

	DOCTORS NOVA SCOTIA
Section:	BOARD POLICY
Subject:	Media Relations Policy
Approved by Board:	May 2026

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure open, accurate and consistent communication with the media that promotes transparency, trust and alignment with our purpose and the interests of physicians and their patients.
- 1.2 This policy provides clear guidance on how Doctors Nova Scotia (DNS) representatives engage with the media to protect DNS's reputation, advance its positions and support physicians as trusted leaders in the healthcare system.

2.0 POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1 DNS is committed to proactive, accurate and timely media engagement that reflects our values, supports physician members and contributes to an informed public.
- 2.2 DNS spokespersons will communicate clearly, respectfully and professionally, and will adhere to this policy to ensure consistent, accurate representation of the DNS's positions and priorities.
- 2.3 All media inquiries must be coordinated through the DNS Communications Department to ensure accuracy, consistency and responsiveness.
- 2.4 This Media Relations Policy addresses interactions with journalists and other media outlets. Members are also expected to follow the **Social Media Policy** for online platforms, including personal accounts, when content could reasonably be associated with DNS.

3.0 SCOPE

- 3.1 This policy applies to:
 - The Board of Directors
 - DNS committees and working groups
 - Physicians serving in DNS leadership roles
 - All DNS employees
 - Physician spokespersons representing DNS
 - Contractors or consultants authorized to speak on behalf of DNS

3.2 This policy applies to all media formats, including:

- Traditional news media
- Online news, blogs, and forums
- Social media platforms
- Podcasts, livestreams and digital interviews

4.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

4.1 Communications with the media must be factual, respectful, timely and consistent with DNS's purpose.

4.2 All representatives must understand that statements made publicly, including on social media, may be interpreted as representing DNS.

4.3 DNS will respond to media inquiries that relate to the organization's mandate, positions, programs or issues that impact physicians and patients.

4.4 DNS will redirect media inquiries to other health system partners when they fall outside DNS's scope or expertise.

4.5 DNS strives to maintain professional, collegial relationships with journalists, recognizing their responsibility to report accurate and timely information to the public.

4.6 Privacy, confidentiality and legal obligations must be respected at all times when engaging with the media.

5.0 DEFINITIONS

5.1 **DNS Business:** Any issue, position, program, policy, advocacy activity, negotiation, governance matter, or public statement that relates to DNS's mandate, operations, official positions, or representation of physicians, or that could reasonably be interpreted as being made on behalf of DNS.

5.2 **Media:** Includes print, broadcast, digital news outlets, bloggers, podcasters, online platforms and social media channels.

5.3 **Media Inquiry:** Any request for interviews, comments, background information, photography/videography or statements intended for public dissemination.

5.4 **Members:** Members of the DNS Board of Directors and committees.

5.5 **Spokesperson:** An individual authorized by DNS to speak publicly on behalf of DNS.

6.0 PROCEDURES

6.1 Managing media inquiries

- 6.1.1 All media inquiries must be directed to the DNS Communications Department.
- 6.1.2 Communications staff will:
 - Assess the inquiry and determine whether DNS is the appropriate commentator.
 - Select and prepare the appropriate spokesperson.
 - Provide background information, key messages and media coaching as required.
 - Maintain a roster of physician subject matter experts for non-DNS topics.
 - Maintain a log of all media inquiries.

6.2 Spokesperson selection

DNS spokespersons may include:

- **President** – primary spokesperson for most issues.
- **Board Chair** – spokesperson on matters related to Board decisions.
- **President-elect, Past-presidents, or Board members** – as appropriate.
- **CEO or Director of Physician Compensation and Negotiations** – as appropriate or when physicians are unavailable.
- **Subject matter experts (physicians or staff)** – based on expertise.

6.3 Expectations for members

- 6.3.1 When speaking on issues for which the Board or committee has an official position, members must uphold that position.
- 6.3.3 Members must adhere to the **Code of Conduct** and protect private and confidential DNS information, including non-public Board or committee discussions or decisions. If unsure, members should consult the Board or committee Chair before responding to media inquiries or posting online.
- 6.3.3 This section applies in conjunction with the **Social Media Policy** for online platforms. Members are expected to adhere to the standards and guidelines outlined in that policy whenever their activity could reasonably be associated with DNS.
- 6.3.4 Members must follow this policy when speaking on behalf of DNS.

