



# TRIFECTA PUBLIC STRATEGIES

Weathering the  
Storm: Staying out  
of the News after a  
Natural Disaster

# ABOUT US



- 20+ years Communications Experience - 10 in SNF/LTC Industry
- National PR experience - Staffed more than 500 interviews
- National PR Director of Golden Living (2011-2015); 304 buildings/21 States
- Worked with Providers in Georgia & Florida during 2017 Hurricane Irma
- Worked with California Fire victims: clients interviewed for Wall Street Journal, HBO Vice, Associated Press, etc. (2017, 2018)
- Worked with providers/receivers related to Skyline fallout
- Worked with providers on closures

“By the time you hear the thunder, it’s too late to build the ark”

- Anonymous



# BEING MEDIA READY SUPPORTS DISASTER READINESS

- Leave room for outlier issues that impact the situation.
- A great emergency plan without a great PR/Media plan can derail and drain vital resources threatening your ability to execute a safe emergency protocol.



# MEDIA IS A DISTRACTION

- The media usually give very little, if any, warning that they are coming to your building.
- In a disaster, your time needs to be focused on executing the emergency plan.
- Health & Safety of your residents.



# BEHAVIOR THAT MAKES GOOD TV



# DANGERS OF FAILING TO COMMUNICATE



## The #1 Failure In Many Disaster Situations Is the Failure to Communicate

- Hollywood Florida facility did not ask for help
- Buildings that do not use FB or Website to provide timely updates
  - Assuming no one will inquire

# COMMUNICATION IS KEY



Communication is as important as anything you do.

- Stabilizes your critical event
- Stabilizes your relationship with all of your audiences
- Buys you time to focus on operations and urgent issues
- Supports your long-term reputation

**external audiences, patients, families, employees**

# INTERNAL COMMUNICATION: MANAGING MORAL

## During the Event

- Keep them informed
- Train them so they are empowered
- Find ways to nurture and support them emotionally
- Offer staff incentives hazard pay
- Bring in food and other comforts that support self-care during the event
- Utilize their strengths – opportunity to help

## After the Event

- Recognize employees
- Onsite counseling
- Massage Therapy (On-site)
- Appreciation events
- Cookouts
- Events with children
- Buttons or stickers that create team collaboration

# WHAT DRAWS UNWELCOMED ATTENTION

1. Untrained Staff (Train & Re-Train)
2. Upset Residents & Family
3. Poor Social Media Engagement
4. Pictures/Video
5. Poor on-camera conduct
6. “No comment”
7. Operational issues that did not give thought to the ‘optics’



# COMMON MEDIA TACTICS

- Driving around in the news van “looking” for visual stories
  - Loading or unloading residents
  - Emergency vehicles – 2 ambulances and a fire truck or police cars
  - Rescue workers, or crowds
- Parking across the street and filming with your building in the background
- Showing up unexpected at your building
- Talking to employees in parking lot (coming or going from work)
- Following employees home or to grocery store
- “Off the record” promises



# BAD PICTURES = INVESTIGATIONS

Residents lay on sofas in August 2017 waiting to be evacuated from the Cypress Glen senior care facility in Port Arthur. The facility was inundated with water from Hurricane Harvey. Cypress Glen is owned by the Senior Care Centers company, based in Dallas.

The Texas Health & Human Services Commission had reopened its investigation into Cypress Glen and another facility, Lake Arthur Place, also owned by the same company.



Dallas Morning News, August 23, 2018

# WHAT GOES INTO A DISASTER CRISIS PLAN



- A process for taking media calls [No comment is not a plan]
- A dedicated and trained spokesperson (or PR representative)
- A designated IT person to help PR with posting updates and managing back-of-the-house (info social media, websites, phone numbers, etc.)
- PR Hotline & email address for media
- A template for creating holding statements or talking points (working batter)
- Social media monitoring & timely response
- Facts and updates on your website (front & center)

# NATURAL DISASTER READINESS...



- Walk in the media's shoes -- what might a reporter see from the street
- What questions will they ask – patient safety, facts related to the event, how you will fix it
- Identify evacuation facilities and keep in regular contact
- Ensure evacuation facility is aligned with your occupancy
- Medical supplies must be prepared – have supplies on standby – quality of care concerns create media attention and regulatory inquiries (Senior Care Center ex.)
- Communicate and hand-off media materials and status/updates during shift changes – cultivate consistency of shared facts

