

Media Relations Policy

Intent

The intent of this policy is to provide a consistent approach when dealing with the media. Doctors Nova Scotia (DNS) nurtures respectful and collegial relationships with the media. DNS strives to offer accurate and complete information in a time sensitive fashion, recognizing the media's responsibility to provide the public with accurate, complete and timely information.

Doctors Nova Scotia values a strong relationship with members of the media, which helps us to position doctors as the leaders they are in health transformation. The association will provide accurate and up-to-date information on positions taken by the association in consultation with members and on the association's programs and initiatives.

The President of Doctors Nova Scotia is the principal spokesperson for the association and will be supported by a cadre of other physicians and senior staff, where appropriate.

As delegated by the president and chief executive officer, the senior communications advisor together with the director of communications are responsible for the release of information to the media and for advising the association's executive, board members, and staff on appropriate media responses.

1. To ensure the media receives timely responses to their inquiries, all media calls should be directed to the communications department.
2. The communications department will work with media to help them form their story, find the appropriate spokesperson and provide the appropriate background information. DNS will support the physician spokesperson through coaching, advice and key messages.
3. The association's staff and members are asked to follow the association's **media relations policy**, when speaking on behalf of Doctors Nova Scotia.
4. The communications department liaises, as necessary, with the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) regarding the release of information with the media.

Procedure

Spokespersons:

- The President is the principal spokesperson for Doctors Nova Scotia.
- The board chair is the principal spokesperson for matters relating to work/decisions of the Board of Directors.

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- Recent past-presidents, board members and committee members will be leveraged as appropriate on board related activities, positions and as project specific spokespersons.
- The CEO and Director of Partnerships and Finance and the Director of Practice Supports and Compensation may be called upon, where appropriate, to speak with the media when the President and physician representatives are unavailable.
- Other physicians and staff may be asked by the communications department to speak with the media in relation to specific topics.

DNS Board of Directors and Committee Members

Reference: [DNS Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest policy](#)

For the purpose of this policy, ‘media’ includes traditional news media, internet media such as blogs and forums, and social media.

As noted in this policy, senior communications staff are responsible for the release of information to the media and for advising the association’s executive, board and committee members on appropriate media responses.

There may be occasions when a Member, as a spokesperson for another organization/interest or as an individual sharing his/her personal views, wants to comment publicly in the media on a particular item related to Board/committee business. If commenting on an issue that the Board/committee has formally decided or taken a position on, the duty of loyalty requires Members to support the decisions made or positions taken by the Board/committee of which they are a member (see [S. 2.a of the Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest policy](#)). If not related to a formal decision or position of the Board or Committee, Members must ensure the statement is not attributable to Doctors Nova Scotia by indicating “the views are my own”.

Members should be cautious and respectful as they are seen as representatives of the Association. It is also important for Members to be aware of their duty of confidentiality. Any Member having questions about what information can be publicly disclosed should consult with the Chair of the Board/committee (see [S. 2.e of DNS Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest policy](#)).

Physicians receiving media requests

Physicians receiving a media request on Doctors Nova Scotia business are asked to contact the communications department prior to speaking to the media. As well, Doctors Nova Scotia members (section chairs, board members, committee members,

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etc.) speaking on non-association business is encouraged to contact the communications department for information and/or support.

Physicians are viewed by the public and media as a trusted source of information. Like all health care providers, it is difficult to separate personal views from professional views, whether it is the association, a district or a hospital.

Physicians serving on Doctors Nova Scotia's Executive Committee of the Board of Directors, the Board of Directors or committees of the Board of Directors should direct media calls to the DNS communications department and solicit support prior to an interview.

When speaking on behalf of Doctors Nova Scotia business, it is important statements reflect those of the association not the individual.

When sharing personal views, physicians are encouraged to clearly state to media opinions expressed are solely those of the individual.

Doctors Nova Scotia will compile and maintain a list of physicians interested in speaking with the media on non-association related topics. Communications will maintain a media tracking document as a record of media requests.

Members of the media

Media representatives acting in a professional capacity must clearly identify themselves as a member of the media to Doctors Nova Scotia employees and members.

All requests for information, interviews, photography/video shoots must be placed through the Doctors Nova Scotia communications office. Requests will be evaluated based on whether the topic is appropriate for the association to comment and availability of spokespeople.

Doctors Nova Scotia cannot guarantee exclusivity of any story.

Public relations opportunities with patients/clients/minors

Patients/clients/minors who are approached by communications to be interviewed, recorded, photographed or videotaped by the news media whether for Doctors Nova Scotia publications or for the news media are required to sign the Communications Consent Form (attached to this policy) prior to the media contact.

Doctors Nova Scotia will work with the Nova Scotia Health Authority or the IWK Health Centre, if the patient/client is in a hospital or community program setting.

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Communications Consent Form

Name: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Address: _____

Email : _____

I _____ give permission to Doctors Nova Scotia and or the following media outlet _____ to use images and information about me for educational/promotional purposes.

Provide information on how images/information will be used and through what specific method (social media, website, magazine, etc.)

I have been made aware of the nature, purpose and intended uses of this information.

In consent to be:

- Interviewed
- Photographed
- Videotaped
- Tape-recorded

I have confirmed:

- My name may be used
- My name may NOT be used

I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand the above consent.

Signature Date

(dd/mm/yy)

Witness Date

(dd/mm/yy)

If signed by someone other than the model, please indicate relationship

_____.