

## **DHHS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

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<b>Section IV:</b>	<b>General Administration</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Secretary's Correspondence</b>
<b>Current Effective Date:</b>	<b>8/1/02</b>
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### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide a standardized format and procedure for preparing correspondence for the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Office of the Secretary.

### **Policy**

It is the policy of the DHHS that The Office of Citizen Services (OCS) handles/processes all correspondence to the Secretary of the DHHS.

### **Implementation**

When correspondence is received by OCS, it is evaluated and actions are taken to address the issues that are included in the correspondence. Correspondence is logged in the OCS database, and, if specific complaints are voiced against the DHHS, the correspondence is logged as an Ombudsman case. Whether a general inquiry for information or a complaint that becomes an Ombudsman case, all correspondence is tracked until the correspondence is complete, ensuring all inquiries receive complete feedback and the best customer service. Specific detailed information is provided to the appropriate division/facility/school regarding requirements for completing the response. The division/facility/school is given 10 working days to submit a response to OCS. The three (3) types of control letters are:

1. Responses to correspondence that require the signature of the Secretary of DHHS;
2. Responses to correspondence that may be responded directly by the designated DHHS division/facility/school; and
3. Responses to correspondence that may be responded directly by OCS.

For correspondence that requires the signature of the secretary, the response prepared by the division/facility/school is sent to OCS for review and upon approval, submitted to the secretary's office for review and signature. If corrections are necessary OCS returns the correspondence to the division/facility/school for revision. After corrections or revisions are made by the division/facility/school, the correspondence is resubmitted to OCS for review. If no corrections are needed, the inquiry/case is closed by OCS. The secretary's office sends

the signed original to the customer and a signed copy to OCS and/or the division/facility/school responsible for handling the correspondence.

For correspondence that may be responded to directly by the designated division/facility/school, the response prepared by the division/facility/school is approved by OCS. The division/facility/school sends the signed original to the customer and a copy of the original response to OCS. The inquiry/case is closed by OCS.

For all correspondence directed to the secretary, OCS tracks geographic origin of the correspondence, customer's name, age, sex, issue, and referral source. Information that is tracked is compiled into a monthly statistical report for the DHHS Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Executive Management and every division/facility/school within DHHS. Reports are used to note the most prevalent issues, trends, and hot topics, and reports play a key role in developing and changing programs' policy.

**Reference:**

DHHS Office of Citizen Services

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