

<b>HAWKE'S BAY DISTRICT HEALTH BOARD</b>	<b>Manual:</b>	Operations Policy Manual
	<b>Doc No:</b>	HBDHB/OPM/022
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	<b>Approved:</b>	Chief Executive Officer
	<b>Signature:</b>	Dr Kevin Snee
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<b>Media Relations</b>		

## PURPOSE

To describe Hawke's Bay District Health Board's (HBDHB's) policy and procedure for managing the organisation's relationships with the media and social media.

## PRINCIPLES

All communications with, and through, the media/social media are coordinated effectively.

All communications with, and through, the media are consistent, clear and accurate.

All staff, Board members and Advisory Committee members have clarity of their roles and responsibilities, and the processes, in managing the organisation's relationships with the media.

All communications with the media demonstrate professionalism and are consistent with the organisation's strategic goals and direction.

HBDHB has a duty to communicate on matters deemed to be in the public interest.

HBDHB encourages positive relationships with the media by sharing health protection, health promotion and HBDHB developments communications.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to all HBDHB staff, Board members and Advisory Committee members, contractors, students and contracted personnel (hereafter referred to as **HBDHB Personnel**). This policy covers public speaking where media may be present.

## PROCEDURES

HBDHB Communications Service, i.e. the Communications and Media Manager and Media and Public Relations Advisor are accessible 24/7. Their role is to act as liaison between HBDHB and the media

- They should be consulted before any HBDHB Personnel approach or respond to the media.
- All incoming media calls must be directed in the first instance to the Communications and Media Manager, in the second instance to the Media and Public Relations Advisor
- They will ensure that HBDHB senior managers are kept fully informed of media requests for information.

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## LEGAL LIABILITY

HBDHB Personnel making public statements regarding any person or organisation must comply with all relevant legislation including the Privacy Act 1993, Health Information Privacy Code 1994 and Code of Health and Disability Consumers' Rights.

HBDHB Personnel may be personally liable if the statement is unfounded.

## AUTHORISED SPOKESPEOPLE

HBDHB Personnel may only speak on behalf of HBDHB if they are authorised to do so. Any contact by the media with HBDHB Personnel who do not have delegated spokesperson authority must be directed immediately to HBDHB's Communications Service.

All authorised spokespersons shall be media trained or advised and well prepared to fulfil their roles.

MEDIA ISSUE	AUTHORISED SPOKESPEOPLE
Governance	Board chair Delegate – Deputy Chair
HBDHB allocation of funds, major capital expenditure, budget outcomes	Chief Executive Officer Delegate – Chief Financial Officer
HBDHB: operational matters: e.g. new initiatives, workforce issues, patient conditions	Chief Executive Officer Delegate- Chief Operating Officer or appropriate nominated other EMT delegate
HBDHB Clinical matters	Chief Medical Advisor (CMA) or appropriate nominated other EMT delegate
Public health - disease outbreak, legislation and regulation	Chief Executive Officer Delegate - Medical Officer of Health Director Population Health
Public health - health promotion programmes	Chief Executive Officer Delegate – Director Population Health/Equity Champion General Manager Maori Health

**Table One: HBDHB Authorised Spokespeople**

Statements to the media should, whenever possible, be in written form. These statements are to be released from the Chief Executive's office and are to be approved by the Chief Executive Officer, or a manager with specific delegated authority (refer Table One, above and HBDHB/OPM/024 - Delegation of Authority Policy).

Where verbal statements or information are required, they can only be authorised by the Chief Executive Officer or divisional managers, in consultation with the Communications Service. Where such statements are made, an email summary of what was said is to be recorded, and if required, forwarded to the Communications Service for recording purposes.

## **RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE MEDIA**

- For professional guidance refer the relevant professional Code of Conduct e.g. [www.nursingcouncil.org.nz](http://www.nursingcouncil.org.nz), [www.mcnz.org.nz](http://www.mcnz.org.nz), [www.ssc.govt.nz](http://www.ssc.govt.nz)
- HBDHB Personnel not listed in Table One who engage with the media are invariably breaching the terms of this policy in that they are not authorised spokespeople for HBDHB. They are therefore at risk of disciplinary action.
- After first seeking advice from the Communications Service, health professionals are encouraged to comment on matters of a health/clinical specialist nature, based on their professional expertise.
- HBDHB Personnel communicating with the media must not make defamatory statements or potentially defamatory statements about individuals, nor breach privacy legislation.
- HBDHB Personnel may not express a controversial opinion on HBDHB or the health system in particular if they are at a conference or function where the media is present.
- HBDHB Personnel must immediately advise the Communications Service when they have made comment with the media present.
- Legislation specifies that a Protected Disclosure must not be made to the media. To make a protected disclosure HBDHB personnel should refer to HBDHB's Protected Disclosure Policy PPM066.
- HBDHB Personnel who are spokespeople for professional or employee organisations may make statements to the media to express the views of their organisation. In all cases they must state the capacity in which they are speaking i.e. in their professional opinion/representative capacity rather than as an employee of HBDHB.
- The delegations in this policy apply to HBDHB Personnel writing or submitting an article for inclusion in any publication which discusses HBDHB policy, politics, operational, staff and/or patient information.
- Governance Board members and Advisory Committee members are able to speak on general health sector issues; however any matter specific to HBDHB must be referred to the Chair or other authorised spokesperson as listed in Table One.

