



CORONAVIRUS

COVID-19

COMMUNICATION TOOLKIT

Employee communication during and
after the COVID-19 crisis

04.24.2020

Our staff is our most important audience.

This communications tool kit is being provided by the S.C. Hospital Association and Solvent Networks to support and augment employee communications during this unprecedented crisis. We know that you face numerous communications challenges with such a rapidly-changing environment, and we want to help. The purpose of this toolkit is to offer suggestions, templates, links and samples that you can customize for your situation and brand with your own logo and style guidelines. We will continue to update the toolkit, and we welcome your suggestions, questions and examples of effective communication that you're willing to share with other hospitals.

Crisis communications

Solvent Networks column: [YOUR PEOPLE ARE YOUR MOST IMPORTANT AUDIENCE: Navigating the COVID-19 communications challenge](#), by A. Neill Cameron Jr.

Frequent, information-packed updates with facility-specific information on PPE supplies, policies regarding use of those supplies, your facility's role in the surge plan, and what the hospital and local communities are doing to support them.

- MUSC's [tri-weekly update](#)
- Prisma Health's running [FAQ](#) – for patients, visitors, staff

Frequent messages from leadership to remind employees they are important, tell them what they can expect, and what you are doing to support them (child care resources, employee assistance programs, training, etc). Make it personal when possible by sharing their stories. While email is convenient, video messages are generally more effective.

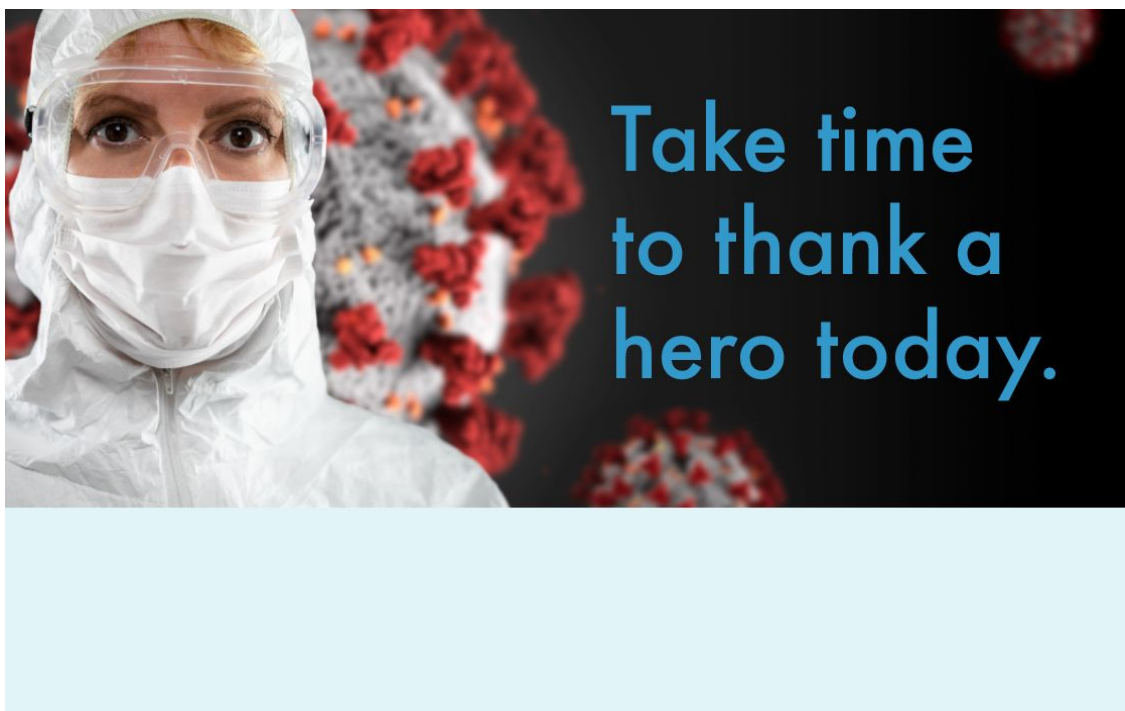
- [Marriott](#)
- [Intermountain Healthcare](#)
- [Nephron](#) (SC Chamber of Commerce video hub)

Effective communication can help create a safer, healthier workplace for staff who are experiencing higher than usual levels of stress and anxiety. Acknowledge and validate their feelings, practice active listening, and foster a culture of psychological health and safety. SCHA's [Working Well program](#) offers more information about how to help build a resilient workforce. A new, free [e-book](#) by Columbia psychotherapist Dr. Lisa Holland offers ways for healthcare workers to talk to their children about their feelings during these uncertain times.

