new orleans health department

Communications Policy » 2012-2013

To accompany the City of New Orleans Communications Manual regarding NOHD's external communications

For NOHD staff

December 2012

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Purpose

The City of New Orleans Communications Manual (separate document) outlines policies and procedures pertaining to external communications – that is, communication with those outside of the Health Department and City Hall. These policies and procedures apply to all departments, including the Health Department.

The purpose of this document is to provide NOHD employees with additional information pertaining to external communications, including:

- Communications policies specific to the Health Department
- Internal controls and approvals around communications for the Health Department
- General information regarding the Health Department's communication strategies

This document begins with an overview of communication strategies used by the department and a description of communications-related roles and responsibilities (Part 1). This is followed by a variety of communications-related topics that correspond to sections in the City of New Orleans Communications Manual (Part 2).

If we adhere to these policies, we will produce high-quality communications that effectively transmit our message to our target audiences and that reflect our commitment to health promotion.

Part 1: Overview of communications at NOHD

Target audience and communication channels

NOHD communications target a variety of audiences. They consist of three main groups:

1. **Consumers of health information and services** (e.g., NOHD program participants, potential program participants, those in need of health care or health information, and the general public)

2. **Public health system partners** (e.g., state and federal agencies, health care providers, non-profit organizations, foundations)

3. **Media/press** (e.g., television, radio, newspapers)

While we regularly reach people through interpersonal communication, phone calls, and emails, we also produce communications and hold events in order to reach a wider audience. Many of our communication strategies are used with multiple audiences. See Table 1.

Table 1: Modes of communication to target audiences

Target Audience	Examples of communication methods we use to reach them	Purpose of communications
Consumers of health information and services	- Flyers and brochures - Posters - Advertisements - Website - Outreach events - Social marketing campaigns - Email newsletters - Media/press	- To inform them of our programs and services - To inform them of how they can protect their health and prevent disease - To inform them of how they can access health care
Public health system partners	- PowerPoint presentations at meetings - Reports - Flyers and brochures - Website - Email newsletters - Media/press	- To coordinate public health efforts - To leverage resources to enhance public health efforts - To raise awareness and support for NOHD initiatives
Media/press	- Press releases - Press conferences - Media advisories	- To reach a wide audience with public health messages - To highlight new initiatives and achievements

Guidance for developing communication products

While some NOHD programs disseminate informational products obtained by outside sources, NOHD also develops communication products in-house. These products may include flyers, brochures, posters, advertisements, websites, and reports. When developing such products, keep the following principles in mind:

- *Coordinated communications:* Each program is responsible for coordinating with other programs in NOHD, other City departments, and local public health system partners to ensure that health messages used in communications materials are consistent.

- *Who is your target audience?* Ensure that your key messages are clear and appropriate for your target audience. Seek feedback on your materials and messages from members of your target audience prior to use to ensure comprehension and cultural appropriateness.

- *Health literacy:* Health literacy is the ability of your target audience to understand and act upon health information. To promote health literacy, communications materials should clearly state action steps for the reader, use appropriate visuals, leave enough white space, and avoid technical terms and abbreviations. More information on health literacy is available in the CDC's *Simply Put*: http://www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/pdf/Simply_Put.pdf

- *Writing guidance:* Refer to the Mayor's Office of Communications' Style Guide for guidance on creating clear, effective communication documents (City of New Orleans Communications Manual, pages 33-34).

Additional guidance for developing communication products is as follows:

- ☑ All materials must contain the NOHD logo.
- ☑ All materials must be dated. Include either the month and year or season and year at a minimum.
- ☑ Print materials paid for by external grants must comply with grantor requirements for communication products, e.g., notation of funding source.
- ☑ Have materials proofread prior to submitting them to the Health Commissioner, Deputy Director, or Mayor's Office of Communications for approval.
- ☑ Plan accordingly and design your materials in advance of when you will need them to allow time to obtain the necessary approvals.

Roles and responsibilities

Responsibilities for communications are shared among a variety of positions within the Health Department and City government, as indicated in Table 2.