## **MEDIA REQUESTS FOR PATIENT INFORMATION**

All media requests for patient information must be referred to the Communications Service who shall obtain and then provide information in accordance with privacy requirements.

## **PREPARATION OF MEDIA MATERIALS**

All written statements should be approved and/or prepared by the Communications Service who will then arrange for the release of material to the media.

## **ACCESS**

Any requests for access to HBDHB facilities by news media reporters/camera crew/photographers must be referred to the Communications Service. The news media and media photographers/camera crews will not have access to staff, patients, or facilities without

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the permission of the Chief Executive Officer/Chief Operating Officer or delegate, as well as the patient and/or staff involved.

Where photographs are taken, the permissions of those photographed, staff or patient, must be sought and recorded as per the HBDHB/OPM/020 - Photograph Policy.

## **RESPONSIBILITY OF STAFF**

It is the responsibility of staff to alert their manager of any potential media issues at the earliest opportunity. It is the manager's role to work with the Communications Service.

## **RESPONSIBILITY OF TEAM, UNIT & SERVICE MANAGERS**

A thorough and proactive approach to managing patient/family complaints is a key risk mitigation strategy in minimising adverse "patient experience" media. HBDHB encourages a 'no surprises' approach throughout the organisation, managers at unit and group/service level are required to advise divisional managers of any actual or potential media interest/enquiries to their service.

## **DISTRIBUTION**

All media statements are released through the Communications Service after permission from the Chief Executive Officer.

Media statements are placed on HBDHB website as soon as is practicable.

## **OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT REQUESTS**

All requests for Official Information by the media must be forwarded to and coordinated by the Chief Executive's Office. The Communications Service will prepare the response for authorisation by the Chief Executive.

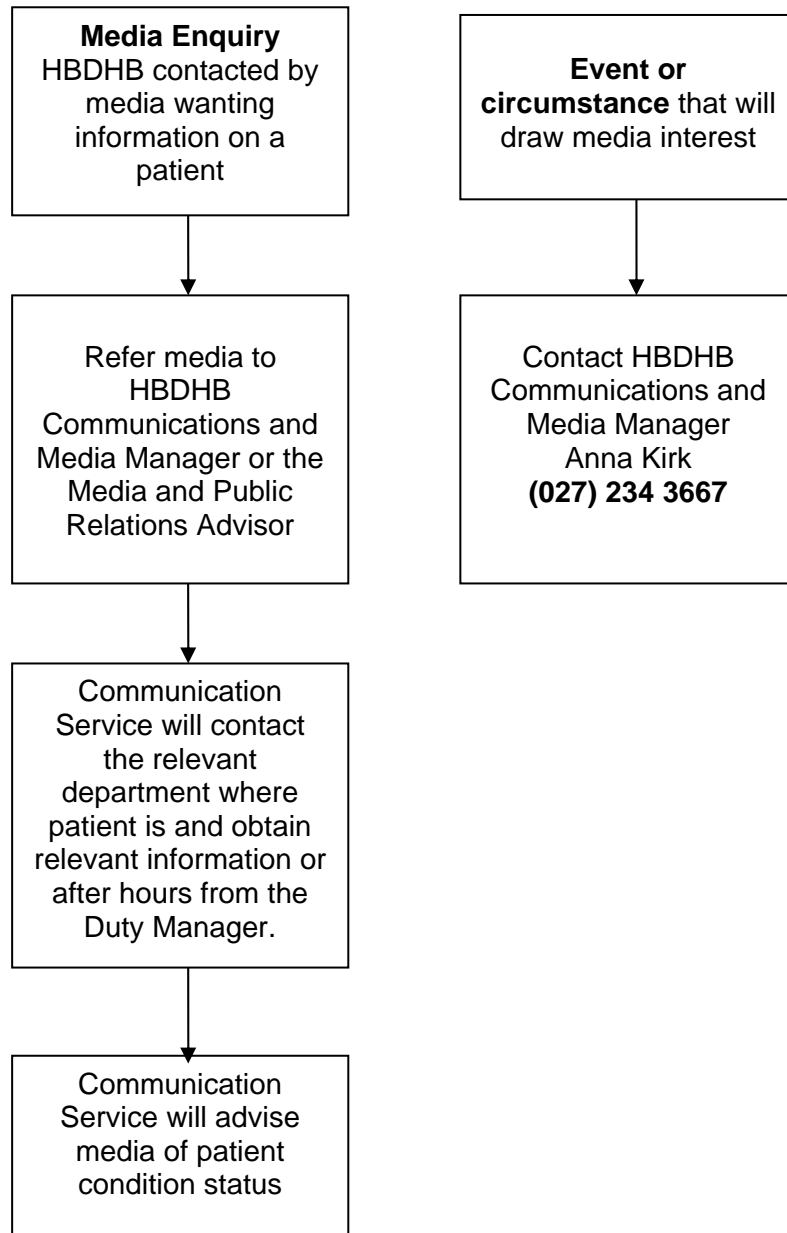
## **REFERENCE**

Appendix 1 Communications Flow Chart (visual representation of this policy).

***For further information please contact the HBDHB Communications Service.***

Appendix 1

**Day-to-Day Media Enquiry or Event which will draw Media Interest**



***NB: This flow-chart is to sit alongside Emergency Control Plans.***