# ...NATURAL DISASTER READINESS



- Make sure you're an active member of AHCA
- Keep current names, phone numbers and contacts for all relevant agencies (FEMA, etc.)
- Expect media to congregate and seek answers
- Anticipate politicians to visit – especially given the recent media coverage in 2017, 2018
- Ombudsman will likely be on site and can help communicate your message

# WHAT'S IN YOUR 'GO' BAG

- Keep a hard and soft copy of you emergency plan and communications materials
- Keep updated facts related to your building on hand
- Petty Cash to mobilize quick needs (ex. Bus driver)
- Names and numbers of partnering facilities
  - Places where you might evacuate
  - Vendors for additional supplies
  - Volunteer contacts – friendly support resources
- Notify your key patient/resident stakeholders

# ANATOMY OF HOLDING STATEMENTS



- Report the health and safety of your staff and residents
- Have accurate numbers (residents, staff)
- Report the steps you are taking to resolve the issues related to or caused by the disaster (outliers, etc.)
- Anticipate questions about your physical plant, dependent on disaster (heating, cooling, ventilation, plumbing, power, sprinklers)
- Make a commitment to keep people updated with new developments
- Ask the media for their understanding – we are focusing all efforts and resources on the health and safety of our residents.

# DO'S & DON'TS – WITH MEDIA



- Designate one spokesperson
- Only comment on your situation
- If asked about a situation at another facility, simply say, “I do not know. We can’t speculate about any events or incidents that have taken place at another facility.”
- Situations change rapidly – do not commit to definitive costs, timelines, etc.
- Practice your holding statements BEFORE you are in a critical event

# **Questions? – Real Events To Address – Role Play Scenarios – Examples We've Seen**

# STAKEHOLDERS ON YOUR TEAM



# ADDRESSING A MEDIA INQUIRY

- **Media card:**
  - Not a substitute for training, but it will help **in a pinch**
  - Use in standup meetings with staff
  - Help to ensure consistency of message
- **Pitfalls:**
  - Underestimating employee gossip
  - Assuming journalists understand our industry
  - Mistaking a reporter as your friend
  - Getting into situations where you are not prepared
- **Determine a spokesperson:**
  - Top Executive
  - Executive Director/Operator
  - Corporate Comms or PR representative

## When a reporter calls

- Get reporter's name, publication/station
- Get a brief explanation of the reason for the call/questions
- Secure the deadline
- Get reporter's phone number & e-mail
- Let reporter know that someone will call back
- Contact your supervisor
- Contact your public relations department or Trifecta Public Strategies
- Your public relations team will work to help determine the appropriate response

If a critical event has occurred that may generate media inquiries, call Public Relations or Trifecta Public Strategies immediately for guidance on how to best manage the situation.

[www.trifectapublicstrategies.com](http://www.trifectapublicstrategies.com)

# YOUR RIGHTS WITH THE MEDIA



- You do not have to go on camera
  - It is typically best to provide a written statement
- You do not have to comment on documentation you've never seen
- You can set the time, date and location of the interview, if you choose to go on camera
- **People who are kind and calm make for bad TV.**

*To read the full article series on your Interviewee Rights visit the LinkedIn profiles of: Kelli Luneborg-Stern or Susan MacLaughlin.*

# YOUR HOMEWORK



- If you do not already know the answer - contact your IT department to discuss and review:
  - How to access and post content quickly to your website (phone, email, contact – buddy building or other)
  - Establish your 1-800 provider
- Build your Go Bag
- Train your staff on fielding media inquiries in a disaster (practice!)
- Draft your Holding Statement Templates (Tornado, Wind, Flood, Ice, Heat/AC systems)
- Do a walk around and take pictures to view your building from the media perspective
- Make a short list of key influencers you can call on for support

# You Already Are A Great Communicator!



1. Operators ARE communicators – Staff, Residents, Patients, Community, Referral Sources, Surveyors
2. Everyday you deal with difficult and sensitive situations in an immediate response platform
3. Practice applying key messages or talking points to the media

# OUR TEAM



**Kelli Luneborg-Stern**

**Managing Partner & Founder**

For more than 20 years, Kelli has worked shoulder-to-shoulder with company leaders and entrepreneurs to develop communication and reputation strategies that support her clients' business goals, create a competitive edge and simplify complicated – yet smart – products, services and public platforms. She has used her writing, positioning and reputation management skills to identify the “who cares” value proposition for products and services that range from semiconductors and skilled nursing facilities to ophthalmic pharmaceuticals and Slurpees®. As a strategic communications partner, she enjoys launching new products, winning new business, protecting or repairing reputations, and creating programs to enable growth. Kelli is at her best when helping companies stand out from the crowd or – when necessary – explain what went wrong and what corrections will be made as a result of an unfortunate event in an unforgiving world.



