

ASPR TRACIE Technical Assistance Request

Requestor:

Requestor Phone:

Requestor Email:

Request Receipt Date (by ASPR TRACIE): 29 April 2016

Response Date: 5 May 2016; updated response 16 May 2016

Type of TA Request: Standard

Request:

The requestor asked ASPR TRACIE if we had any hospital policies, procedures, or processes regarding the maintenance and use of mass notification systems (i.e., who manages and budgets its use, how is training conducted, and access control and message management).

Response:

The ASPR TRACIE Team conducted a search on hospital and healthcare mass notification system policies, procedures, and processes. Section I below includes those policies, procedures, and processes. Section II provides additional resources related to notification and communication systems.

The ASPR TRACIE Team would also like to provide the [Communication Systems Topic Collection](#), which includes several more resources that may be helpful for this request.

Updated Response (5/16/2016):

The ASPR TRACIE Team reached out to our Subject Matter Expert (SME) Cadre members who have knowledge of the mass notification systems within their hospitals to collect any resources or information they may have pertinent to this request. They provided the following opinions and anecdotal information:

- Response from a smaller hospital system in Ohio: Avita Health System uses WENS (Wireless Emergency Notification System) in conjunction with the Crawford County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) and other public service entities in the county. EMA is the overall administrator of the system. It is paid for with ASPR funds or out of the Emergency Management/ Safety budget. Staff are encouraged to register for the notifications at new employee orientation. Currently, there is only one individual within Avita who edits and deletes employee accounts. This person is also the only one (besides EMA) authorized to send Avita Alerts. There is no written policy.
- We utilize a paging system to send what we call an “All Page” out via email and pagers to our team members. See the reference below to the Orlando Health policy document (in Section I), which is the policy and procedures for the utilization of the notification.
- Mass notification systems are an area of great need for hospitals/ healthcare systems. With the complexity of our operations and the growing culture of our society being in the know of their safety, it is increasingly challenging due to the continued focus on budgets and the cost of these systems.

I. Mass Notification Systems Policies, Procedures, and Processes

California Hospital Association. (n.d.). [Communications](#). (Accessed 10/30/2017.)

This webpage provides several resources, including a section called [Communication Resources for Hospitals](#). In this section are materials related to the California Health Alert Network (CAHAN), the Government Emergency Telecommunication Service (GETS) and Wireless Priority Service (WPS), and the Telecommunications Service Priority (TSP).

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Environmental Health, Division of Environmental Hazards and Health Effects, Radiation Studies Branch. (2003). [Roundtable on Hospital Communications in a Mass Casualty Radiological Event](#).

This expert roundtable summary includes recommendations for communications policies, protocols, and capabilities during a large-scale radiological event. Overall, participants recommended that hazard-specific communications plans be integrated into a hospital's all-hazards communications plan.

Minnesota Department of Health. (2008). Metropolitan Hospital Compact: MNTrac System Policy. (See attached.)

This document outlines the protocols for metropolitan hospitals using the MNTrac system, which is the Minnesota system for Tracking Resources, Alerts, and Communications. It is a database-driven web application used to track bed, pharmaceutical, and resource availability from all designated facilities within the state of Minnesota as well as providing for allocation of these resources to support surge capacity needs. Hospital bed diversion status, emergency event planning, emergency chat, and alert notifications are supported in real time.

Minnesota Department of Health. (2015). MNTrac Operations Guidance. (See attached.)

This document provides guidance and protocols on the MNTrac system (Minnesota system for Tracking Resources, Alerts, and Communications) related to the operational aspects of the system. For example, it describes how to access MNTrac, how to add new partners, how it is used for daily operations and for drills/ exercises, system data polices, and the various types of alerts and notifications.

Orlando Health. (2015). Use of Emergency All Page. (See attached.)

This policy document provides the guidelines for using the “Emergency All-Page” system during emergencies/disasters involving Orlando Health facilities.

West Nipissing General Hospital. (2014). [Communications Plan](#).

This communications plan was developed by the West Nipissing General Hospital (in Ontario, Canada) Senior Management Team for the purpose of outlining how information will be shared within the hospital as well as with external stakeholders.

II. Additional Notification/ Communication System Resources

Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security. (2007). [Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan](#).

This state plan is in a standard template form that illustrates how most states organize themselves for communications across different levels of government, vocational fields, and into non-governmental organizations such as hospitals.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security. (2014). [National Emergency Communications Plan](#).

The 2014 edition of the plan is organized into three sections: Emergency Communications Landscape, National Emergency Communications Plan Strategic Components, and Implementation and Measurement.

U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency. (2016). [Disaster Emergency Communications Division](#).

This webpage highlights the role of this Federal division (to establish, maintain, and coordinate emergency communications services and information systems critical the coordination of the Federal government's response before, during, and after an incident or planned event). Information on the six Mobile Emergency Response Support detachments and numerous Mobile Communications Office Vehicles is also included.

III. Agencies and Organizations

[Hospital Disaster Support Communications System](#).