



# From Chaos to Clarity: Real-World Crisis Communications Strategies

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# About the Presenters



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## **For nursing the number of credits designated is the number of credits awarded**

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# Process for Claiming Credit

In order to earn CNE credit learners should complete the evaluation questions that will assess if nurses have learned the most important recommendations and conclusions from this course. Each LIVE activity consists of the full participation of the learner, and a course evaluation. The evaluation will open after the learning activity is completed.

## **Process for Completing the Activity:**

1. Read the target audience, learning objectives, and financial disclosures.
2. Complete the LIVE educational activity.
3. Complete the activity evaluation on Copic's LMS platform and/or Survey Monkey

It is estimated that this activity will take approximately 1 hour to complete.

# The Current Landscape

**Stryker investigating cyberattack that caused widespread outage**

**Data Breach Settlements Agreed by Centrelake Medical Group & Des Moines Orthopaedic Surgeons**

Lawsuit over data breach impacting Staten Island University Hospital patients reaches settlement

Norton Healthcare \$11M Data Breach Class Action Settlement

**80 Hospitals May Have Been Affected by the Oracle Health Data Breach**

**Georgia healthcare company data breach impacts more than 620,000**

Texas AG To Investigate Conduent, BCBS For Data Breach

**\$14M McLaren Health Care Corp. data breach settlement**



# Role of the Risk Manager



Having a seat at the table (no silos)



Incident Command/know your role if applicable/contain & mitigate



Coordinator, investigator, communicator, advisor

# Cyber Breaches Are More Dangerous in Healthcare. Why?

## 1 We are Uniquely Vulnerable

- Highly sensitive data (PHI, financial, identity)
- Operational dependency on IT (EHRs, imaging, pharmacy, scheduling)
- Life-safety implications if systems go down

## 2 Cyber incidents as operational crises + reputational crises

## 3 The communications mistake most organizations make:

- Treating cyber as an IT problem instead of an enterprise crisis



# Core Concepts:

How to handle a data breach  
or cyber incident from a  
communications perspective



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# Concept #1 – Treat Cyber Incidents as Crisis Events from the First Minute

**Assume** media attention, regulatory scrutiny, plaintiff litigation, and staff and patient anxiety

**Activate crisis communications protocols** simultaneously with incident response, legal review and IT forensics

**Delays in communications almost always worsen outcomes**



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## Concept #2 – Define Governance & Decision-Making Structure

**Who should be in the cyber crisis room?** CEO or system president, general counsel, CIO/CISO, compliance and privacy officer, communications lead, risk managers

**Establish a single source of truth**

**Avoiding the “too many cooks” messaging problem**

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# Concept #3 – Aligning Legal, Regulatory and Communications Efforts

HIPAA, state breach notification laws & OCR expectations

Law enforcement involvement (FBI)

The tension between what lawyers and communications want to say

How to message responsibly without admitting fault

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# Concept #4 – Stakeholder-First Communications Strategy

Priority audiences

Tailoring messages

Internal communications



# 5 Concept #5 – Transparency Without Speculation

## What to say when:

You don't know  
the scope yet

Our systems  
are still down

The investigation  
is ongoing

Phrases that build  
trust vs. phrases that  
trigger backlash

The danger of  
"we take this very  
seriously" without  
substance

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# Concept #6 – Message Discipline Over Time

Cyber crises are marathons, not sprints

Managing new information

Preparing leadership for fatigue



**Real-world challenges  
you should expect  
to face**



# #1 – Operational Chaos Meets Public Scrutiny

- EHR downtime impacting patient care
- Manual workarounds increasing error risk
- Staff frustration spilling into the public sphere
- Patients blaming leadership rather than the hackers



# #2 – Media Dynamics in Cyber Incidents



How reporters cover breaches differently than clinical events



Why silence often gets framed as deception



Common media narratives:

- “Hospital hid the breach”
- “Leadership was slow to act”
- “Patients are left in the dark”

# #3 – Social Media and Misinformation

- Staff posting screenshots, rumors, or frustrations
- Patients sharing incomplete or incorrect information
- Monitoring and response strategies



# #4 – Regulatory and Legal Aftershocks

- OCR investigations
- State AG inquiries
- Class-action lawsuits
- Communications during legal proceedings



# #5 – Reputational Damage Beyond the Incident

- Loss of patient trust
- Donor hesitation
- Recruiting challenges
- Board and leadership confidence issues
- Long-term brand erosion if response is mishandled



# Practical Takeaways for Risk Managers

**Cyber incidents are inevitable;  
reputational disasters are not**

**Communications planning must be  
integrated into:**

- Cyber insurance
- Incident response plans
- Executive training

**Crisis simulations should include:**

- Media pressure
- Patient outrage
- Regulatory calls

**The goal is not perfection; it's credibility**

# What the best responses to similar incidents have in common:

Early  
acknowledgment

Patient-first  
communication

Consistent  
messaging across  
channels

Visible corrective  
action

Leadership  
presence, not  
delegation



# Incident Reporting & Copic Coverage

Working with Copic Claims



# Questions?