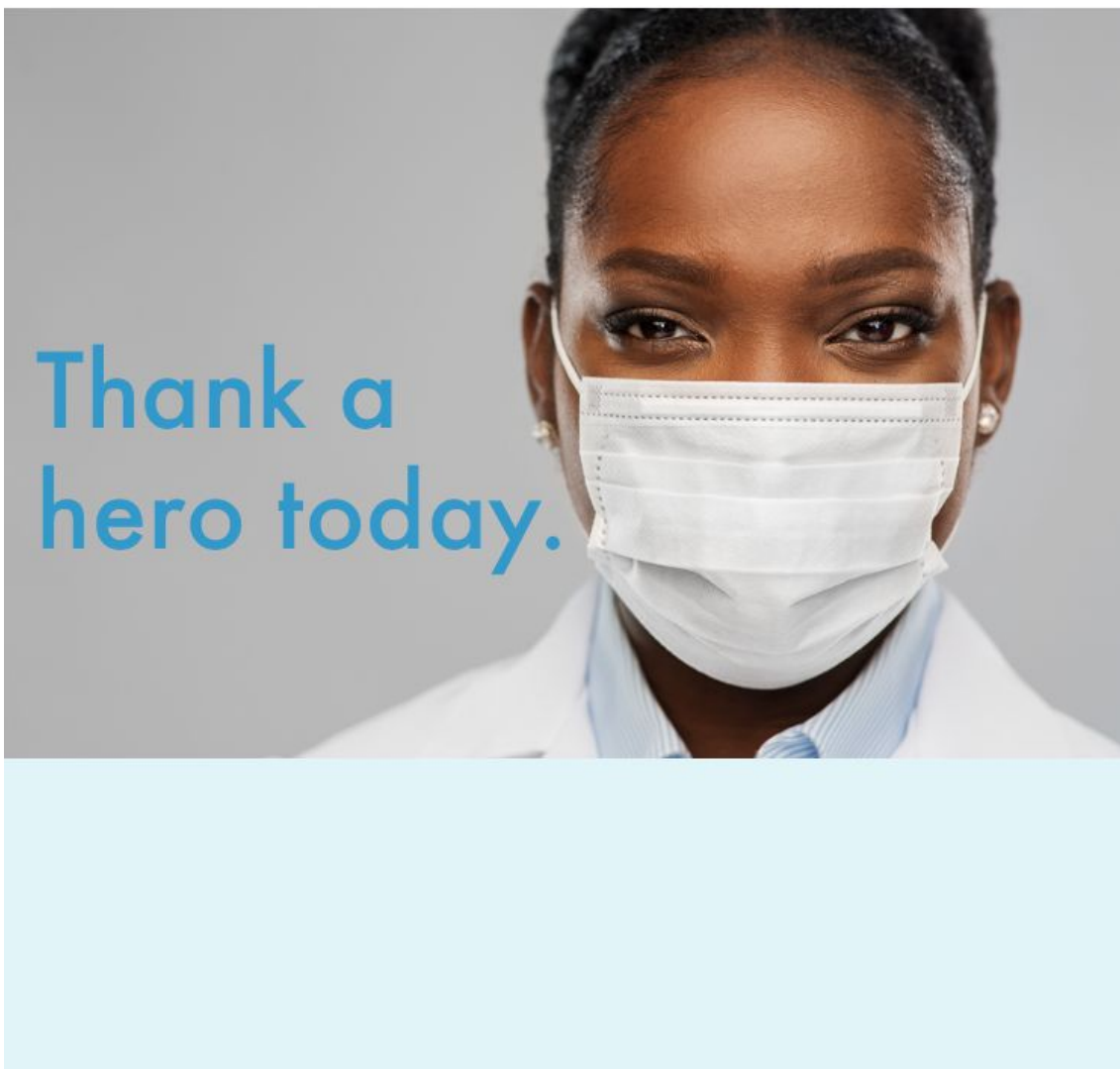
Consider offering a two-way communications option, such as a Q&A web page where posted questions are answered within 24 hours. Collect the most common questions for an FAQ on your employee news site.

Keep finding ways to say “thank you.”

Participate in our “Thank a Hero” public service campaign. Below are visuals you can use with your hospital’s branding.



