

## **DHHS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

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<b>Section IV:</b>	<b>General Administration</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Legislative and Congressional Inquiries, Reports and Presentations</b>
<b>Current Effective Date:</b>	<b>8/1/02</b>
<b>Revision History:</b>	<b>8/1/02</b>
<b>Original Effective Date:</b>	<b>1/1/94</b>

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### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure consistency and timeliness in preparing and disseminating information for members of the NC General Assembly and US Congress, including their staff members. In addition, it outlines procedures for the review and submission of studies and reports required by the NC General Assembly and for placing an agenda item on a meeting of the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations.

### **Policy**

#### **Inquiries from Legislators, Congressional Offices, Other Policymakers**

All inquiries from legislators, congressional offices, and other state government policymakers must be documented via e-mail at the time the request is made.

1. Each e-mail contains the following information:
  - A. Date of the inquiry,
  - B. Name of the person making the inquiry and the organization he or she represents,
  - C. Phone number of the person making the request,
  - D. E-mail address of person making the request, and
  - E. Summary of inquiry, including time frame for responding, and steps taken to answer it.
  
2. If the requestor asks for information about a specific constituent, send the e-mail to the division director with copies to the following staff:
  - A. Director of the Office of Government and Community Relations and the designated staff assigned to the responding DHHS Division, and
  - B. DHHS Deputy or Assistant Secretary.

3. For all other requests, the staff member receiving the request for information sends the e-mail to the DHHS Division Director with copies to the following staff:
  - A. Director of the Office of Government and Community Relations and the designated person assigned to the responding DHHS Division,
  - B. DHHS Director of the Division of Budget and Analysis,
  - C. DHHS Deputy Secretary,
  - D. DHHS Assistant Secretary, and
  - E. Budget Administrator in the Office of State Budget and Management (OSBM).
  
4. Responses to requests for information must be completed by the time frame requested, but no later than five (5) working days from the date of the request. The Office of Governmental Relations must approve any exception to this policy.
  
5. The nature of the request for information will determine who responds and how the response is made.
  - A. Factual information is any information available from existing data bases and management reports such as the number of clients served by a program, number of beds in a facility, number of counties participating in a program, current authorized budget, etc. In addition, factual information includes information contained in a printed document (e.g., a signed legislative report) which has been previously approved by the DHHS Office of the Secretary for dissemination outside the department.
    1. A staff member receiving a request for factual information responds in writing or verbally to the person making the request.
    2. The e-mail documenting the request for information may be prepared and sent after the verbal information is provided.
  
  - B. All other information, including matters of policy, budget, legislation, and personnel or data/information that requires interpretation, must be reviewed and approved by the Office of Government and Community Relations prior to providing information to the requester. The Office of Government and Community Relations will coordinate the review and approval by the DHHS Division of Budget and Analysis and the Deputy Secretary prior to the release of the response, when appropriate. The response is prepared for the division director's signature.
  
  - C. Copies of all responses are provided to the individuals described in 1. B. and C.

### **Meetings with Legislators**

The Office of Government and Community Relations and the DHHS Division of Budget and Analysis must be notified when legislators or legislative staff request a meeting with division. Division staff must immediately prepare a summary of the meeting, including purpose, content and any resulting requests for information.

### **Reports Required by the General Assembly**

1. The Office of Government and Community Relations and the DHHS Division of Budget and Analysis must review each report or study prepared for the legislature. The DHHS Division of Budget and Analysis will coordinate the review and approval of reports for the DHHS Office of the Secretary and obtain the secretary's signature on the cover letter(s).
2. Each report and the appropriate cover letter(s) for the secretary's signature are to be submitted for review and signature 30 days prior to the date due to the NC General Assembly. In addition, an executive summary stating the purpose of the report, key findings or recommendations, and coordination with other divisions or agencies in developing the report must also be submitted.
3. After the secretary has signed this letter, the division or office submitting the report is responsible for copying and distributing the report and signed cover letter(s). The report and cover letter(s) are distributed to: the DHHS Director of the Division of Budget and Analysis, appropriate member of the Executive Management Team, Legislative Library, Fiscal Research Division, assigned OSBM budget analyst, and Director of the Office of Government and Community Relations.

### **Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations**

1. The DHHS Division of Budget and Analysis is responsible for coordinating placement of DHHS items on the agenda of the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations.
2. All agenda items and materials for the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations must be submitted to the DHHS Division of Budget and Analysis at least five (5) working days before to the end of the month prior to the next meeting. Copies of the agenda items and materials must be provided to the Deputy Secretary and the Office of Government and Community Relations at the same time.
3. Any concerns or disagreements about the agenda item will be resolved in accordance with DHHS Directive II-10.

## Implementation

1. Division directors may establish internal procedures for responding to requests for information. The internal procedure may designate who and how requests for factual information are communicated.
2. Each division director is to designate one person as its legislative contact to work with the Office of Government and Community Relations on legislative issues.
3. Any questions about the policy and procedures contained in this document can be directed to the Director of the Office of Government and Community Relations .

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