



Carolinah HealthCare System

Uncompromising Excellence. Commitment to Care.

The federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) governs how healthcare institutions release medical information about patients to the news media.

The decision to provide such information is determined by whether the patient's name does or does not appear in the hospital directory. If the patient's name is listed in the directory, we can provide a condition if the reporter supplies us with the name, spelled correctly.

If the name does not appear in the directory, either the individual is not a patient at Carolinas Medical Center (CMC) or has decided to "opt out" of the directory. In the later case, HIPAA prevents us from providing any information about the patient or his/her condition.

The conditions we are permitted to provide if the patient's name appears in the directory are:

Undetermined - The patient's condition has not been determined pending final assessment by a physician.

Treated and Released - Patient was treated at the hospital, but is no longer on the premises. HIPAA prevents us from providing the date of release or where the patient went after being released, unless additional patient authorization is obtained.

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.

Deceased - This condition may be provided to the media after the next of kin have been notified. The cause of death must come from the patient's physician, following approval by a legal representative of the deceased

To provide more detailed information about a patient's condition, including interviews and photos while the person is located at CMC, an additional step must take place - the patient or a member of his/her family must sign a HIPAA release form. CMC's Public Information department will complete this form prior to the interview/photo taking place.