weeks
- » Intense media attention will continue
- » Opportunity to spotlight extraordinary effort and people, innovation such as telehealth, non-traditional models

Next Media Cycle

- » Caregiver/patient stories
- » Financial and operational stories

Trends



- » Employees are stressed and scared
- » Healthcare providers can help to ease stress
- » Rapid and ongoing operational changes create challenges
- » Media focused on hospital preparedness
- » COVID-19 is here to stay, so are opportunities to showcase innovation
- » Next media cycle: Caregiver/patient stories; financial and operational stories

What to Expect Next

Thinking ahead about how to get prepared for the next round of COVID-19 communications needs.

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What to Expect Next

- » Capacity issues due to space, equipment or employee limitations
- » Shortages of supplies
- » Employee burnout/stress
- » Labor unions looking to capitalize on fear
- » Conflicting information from healthcare authorities
- » Furloughs/layoffs
- » Need for coordination with other providers, health authorities
- » Growing divides between frontline caregivers and other providers/administration
- » Patient billing issues – how COVID-19 care will be paid for
- » Desire to get back to “normal”

What to Do Today

- » **Take care of yourself**
- » **Ask for help when you need it**
 - » This is a marathon, not a sprint. We will all need help.
- » **Have three goals to accomplish each day**
 - » Without goals, you risk only reacting

Questions and Discussion

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