

<b>Category:</b> Communications	
<b>Title:</b> PHSA guidelines for media organizations	<b>Last reviewed:</b> October 25, 2016

## 1. PURPOSE

These guidelines have been developed to ensure external news and trade media organizations and their representatives have a clear understanding of the opportunities they have when interacting with the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA), its agencies, departments, programs and services.

## 2. SCOPE

These guidelines apply to all representatives of external news and trade media organizations including other producers of communications content, including but not limited to legislative bloggers and corporate videos. These guidelines also apply to anyone seeking information from or access to any PHSA agency, program, department or service, including anyone who works or volunteers for PHSA and anyone who is a client or patient of PHSA.

The terms “communications” and “communications activities” span several service areas, including issues management; media, client/patient, stakeholder, community and government relations; corporate communications; online communications (websites, intranets and social media); and marketing and advertising (branding, print and electronic materials). They can also include internal or stakeholder communications if one or more of the previous mentioned activities are involved in communicating to a broad internal or stakeholder audience. Sponsorships can also be included if it includes communication activities such as marketing, advertising and public relations.

The term “communications representative” refers to the member of PHSA’s Communications department who has been designated as the first contact for staff of a given PHSA agency/program/department/service. In some cases, this individual works at the agency/program location, and in other cases, they are based at PHSA’s corporate office.

The term “journalist” includes any representative or freelancer of a news, trade or personal media outlet who contributes to news, trade or private media coverage, including but not limited to writers, reporters, bloggers, videographers, producers, directors and editors. This term can also apply to external corporations producing any kind of communications materials that makes reference to PHSA or any of its agencies.

The term “agency” refers to all PHSA agencies, programs, departments and services.

The term “initiative” refers to a singular, or group of strategic services, programs and/or activities that are led and/or funded by PHSA or one of its agencies.

The term “PHSA Agency & External Communications” refers to the division of the Communications department that is responsible for media relations.

### **3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

#### **3.1 PHSA**

The first organization of its kind in Canada, PHSA plans, manages and evaluates specialty and province-wide health care services across BC. Collaborating with the five geographic health authorities (Fraser Health Authority, Interior Health Authority, Northern Health Authority, Vancouver Coastal Health Authority and Vancouver Island Health Authority), PHSA works to ensure everyone in the province has access to the kinds of specialized health services they need, wherever they happen to live. Achieving this goal is accomplished by providing leadership to the agencies, services and projects under PHSA jurisdiction.

PHSA was established in December 2001 as an umbrella organization uniting eight pre-existing provincial agencies. PHSA is also responsible for planning, coordinating, monitoring and in some cases, funding specialized and provincial health services that are delivered through the geographically-based health authorities. It oversees the provincial division of the Emergency and Health Services Commission. The overall goal is to create a more coordinated and accountable provincial health system.

#### **3.2 PHSA Communications department**

When PHSA was established, a number of corporate functions common in all of the agencies were integrated for efficiency purposes. Communications is one of the integrated departments, and PHSA's broad mandate requires comprehensive communications support tailored to its unique structure.

The Communications department consists of a team of agency-based and centrally located communications officers, communications managers, communication specialists, a senior director of agency & external communications, a senior director of corporate communications and a chief communications officer. Agency-based team members report to the senior director of agency & external communications, ensuring integration of communications across PHSA while at the same time working to meet the specific communication needs of each agency.

### **4. POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

#### **4.1 Visitation policy**

PHSA welcomes journalists to PHSA agency locations and facilities with the requirement that all individuals involved will strictly adhere to PHSA media visitation terms and conditions below.

Journalists are asked to call PHSA's media line (778-867-7472), two business days prior to visiting a PHSA agency or corporate location.

PHSA has a Privacy & Confidentiality Policy (IA\_020) governing disclosure of and access to personal information and other confidential information, including patient information (*Freedom of Information & Protection of Privacy Act*). As well, PHSA has consent forms which must be signed by patients prior to journalists taking names or photos of patients at any PHSA location (COM\_120 Release of Patient Info to Media or Public Policy).

##### **4.1.1 Media visitation terms & conditions**

PHSA agrees to grant a media organization or its representatives access to its agencies for purposes of filming stories or events, subject to the following terms and conditions:

- a) In permitting access to and use of its facilities, PHSA does not relinquish custody or control thereof and does specifically retain the right to enforce any and all laws, rules and regulations applicable to PHSA. The media organization's use of the facilities is subject to reasonable measures PHSA may take to maintain the confidentiality, safety, and security of patients and staff, and will be subject to compliance with all PHSA policies of general application at PHSA facilities.

