

## What are Action Alerts?

An “Action Alert” is the notification PRC sends to a client about a serious situation mentioned by the respondent during the survey.

The process for getting this important information to clients begins with PRC interviewers. All PRC interviewers are trained on how to submit an Action Alert. Following each survey, interviewers have the option to fill out an Action Alert form which automatically appears on their screen at the completion of a survey. Interviewer training instructs, and the onscreen form reminds, interviewers to be as complete as possible with an explanation of what was said by the respondent. Action Alerts that meet the criteria are sent (via secure-mail) to a designated contact at the hospital within 24 hours of the interview.

An Action Alert will be submitted to a hospital if a patient mentions or talks about any of the following:

- filing a lawsuit or taking legal action
- a serious breach of privacy and/or confidentiality (this does not include a patient asking, “How did you get my number?”)
- physical or verbal abuse, hostility, sexual harassment, or discrimination
- issues of patient safety (e.g., wrong medication, wrong identification, etc.)
- gross misconduct, malpractice, or negligence (e.g., employees suspected of being “under the influence” of drugs or alcohol, extremes in not taking care of “blood pooling in bed,” or “screaming with pain”)
- insisting, even after PRC suggests the patient handle it themselves, that the hospital specifically contacts him/her
- a specific incident that made them rate the quality of care question as “poor”

Interviewers are also encouraged to fill out an Action Alert if, in their judgment, there would be value in it under circumstances other than the ones stated above.

PRC interviewers do not promise any patients that the hospital will call them; rather, interviewers, state that we will send the information to this hospital. When needed, a PRC interviewer may tell a patient, “May I suggest that you call the hospital during business hours and ask to speak with the patients’ advocate or patient relations office? This will mean a lot to the hospital and you can be sure that the right people are hearing your concerns.”

The information included in an Action Alert document varies by situation, but the Action Alert will, at minimum, contain the patient information, an explanation of the situation, whether or not the patient *asked* to be contacted by the hospital, and whether or not the patient *agreed* to be contacted further about the situation.

