PATIENT PRIVACY AND RELEASE OF CONDITIONS TO MEDIA

Release of patient condition
Under HIPAA privacy regulations, information about a patient’s general condition may only be released if the media identifies the patient by name—first and last.

Only a one-word condition may be released as listed and defined below:

- **Undetermined** – Patient awaiting physician assessment.
- **Good** – Vital signs are stable and within normal limits. Patient is conscious and comfortable. Indicators are excellent.
- **Fair** – Vital signs are stable and within normal limits. Patient is conscious, but may be uncomfortable. Indicators are favorable.
- **Serious** – Vital signs may be unstable and not within normal limits. Patient is acutely ill. Indicators are questionable.
- **Critical** – Vital signs are unstable and not within normal limits. Patient may be unconscious. Indicators are unfavorable.

*Note:* The terms “stable” or temporary serious” are not used as a medical condition.

Patients treated and released
When the patient is identified by name, our staff may disclose that a patient was treated and released. They may not disclose the date or time of release and where the patient went upon release without patient authorization.

Medical information beyond a one-word condition
Written authorization is required from the patient or his/her personal representative to release any information beyond a one-word condition or for patient interviews. If the patient is a minor, permission must be obtained from the parent or legal guardian.

Extent of injury, illness or medical care or treatment information must be obtained from the physician.

Patients in labor and delivery; Births
Beaumont representatives may not disclose that a patient is in labor or has been released from Labor and Delivery without patient authorization. Staff may acknowledge a birth if the patient is under standard privacy but no details (time, date, etc.) may be given without patient authorization.
Psychiatric or substance abuse patients
No information may be released.

Verification of Death
If the patient is under standard privacy, Beaumont may disclose that a patient is deceased once next-of-kin has been notified. Signed authorization must be obtained from a personal representative of the deceased to release the date, time or cause of death. Information concerning the cause of death must come from the patient’s physician. When the death is being investigated by the Medical Examiner, cause of death should be released by the Examiner.

“John Doe” patients
Beaumont staff may not release a photograph of the patient without their permission. But they may release information describing them (i.e. age, gender, height, weight) to assist in identifying the patient.

Emergency situations
In some public emergency situations, Beaumont may release general information such as the number of patients by gender or by age group (i.e. adults, children, teenagers.)

Photographs and video footage
Written authorization is required to take or release photographs or video footage of patients.

Patients under privacy
Patients may request to be placed under total privacy while in the hospital. In this instance, no information may be released about them and their presence in the hospital may not be acknowledged.