- b) The media organization will conduct all activities under this agreement with regard for public safety which can be defined as involving the prevention of and from events that could endanger the safety of the general public from significant danger, injury/harm or damage.  
The media organization will comply with all laws, statutes, ordinances, rules and regulations of any governmental authority which are applicable to PHSA.
- c) The media organization will not film inside any PHSA facility without the prior written approval of PHSA agency & external communications. Once written approval has been obtained, the filming will only take place in those areas of the PHSA facility previously identified and approved by PHSA.
- d) The media organization will work with PHSA agency & external communications to obtain all necessary releases and consents from any person interviewed or filmed by the media organization, including PHSA staff and patients.
- e) If the media organization obtains personal health information (defined as information that a health care professional receives during the course of providing treatment) or other personal information (defined as information about an identifiable person) about a patient or employee of PHSA without the patient's or employee's written consent, the media organization will ensure that its employees, agents or subcontractors notify PHSA Communications immediately. Moreover, it will maintain the confidentiality of the patient's or employee's identity and their personal health information and/or personal information, and comply with all applicable laws and regulations regarding the confidentiality of such information.
- f) The media organization is responsible for the acts and activities of its agents, employees and subcontractors (including any production company engaged by the media organization to shoot footage) during the use of PHSA's facilities. The media organization will indemnify and hold harmless PHSA and its officers, agents and employees for all claims, causes of action and judgments that arise, directly or indirectly, from the intentional or negligent act or omission of the media organization or the officers, agents, employees, subcontractors, guests and invitees of the media organization during the use or occupancy of PHSA facilities.
- g) PHSA will not be liable for any property belonging to the media organization or its employees, agents, officers, subcontractors or guests that is lost, stolen or damaged while on the premises of its facilities.
- h) In no event will PHSA be liable for any direct, indirect, incidental, consequential, punitive, special or enhanced damages arising out of or related to the media organization's use of PHSA facilities, including any losses, expenses or damages incurred by reason of lost revenues or profits.
- i) PHSA has the right to immediately cancel the media organization's access to and use of its facilities at any time if PHSA needs the facilities for patient care or other operational purposes, or if in PHSA's sole and absolute judgment the media organization's activities:
- jeopardize or may jeopardize the safety of any person or animal at PHSA's facility;
  - damage or may damage the buildings or property of PHSA;
  - unduly disrupt or may unduly disrupt the operations or activities of PHSA's facility;
  - cause or may cause expense to PHSA's facility;
  - violate or may violate patient privacy; or
  - otherwise adversely impact or may adversely impact the patients, employees, volunteers, or property at PHSA's facility.

#### **4.2 Contact**

Communications representatives are available to respond to media inquiries and to act as a source for story ideas. Please contact PHSA's media line at 778-867-7472. Calls during regular business hours and evenings are returned promptly. Calls that come in overnight are returned the next morning.

## 4.3 Embargo policy

### 4.3.1 Eligibility

Journalists on assignment for an established publication or news agency with valid press credentials are eligible to receive embargoed material in advance from a PHSA Communications representative. Writers of internal newsletters and suppliers of financial advice are not eligible. Eligible journalists must agree to abide by the conditions of PHSA's embargo policy (below).

### 4.3.2 Conditions

- a) The journalist will not publicize embargoed information in any format, including print, broadcast, radio or online, before the date and time specified by PHSA. Precise embargo dates will accompany all advanced materials.
- b) The journalist will not redistribute information within or outside their news organization, with the following exception: journalist may share embargoed materials with subject matter experts for the purpose of obtaining relevant commentary.
  - 1) When sharing material with third parties for review, embargoed materials must be clearly labeled with the embargo date and time.
  - 2) Journalists are responsible for ensuring that all third parties honour the embargo date.
- c) The journalist will credit to the appropriate source any supporting materials provided by PHSA, such as graphics, audio, and/or video clips. Furthermore, the journalist will not use these materials to illustrate or accompany other stories unrelated to PHSA.
- d) The journalist's failure to adhere to this policy will result in revocation of access to all future embargoed material from PHSA.

For more information about this policy, contact the senior director of agency & external communications or the manager of issues management & media relations through the media line at 778-867-7472.

## 4.4 PHSA agency style guide for media

The following describes the proper use of PHSA agency names:

- Follow the agency's full name with, "an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority" in the initial reference. For example, "The announcement was made by the BC Cancer Agency, an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority."
- On second reference and thereafter, if an abbreviation is desired, use the common short-forms provided here:

Proper name	Short-form (if applicable)
BC Cancer Agency	
BC Centre for Disease Control	BCCDC
BC Children's Hospital and Sunny Hill Health Centre for Children	BC Children's and Sunny Hill (if together) BC Children's Sunny Hill
BC Emergency Health Services	BCEHS
BC Mental Health & Substance Use Services	
BC Renal Agency	
BC Transplant	
BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre	BC Women's
Cardiac Services BC	
Health Emergency Management BC	HEMBC
Mobile Medical Unit	
Perinatal Services BC	
Provincial Infection Control Network of BC	PICNet
Stroke Services BC	
Trans Care BC	
Trauma Services BC	

#### **4.5 Requests for logo use & graphic files**

To get authorization to use logos and to request logo image files, call PHSA agency & external communications on the media line at 778-867-7472.

#### **5. REFERENCES**

IA\_020 Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

COM\_120 Release of Patient Info to Media or Public Policy

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