Facebook *(Copy and add your logo like the Solvent example)*



Instagram (Copy and add your logo like the Solvent example)



Billboard



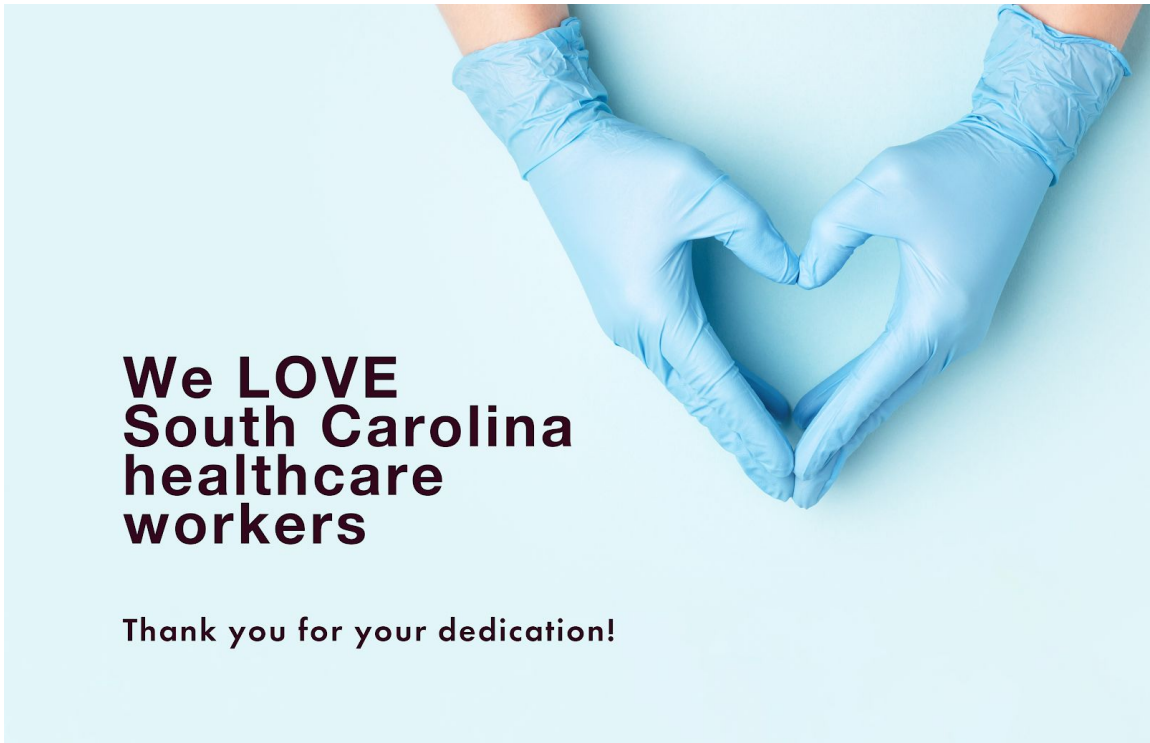
Digital monitors and computer screensaver



**We LOVE
South Carolina
healthcare workers**

Thank you for your dedication!

Letter size flyer/magazine ad



11 X 17 Poster



Email header/footer
Vinyl banner

Encourage hospital executives and board members to participate in the following two SCHA fundraising campaigns, as well as locally organized fundraisers. Issue a 100 percent participation challenge.

- [22 and You campaign](#)
- Southern Tide [Hats off to Healthcare Heroes](#) collection

Post encouraging messages on your website. Examples include:

- S.C. Department of Commerce [email](#)
- Tideland's "[Helping the Helpers](#)" page

Use your mass communication system to send uplifting messages to your workforce. Share gratitude, messages of joy, acknowledge joy. Use your overhead communication system to play short clips of an uplifting song when something good happens. One hospital plays Pharrel's "happy" every time someone is extubated or discharged. SCHA's [Working Well program](#) offers more suggestions about effective communication during stressful times.

Take your messages to the public, which wants to support healthcare workers.

Send a CEO bylined letter to the editor of your local newspaper about what the public can do to support healthcare workers.

- Sample [letter](#) from Thornton Kirby, SCHA President

Send public service announcements to local radio and television stations, which have time to fill because of reduced advertising. Between March 12 and April 10, TV and radio stations aired 237,051 National Association of Broadcasters produced public service spots for an estimated ad value of \$54,544,137. Reference psa.nab.org for guidance.

Provide the digital billboard design we are providing to your local outdoor advertising companies with a request that they run it as a public service announcement. Here are some examples of what others are doing.





Recognize that media outlets are hungry for new COVID-19 storylines, while also facing staff cutbacks due to lack of advertising revenue. Scour your website for content that could be repurposed as a news release. Examples include:

- [HHS grant to SCHA](#)
- [Website](#) launched to source and distribute medical supplies

Links to more resources

- [AHA](#)
- [DHEC](#)
- [CDC](#)
- [Ad Council](#)
- [NAB](#)