



New Hanover County Health Department Policies and Procedures



Subject:	Communications Triage
Date of Origin:	3/22/05
Policy Number:	GS-ADM-065

PURPOSE AND SCOPE:

The purpose of this policy is to establish the guidelines to be used by the entire Health Department in carrying out the responsibilities of communications triage, which will be facilitated through the Health Promotion staff. The scope of this policy applies to all members of the New Hanover County Health Department (NHCHD) workforce.

POLICY:

The New Hanover County Health Department's Health Promotion staff will facilitate communications triage identifying and triaging important internal and external communications of the New Hanover County Health Department.

PROCEDURE:

1. A multi-disciplinary panel of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) will be identified throughout the organization to assist as needed to develop effective communications. SMEs and their respective supervisors will be utilized as clearinghouses to help ensure content accuracy and the consistency and relevance of communications in their field of expertise.
2. The Health Promotion Team and SMEs will act as "central control valves" to triage communications, turn relevant subject matter into clear and concise communication, and help monitor policy compliance.
3. The Public Information Officer (PIO) functions as the ultimate gatekeeper in channeling or controlling the flow of information and has "veto" power over message distribution.
4. The Health Promotion staff will assemble with SMEs as needed. A smaller sub-team will be identified to facilitate and accommodate requests for immediate assistance.

Submitting Requests for Communications Triage

1. Employees must inquire with Health Promotion staff about available materials before initiating a request.
2. Employees should forward requests for communications triage to their respective supervisors. Supervisors (or their designee) should review the request and email it to the Health Education Supervisor. Staff should attempt to include the following information in their requests for assistance:

WHO needs to know the information?

WHAT information is appropriate and needs to be communicated?

WHERE should the information be made available?

Submitting Requests for Communications Triage (cont.)

WHEN should the information be made available?

WHY is the information important or necessary?

HOW is the information best communicated and distributed?

3. Fixed communications, such as form letters and educational materials, are included in Program Policy and Procedure Manuals and will be reviewed annually by on a staggered schedule. New or revised form letters may be developed as needed.

OTHER INFORMATION: (attached)

Although elements of style are important considerations, the Health Promotion Team will concentrate its efforts on grammar, punctuation, word usage, readability, content, relevance, format, audience, and dissemination.

With ongoing oversight of the communications triage process, the PIO will monitor the policy's effectiveness and staff collaboration. SMEs may exit their respective roles and new members may replace them based on their supervisor's approval.

Supervisors will be asked to help identify SMEs within their work groups. Under the direction of the PIO, Health Programs Administration will assist staff in developing effective communication skills and delivering meaningful communication (i.e. creating PowerPoint presentation templates, offering Lunch and Learns and exploring outside opportunities to further staff development in these areas.

This Policy is meant to augment the existing Media Communications Plan.

REFERENCES:

Public and Media Communications Plan GS-ADM-029

CHANGE HISTORY:

Version	Date	Comments
A	3/22/05	Original Document
Annual Review	5/13/08	