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Crisis Communications
Learning from 9/11

Together we are  **OhioHealth**





About Inova Fairfax Hospital

- Located in Falls Church Virginia (15 miles outside Washington DC)
- 5 hospitals, multiple urgent care centers and home care
- The only level I trauma center in Northern Virginia and closest to the Pentagon
 - 833 beds
 - Admits about 2,300 adult and pediatric patients annually
 - ED sees more than 80,000 visits per year





Leading up to 9/11

- Very few would expect a crisis of this magnitude
- The week leading up to 9/11 Fairfax Hospital had a disaster drill
- The DC metro area is generally prepared for disasters
- Inova Fairfax Hospital had a detailed crisis communication plan in place
- Roles and responsibilities were established
- Our spokesman was established (hospital President)



You Never Know When it is Coming

- Having a strategy meeting in Administration
- Attack in New York City occurs
- Notified about the attack on Pentagon
- Inova Health System leadership was on a retreat in DC
- Rumors are running rampant throughout the hospital
- Panic sets in and some staff begin to leave to be with family members
- At 10:00 am External Disaster Plan executes
- Crisis communications plan is executed



Accounting of Events

- Inova AirCare was one of the first on the scene
- Elective surgery was cancelled and patients were discharged from the tower (215 beds were cleared)
- Communicated to the staff about what we knew and reinforced our mission
- Managed rumors





Accounting of Events

- Responded to the needs of the media that had assembled outside the Emergency Department
- Communicated with the System leadership, hospital associates and medical staff
- Prepared for many casualties



9/11--What we Learned

- The need to refine our Crisis Communications Plan
 - Better communications between hospital functions
 - 14 step process (formalize steps to take)
- More effective communications to Inova medical staff
- More proactive communications to general medical community about our staffing levels
- Higher frequency of communications
- Inform associates of when they would be updated
- Convenient tools for key staff (pocket guide)



General Components of a Plan

- An established crisis management team
 - President/CEO, top managers, operational leadership, public relations, legal and security
- Contact information for key officers, spokespeople and crisis management team members
- Fact sheets on the company, each division and each hospital
- Profiles and biographies of key managers
- Templates for a general press release and other communications
- Contact information for local and national media



Communications Channels





Crisis Communications Key Responsibilities

- Establish your position as the central source for information
- Identify actions that should be taken first and who should speak for the company
- Determine the most appropriate messaging
 - Different audiences such as physicians
- Identify the spokesperson that is comfortable delivering key messages
- Establish a central location to brief the media
- Speak with ONE voice



Speak with ONE voice--case study

- Jan. 2, 2006, a coal mine exploded in Tallmansville, West Virginia
- 13 coal miners were trapped underground
- Hours after the incident began, news outlets across the nation began to report that 12 of the miners were found alive
- Three hours passed before the mine company issued a correction to the media



Speak with ONE voice--case study

Sago Mine Explosion January 2, 2006

KIDS PICK FLICKS
High 55, Low 33
Doubtful
Movie starts at 50 CENTS

3 OVERTIME THRILLER
Penn State defeats Florida State
28-23 in Orange Bowl
SPORTS, F1

FREEZER FLAVOR
Fruits and vegetables
come in from the cold
FOOD, C1

The Columbus Dispatch
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 4, 2006

Lobbyist admits he gave Ney bribes
Congressman denies accusations but soon may be indicted himself

12 miners alive
► Families rejoice 41 hours after explosion trapped 13
► Body found earlier dimmed hopes that anyone survived

Survivor at Ruby in critical condition

Mercury raising status of bar food
Columbus restaurant
now on Page 1C

Sports
An event on Jan 10
from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.
Page 6B

Local
Fans greet Mountaineers
Football fans
gather in Morgantown

Weather names new struggle
City has gone through
it twice before
Page 1B

THE DOMINION-Post
Morgantown, West Virginia

WEDNESDAY
Jan 4, 2006

WEDNESDAY'S WEATHER
High 46 Low 38
Your complete forecast
Page 6A

Obituaries
BRADY, Linda L.
FISHER, Neil Lewis
FRANKE, Don M.
HARRIS, Tom
HARRIS, Tom
HARRIS, Tom
HARRIS, Tom
Page 5B

Markets
DOW 123.91
NASDAQ 382.2
S&P 500 121.51
Page 5B

Jacobs Financial acquires MVA, Fire and Casualty Co.
Transaction received final approval
Page 4B

Correction
12 miners dead; 1 survives Sago accident
Previous reports erroneous

12 miners dead
Survivor at Ruby in critical condition

Fans greet Mountaineers
Football fans gather in Morgantown



Speak with ONE voice--case study

Lessons Learned

- Communicate with a single voice/establish a company spokesperson
- Establish someone as the central source of information for the media
- Do not repeat or act on unverified information
- Always tell the families first (never let them hear the bad news from news reports)



Crisis Communications-- Key Takeaways

- It is critical that your organization is overly prepared to communicate during a crisis
- A detailed communications plan is your road map for effective communication during a crisis
- Manage your message (never tell more than you know)
- Let your spokesperson communicate with the media
- The first 24 hours are critical to executing an effective plan
 - Especially when managing your message



Crisis Communications-- Key Takeaways

- Keep your associates/team informed regularly (over communicate)
- Staging of your message is crucial (communicate to the family first)
- Never act on unconfirmed information
- Know where, when and from whom to obtain reliable information (through communications team)
- Know the components of your crisis communications plan
- Expect the unexpected



Questions?