



# University of Connecticut Health Center

**POLICY NUMBER 2005-11**

**May 1, 2005**

**POLICY: CONTACT WITH NEWS MEDIA**

**POLICY STATEMENT:**

Effective communications with the media are critical to the Health Center's ability to carry out its mission and promote continued public support for the Health Center. Effective media relations best serve the Health Center by informing the public of what we can do for them; promoting the Health Center's achievements, activities and events of significance; expanding the general visibility of the Health Center; and ensuring that accurate information is conveyed to the public regarding incidents and issues of a controversial and/or sensitive nature.

- The Associate Vice President (AVP) for Communications serves as the official Health Center spokesperson and conveys the official Health Center position on topics or issues of general Health Center-wide impact or significance or situations that are of a particularly controversial or sensitive nature. The Office of Communications is responsible for coordinating the collection and dissemination of news about the Health Center. In order to be effective, the AVP needs to be well informed about what is happening at the Health Center, in the event of controversy as well as in routine matters. Inquiries from the media about such issues must be referred to the AVP for Communications.
- Depending on the specific circumstances, the Executive Vice President of Health Affairs or the AVP for Communications may designate another Health Center administrator or employee to serve as spokesperson on a particular issue.
- In the event of a crisis or emergency situation, the AVP for Communications will handle all contact with the media, and will coordinate the information flow from the Health Center to the public. In such situations, all Health Center departments should refer calls from the media to the Office of Communications.
- Members of the faculty and staff are free to respond to requests from the media regarding their research, scholarship, teaching or professional expertise provided they do not present their views as being in any way the official views of the Health Center. When contacted by the media, the Office of Communications should be notified as soon as possible, and preferably before conducting interviews, to inform them of the contact. Such notification can be particularly important if follow-up inquiries are made with other Health Center personnel to ensure a coordinated, consistent Health Center response. A

member of the Office of Communications will work with you to develop an appropriate strategy and response to the media request. Media inquiries should be referred to the AVP for Communications if they involve issues with Health Center- wide significance and/or are of a controversial or sensitive nature.

- Media statements may not contain information on the Health Center generally, or students, staff or patients individually, that contravenes the Health Center's policies on the handling of confidential information or contractual obligations of the Health Center.
- Faculty and staff who seek media coverage for events and activities must contact the Office of Communications which will analyze each request and define the strategy it believes will be most effective in achieving the desired goal on behalf of the Health Center.
- Nothing in this policy is intended to affect faculty and staff members' pursuit of scholarly publications or personal involvement in community activities, nor is it intended to affect individual employee's rights to express personal views about Health Center or non-Health Center issues as long as they make it clear that they do so as individuals and do not represent the official position of the Health Center either directly or indirectly.
- During regular working hours, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., contact the Office of Communications at 860-679-4777.
- After hours, and weekends, call the Health Center operator at 860-679-2000 to page the on-call Communications staff person.

James H. Walter (signed)

4/14/05

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Associate Vice President for Communications

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Date

Peter Deckers, MD (signed)

4/19/05

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Executive Vice President for Health Affairs

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Date

**Replaces:** Contact with News Media policy – February 1999