**Susan MacLaughlin**

**Founding Partner**

After tenures with agencies large and small, Susan is thrilled to be hanging her own shingle as an independent public relations consultant. Most recently, Susan served as a Senior Account Supervisor with Edelman, the world's largest public relations firm. While there, she provided strategy, media relations and day-to-day support for clients in the corporate practice. For the past 10 years, she has provided counsel and support to clients in a variety of industries, expanding her experiences and knowledge in corporate and financial communications, media relations, and issues and crisis management. Susan's past and present clients span industries and size - from pioneering entrepreneurs to global corporations. Susan's media relations efforts have garnered a number of placements with top-tier outlets including CNBC, Bloomberg BusinessWeek, TIME and Reuters. She has also developed a number of media relationships in the Dallas-Fort Worth region, securing several strategic placements with local broadcast and print outlets including The Dallas Morning News, The Dallas Business Journal, D CEO and WBAP-AM.

# OUR TEAM



**Kathy F. Catoe**  
**Director of Digital Marketing**

Kathy Catoe is a marketing professional with over thirty years of experience who utilizes social media strategy as part of an integrated marketing plan. She is an Inbound Marketing Certified Professional with marketing, advertising, public relations, business development, sales management and writing experience for B2B, B2C and nonprofit organizations across the U.S. Her work in healthcare resulted in an organization being named in the top 5 of SeniorHomes.net Top 25 Most Social Media Friendly Senior Living Communities Rankings Online.

Kathy provides coaching, training, and public speaking on social media strategy and platforms for clients, marketing professionals, job seekers, students and community organizations. She has a Bachelor of Journalism in Public Relations from the University of Texas at Austin. Kathy is a board member of Social Media Dallas where she serves as the Outreach Chair to individuals and brands.



**Stacie Smith**  
**Government Relations, Advisor**

Stacie Smith is a strategic and resourceful government relations expert, who brings more than 15 years of hands-on experience advancing legislative priorities and impacting policy. She supports Trifecta Public Strategies clients by maintaining strong relationships with legislative leaders in many states; monitoring multiple state and national legislative and regulatory issues; and providing strategic counsel to clients.

Stacie has been at the forefront of some of the most nuanced legislative changes to healthcare policy on issues including Medicaid reimbursement, medical malpractice/tort reform and negligence per se legislation. She also brings a wealth of relationships with many of the leading state and national healthcare trade associations including AHCA and Leading Age.

Prior to joining Trifecta Public Strategies, Stacie held roles with organizations including Align LLC, PointClickCare, Golden Living, AseraCare, Aegis Therapies and Beverly Enterprises. Stacie is also affiliated with the Arkansas Institute of Performance Excellence where she is a Malcolm Baldrige Quality Award Examiner.

# OUR TEAM



Sarah Meche

Communications Specialist

Sarah is a dedicated and creative communications professional with nearly 20 years of agency and corporate experience. She supports Trifecta Public Strategies across all practice areas working on content creation for multiple audiences, PR and social media campaign management, media relations, executive communications, and project management.

Given the breadth and scope of her comprehensive communications and media experience, Sarah brings tested and practical solutions to her role at Trifecta. This makes Sarah one of the most versatile communications professionals because there is very little she hasn't seen!

Working with small businesses, Fortune 500 companies and international corporations, Sarah has served as an integral team player when clients rollout PR and communications strategies via internal and external communications channels. Her efforts have contributed to creating stronger corporate cultures, improved corporate reputations in hyper-local markets and increased corporate visibility to measurably support the sales channel.

Over the years, Sarah's clients have included: AseraCare, Aegis Therapies, Golden Living, JCPenney, Sony Ericsson, 7-Eleven, Sprint, Benefitmall, EADS Telecom and Carrot Ink.