

Continually assess and modify your COVID-19 communications needs.

- Keep in mind that COVID-19 is complex and fast-moving. Situations are fluid, and what was permissible or advisable a week ago likely isn't today.
- Take an all-hands on deck approach. As situations change, the team may need to expand to include those with special knowledge related to the pandemic.
- Update your communications plan and policies to continually reflect new challenges and opportunities. Ensure every team member has a clear understanding of the changes to the plans, and how it may impact their roles and responsibilities.
- Maintain an ongoing dialogue with your hospital leadership, legal department and operational teams to ensure content is relevant, accurate and timely.

Know your target audiences and what's important to them.

- Think about the changing needs of your stakeholders, including board members, frontline staff, supporting staff, patients and community. Adjust your messaging and communications channels accordingly.
- Sequence your communications. Meaning, who is it most important to tell first, second, third, etc. This is especially important when relaying sensitive information.
- Make your information accessible to all. Use different communications formats based on how diverse audiences consume information. For example, while majority of the people in your community likely have access to digital communications, your elder populations might rely on physical mail. Use audio clips for people with hearing disabilities. Translate information for non-English speaking audiences. (Check out this [guide](#) on available tools for translating your content.)

Right message, right channel.

- Continue to align the tone of your communications with your hospital's brand and voice, yet fit the context of the crisis. Express emotional support and humaneness. Use a calm tone and let your authenticity shine through. Let people know that we're all in this together and that your staff, patients and community are your priority.
- Treat your COVID-19 web site page for the public and intranet page for your staff as the primary hubs for all critical content. Keep the sites updated with the latest information using your hospital's SMEs, as well as third-party health care authorities such as CDC, WHO and local department of health as trusted and reliable resources.
- Stay active on all other communications channels, including social media, email, newsletters, signage, printed mailers and mobile app.

Create a regular communication cadence.

- Create a regular communications schedule for each of your target groups. For example, share staff updates on your intranet every morning at 9am, post public updates on your COVID-19 web site page every afternoon at 2pm, etc.
 - It provides valuable reassurance about the changing situation, helps people feel in control and motivates them to take positive actions.
 - It sets clear expectations from the get-go for your communications team and makes deadlines more manageable.

Designate a spokesperson.

- Use one spokesperson who communicates effectively, knows your communication plan, and comes across as trustworthy and caring.

Monitor media and online conversations.

- Use a free service like Google Alerts or set up keywords through a paid news monitoring service like Cision or Critical Mention. This can help in messaging and timing your news and updates.