

DHHS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Section III:	Communications
Title:	Media Training Manual
Chapter:	Media Policy
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Every division, section or office should have a written policy that governs how employees deal with the media. The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has a general policy that can be altered to fit the needs of a particular division, section or office.

The goal of this policy is to be as open as possible. Reporters need to be greeted with open arms when they call your office.

Everyone in your office, including support staff, should be aware of this policy. All new hires should receive the policy.

A copy of the Media Policy follows.

DHHS MEDIA POLICY

PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY:

We encourage staff to talk with reporters about our issues. The media can help us get the word out about what we do for our state's families. We need to help them as much as possible.

WHO DOES THIS POLICY APPLY TO?

All employees are encouraged to talk with reporters about their areas their expertise. But, if you aren't comfortable talking with reporters, no one is going to make you. If you don't want to talk to the media, please refer them to the public affairs office or someone who is comfortable talking with the media. Don't ignore the media call.

WHAT SHOULD YOU SAY?

You should provide reporters with factual information only. Don't speculate or give opinions. Stick to your area of expertise. Feel free to refer the reporter to other people with different areas of expertise.

IF A REPORTER CALLS YOU, WHAT DO YOU DO?

If the reporter is calling about your area of expertise, feel free to provide him or her with the information requested. You don't have to get any prior approval for talking with a reporter about your area of expertise. Remember to stick with facts---not opinion or speculation. If you are dealing with a particularly controversial issue or have questions about how to handle the request, please consult with the public affairs office about the proper response.

If you don't feel comfortable talking with a reporter, then refer them to someone who can help them. Any media call can be referred to public affairs. Please don't give false excuses to reporters. Don't tell them that you're not allowed to talk or that they have to talk with public affairs first. Explain that you're not comfortable talking to them and refer them to someone who will talk with them.

DO YOU NEED TO REPORT THAT YOU'VE TALKED TO A REPORTER?

Yes. You don't have to get permission from the DHHS Public Affairs Office to talk with a reporter, but you do need to make sure that the DHHS Public Affairs Office is notified as quickly as possible after you have talked with a reporter. You can either email or phone us to

let us know that you have talked with a reporter. Please make this notification immediately after talking with a reporter.

NEWS RELEASES

NEED A NEWS RELEASE?

If you have a need for a news release, please contact the DHHS Public Affairs Office early. There is no need for you to waste a lot of time working on exact wording for a news release. The public affairs office can do that for you. Public affairs just needs notes on what the news release is supposed to cover. Public affairs officers will turn those notes into a news release for your review and approval. Public affairs will also distribute the release and make appropriate follow through with the media.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL

If you do your own release, you will still need to consult with the public affairs office for review, approval, and distribution. All news releases must be reviewed and approved by the public affairs office. The public affairs office must distribute all news releases.

For questions or clarification on any of the information contained in this policy, please contact [The Office of Public Affairs](#). For general questions about department-wide policies and procedures, contact the [DHHS Policy Coordinator](#)