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INTRODUCTION

Central Health places the highest priority on the protection of staff and clients' right to privacy and confidentiality regarding personal information. Central Health has legal and moral obligations to protect the privacy and personal information of clients and staff.

Recognizing that healthcare is a public service accountable to the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and the residents of the province, Central Health will maintain open, honest and timely communication with media.

Operating under these principles will enhance and protect the organization's reputation and integrity while building public confidence in the healthcare system.

Central Health acknowledges the right of staff to offer professional opinions on issues related to their areas of practice. This policy details the obligations of staff who speak on behalf of Central Health.

Central Health's guiding media relations principles are to:

- Provide timely response to media inquiries;
- Be honest and forthright with the media.
- Be honest and forthright with respect to the confines of legislation regarding privacy and personal health information;
- Be proactive in seeking positive media attention when opportunities arise;
- Monitor media coverage related to Central Health; and
- Make every effort to correct incorrect reporting in a timely manner.

Media relations is a function of Central Health's Corporate Communications Department. All media requests for interviews, photographs or video pertaining to Central Health clients, staff, services, facilities or administration must be made through Corporate Communications. This includes interviews that are initiated by a client or staff member. This ensures that information is obtained through authoritative sources and that misunderstandings are reduced or eliminated.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to appropriately reflect the decisions, actions and policies of Central Health by ensuring the accurate and comprehensive dissemination of information in a timely fashion to the public through media outlets.

SCOPE

All Central Health staff (including physicians with privileges at Central Health facilities), staff of the Central Northeast Health Foundation and South and Central Health Foundation (The Foundations) and volunteers are required to obtain approval from the Director of Corporate Communications before speaking to the media in an official capacity as a representative of Central Health. This approval can be verbal and does not require written consent.

APPROVED BY: Karen McGrath, CEO

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