



MARCH 21, 2005

HEALTH ALERT NETWORK
HEALTH ADVISORY

Individuals Posing as Hospital Surveyors

During the last two weeks, three U.S. hospitals in Los Angeles, Boston, and Detroit reported individuals posing as Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) surveyors, who arrived at their facilities and asked to tour different areas of the hospitals. According to JCAHO administrators, the people were not associated with the Commission nor were any inspections planned at the facilities. These incidents have not been linked to terrorism, but local health-care and law enforcement officials should be vigilant for such incidents.

On February 26, 2005, at approximately 3:00 a.m., a Caucasian man and Caucasian woman posing as JCAHO surveyors arrived at a Los Angeles hospital. The man is described as in his mid-30s, with dark hair, approximately 6-feet tall, and dressed professionally. The woman, also in her mid-30s, has dark reddish hair. A security guard at the hospital believed he saw the two persons wearing badges similar to those used by genuine JCAHO surveyors. The imposters exited after they were stopped by hospital security.

In the second incident, on March 3, at 3:00 a.m., a man described as 35-40 years old of South Asian descent, 6-feet tall, and with a short black beard and mustache, demanded to inspect a medical facility in Boston. The man left the premises after being questioned by hospital staff.

In the third incident, in the morning of March 10, a Caucasian woman described as in the mid-40s, 5'7", 160 pounds, with blonde hair, entered a Detroit hospital through the maternity ward and began wandering around the facility. When hospital staff questioned her, she stated that she was a JCAHO surveyor. After further questioning, she fled the premises.

Counter-terrorism analysts remain concerned that terrorist organizations may attempt to target U.S. medical infrastructure to cause immediate casualties and disrupt health-care and emergency medical services.

Health-care and law enforcement officials must continue to remain vigilant for any suspected terrorist activity and immediately report such activity to the appropriate authorities.

Contact the North Dakota Department of Health at 701.328.2270 if you have any questions.

Categories of Health Alert messages:

- *Health Alert* conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.
- *Health Advisory* provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.
- *Health Update* provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary.
- *Health Information* provides general information that is not necessarily considered to be of an emergent nature.

This message is being sent to local public health units, clinics, hospitals, physicians, tribal health, North Dakota Nurses Association, North Dakota Long Term Care Association, North Dakota Healthcare Association, North Dakota Medical Association, and hospital public information officers.