Table 2: Roles and responsibilities for communications

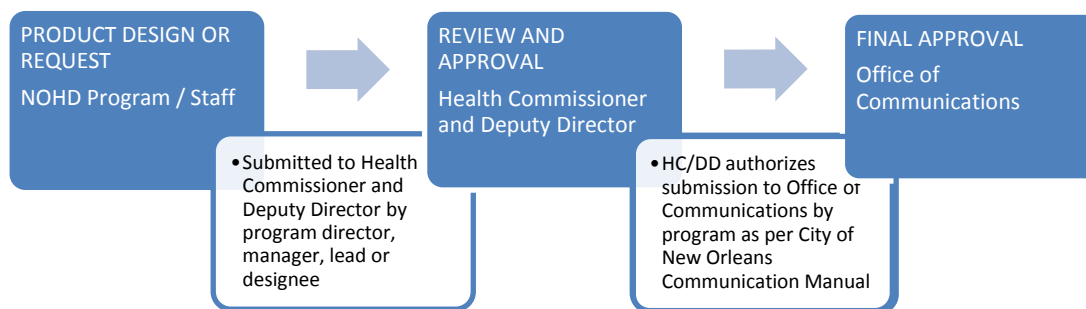| Staff position or entity	Primary role/responsibility
Mayor's Office of Communications	The Mayor's Office of Communications coordinates and oversees all external communication by the City of New Orleans, including the Health Department. Communications Manager Kam Buckner (kebuckner@nola.gov) is the Public Information Officer for the Health Department. Responsibilities include: • Maintaining relationships with the media (and keeping distribution/contact lists) • Liaising with the media to arrange interviews, press conferences, etc. • Reviewing and approving all external communication products produced by the department
Health Commissioner	• Speaking to the media on behalf of the Health Department (as arranged by the Mayor's Office of Communications) • Oversight and final approval over all communications products and messages produced by the department
Deputy Director	• Review and approval of communications products and messages produced by the department
Program directors, leads, staff	• Developing and updating communications materials and content • Reviewing communications materials • Coordinating messaging with public health partners
Communications designee, intern or support staff	• Facilitating internal approval process • Keeping all communications products on file • Assistance with drafting, proofreading, and updating/editing communications products

NOHD staff and members of the Mayor's Office of Communications work as a team to produce communications products and messages on behalf of the department.

Internal approval process

Because the Health Department is part of the City of New Orleans, all external communication by the City of New Orleans, including the Health Department, is coordinated and overseen by the Mayor's Office of Communications. This is important to ensure that the City's messaging is consistent, timely, and appropriate.

Before contacting the Mayor's Office of Communications for approval of communications products or other requests as outlined in the City of New Orleans Communications Manual, NOHD employees should obtain the approval or authorization of the Health Commissioner and Deputy Director (Figure 1). This is to ensure that the Health Commissioner is apprised of all communications with the Mayor's Office of Communications and can follow up on approvals as required, and that Health Department leadership can monitor quality and messaging and provide input as required.

Figure 1: Process for approval of communications products and requests

PRODUCT DESIGN OR REQUEST
NOHD Program / Staff

- Submitted to Health Commissioner and Deputy Director by program director, manager, lead or designee

REVIEW AND APPROVAL
Health Commissioner and Deputy Director

- HC/DD authorizes submission to Office of Communications by program as per City of New Orleans Communication Manual

FINAL APPROVAL
Office of Communications

To obtain approval from the Health Commissioner and Deputy Director on communication products, email the file to both of them. To ensure the Health Commissioner's review, print a hard copy of the document and put it in the Health Commissioner's box along with a brief note explaining the purpose of the document and intended audience. Include your name, your contact information, and any relevant deadlines.

Part 2: References to the City of New Orleans Communications Manual

The City of New Orleans Communications Manual is the authoritative document regarding communications policies for all departments, including the Health Department. Below, please find additional information that applies specifically to the Health Department.

Media Communications

Refer to the **City of New Orleans Communications Manual, pages 7-10**, for the City's policy regarding media communications.

If you wish to communicate with the media regarding a program or event, such as requesting media coverage, preparing a news release, sending a media advisory, or staging a press conference, or if you receive a request from the media, contact the Health Commissioner and Deputy Director to initiate the process. The Health Commissioner or Deputy Director will facilitate the request or authorize you to work with the Mayor's Office of Communications directly.

Electronic Communications

Refer to the **City of New Orleans Communications Manual, pages 14-20**, for the City's policy regarding electronic communications.