6.4 Media Requests Involving Physicians, Patients, or Minors

- 6.4.1 For the purposes of this policy, physicians must notify the Communications Department of media requests related to DNS business, as defined in Section 5.1, before responding.

6.4.2 Media engagements involving patients, clients, or minors require documented consent prior to any interview, photograph, or video or audio recording. Consent must be obtained using the **Communications Consent and Release Form (Appendix A)**.

6.4.3 Where a media request involves a patient or minor in a Nova Scotia Health or IWK Health setting, DNS will coordinate with the appropriate health system partner before proceeding.

6.5 Consent requirements

DNS must obtain documented consent, using the **Communications Consent and Release Form (Appendix A)** where applicable, before collecting, using, or publicly disclosing personal information for media or communications purposes.

7.0 ACCOUNTABILITY

7.1 **Communications Department:** Responsible for implementing this policy; managing media relations; selecting, preparing and supporting spokespersons; and approving public statements on behalf of DNS. The Communications Department determines whether DNS will publicly comment on a given issue or media request, consulting with the CEO as needed.

7.2 **President and authorized spokespersons:** Represent DNS in media engagements and ensure that all statements reflect DNS's official positions and policies.

7.3 **Members and DNS representatives:** Comply with this policy when interacting with the media and ensure that comments made on behalf of DNS align with approved positions.

7.4 **Governance Committee:** Review this policy according to the established review cycle and recommends revisions to the Board, as required.

7.5 **Board of Directors:** Approves this policy and any subsequent amendments.

8.0 REVIEW CYCLE

This policy will be reviewed **every three years** or sooner if required due to operational, legal or media environment changes.

9.0 RELATED DOCUMENTS

- DNS Code of Conduct
- DNS Conflict of Interest Policy
- DNS Social Media Guidelines
- Communications Consent Form (Appendix A)

Last review: November 2019

Next review: April/May 2026

Appendix A: Communications Consent and Release Form

Purpose of this form:

Doctors Nova Scotia (DNS) occasionally shares stories, interviews, photographs, video recordings, and testimonials for use in publications, media relations activities, social media, and other communications. This form covers consent for collection, use, and disclosure of personal information for communications and media purposes and ensures that you understand how your information may be used and that you consent voluntarily.

1. Participant Information

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Address (optional): _____

If the participant is a minor (under 19):

Name of parent/guardian: _____

Relationship to minor: _____

2. Description of Activity (Completed by DNS staff)

Description of interview / photo / video / story:

Date of activity: _____

DNS staff contact: _____

3. Consent for Use of Images, Recordings, and Information

I consent to be:

- ☐ Interviewed
- ☐ Photographed
- ☐ Videotaped
- ☐ Tape-recorded

I have confirmed:

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

By signing this form, I understand and agree that:

- DNS may use my (or my child's/dependent's) name, image, likeness, voice, interview content, or story in the following communications materials:

☐ Media interviews	☐ Newsletters
☐ News releases	☐ Printed publications
☐ Public statements	☐ Promotional materials
☐ DNS website	☐ Other:

☐ Social media channels	
☐ All the above	

- DNS may share approved content with journalists or health system partners for media and communications purposes related to the agreed-upon story.
- Participation is voluntary and I may choose not to answer any questions.
- I may withdraw my consent at any time before publication or release by notifying DNS in writing at **[insert email]**; however, once information has been publicly released, DNS may not be able to retract or control further use by third parties.
- This consent remains valid unless withdrawn in writing, subject to the limitations described above.
- Other limits on use: (outline below)

5. Privacy Protection

DNS will handle my personal information in accordance with applicable privacy laws and DNS privacy policies. Information will be stored securely and will only be used for the purposes outlined here unless otherwise authorized by the participant or parent/guardian or permitted by law, including for legal, regulatory, audit, or complaint-handling purposes.

6. Consent and Signature

Participant Consent

I have read and understood this form. I voluntarily consent to the collection, use, and disclosure of my (or my child's/dependent's) information as described.

Name (print)	
Signature (participant)	
Date	

Parent/Guardian Consent (if participant is a minor)

I am the parent/guardian of the minor named above, and I consent on their behalf.

Name (print)	
Signature (parent/guardian)	
Date	

7. DNS Staff Use Only

Received by (name)	
Position	
Date received	