City Website

NOHD maintains a page on the City's website, nola.gov. Each program within NOHD is responsible for creating its own content for the website and ensuring the information is up to date.

One or more designated NOHD employees ("NOHD Web Managers") will make changes to the website on behalf of programs. Once the requested change has been made, the NOHD Web Manager will let you know and, for substantive changes, will email the Health Commissioner and Deputy Director with a link to the updated page and a brief description of what was changed.

Major changes to reflect a new initiative or a new contractor service must be approved by the Health Commissioner and Deputy Director, and then by the Mayor's Office of Communications (see City of New Orleans Communications Manual, page 15). Once approved, the program representative will work with a NOHD Web Manager to make the change on the site. The NOHD Web Manger will then email the Health Commissioner, Deputy Director, and program representative with a link to the new or updated page.

Social Media and External Websites

Any social media accounts and external websites run by NOHD must be approved by the Mayor's Office of Communications. NOHD employees must obtain approval from the Health Commissioner and Deputy Director prior to contacting the Mayor's Office of Communications regarding the creation of social media accounts or external websites.

PowerPoint Presentations

The Mayor's Office of Communications has made available a standard PowerPoint template for use by all departments. The Mayor's Office of Communications also has granted permission for NOHD employees to use the NOHD's PowerPoint template in place of the City's PowerPoint template. While you are welcome to use the City's template, you are encouraged to use NOHD's template to promote NOHD's brand identity.

Flyers, Signs, Posters and Approval

Refer to the **City of New Orleans Communications Manual (pages 17 and 20)**. Obtain approval from the Health Commissioner and Deputy Director prior to submitting materials to the Mayor's Office of Communications.

Refer to the **City of New Orleans Communications Manual (page 20)** regarding how to obtain approval from the Mayor's Office of Communications.

This policy applies only to materials developed in-house by NOHD. The Mayor's Office of Communications has confirmed that materials obtained from other sources (e.g., WIC brochures published by the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals) do not need to be approved by the Mayor's Office of Communications.

Emails

Refer to the **City of New Orleans Communications Manual, pages 20-21,** for email-related policies.

You are encouraged to include the NOHD logo as part of your email signature to increase the visibility of the NOHD brand. Note that including a disclaimer in the email signature is not required by the Mayor's Office of Communications and is up to you and your supervisor.

Visual guidelines

Refer to the **City of New Orleans Communications Manual, pages 22-26**, for the City's policy regarding visual guidelines including logos and fonts.

Logo and *fleur de lis*

As indicated in the City of New Orleans Communications Manual, the NOHD logo is an official logo. All NOHD materials produced for external use must include the NOHD logo. As long as the NOHD logo is included, the City's official *fleur de lis* logo is not required.

The Mayor's Office of Communications has informed NOHD that if a *fleur de lis* is used in any communications product, whether it is a brochure, presentation, report, web page, or any other product, it must be the official *fleur de lis* design of the City of New Orleans. No other depictions of the *fleur de lis* are authorized for use.

Mayoral Requests

Refer to the **City of New Orleans Communications Manual, pages 11-13**, for the City's policy regarding mayoral requests.

Obtain authorization from the Health Commissioner and Deputy Director prior to submitting a request.

Public Notices Calendar and Mayor's Press Room

Refer to the **City of New Orleans Communications Manual, pages 27-31**, for information on how to submit a request for the Public Notices Calendar or Mayor's Press Room.

Obtain authorization from the Health Commissioner and Deputy Director prior to submitting a request.

Style Guide

Refer to the **City of New Orleans Communications Manual, pages 32-35**, for general guidance on effective written communication.

Also, the CDC's *Simply Put* manual is highly recommended for anyone who develops materials for external distribution: http://www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/pdf/Simply_Put.pdf

Acknowledgement of Receipt of Communications Policy

I acknowledge that I have received and read the Health Department's Communications Policy. I understand that it is my obligation to familiarize myself with and abide by and comply with all of the policies and procedures set forth therein. I further understand that the HD has the right to change, delete, add to, suspend, or discontinue any of its policies and procedures contained in this document at any time without prior notice, and that if the HD so exercises this right and I remain employed thereafter, I will abide by, and comply with, all of the Health Department's policies and procedures which are then in effect.

Employee Name

& Division: _____ (please print)

Signature: _____

Date: _____