

“Media requests & interviews: Before, during and after”

WNC Environmental Health Supervisors

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Make Small CHOICES, expect BIG things.

Before getting media requests

- **Policy & Procedures** (handout)
 - Who coordinates?
 - Who can be a spokesperson?
 - What is the approval process?
 - Timeframe for responding to media?
- **Training** for Spokespersons and Public Information Officer
- **Tools** to help you (handouts)

The media calls... then what?

- **Key questions to ask reporter:**
 - What is the focus of the interview?
 - Who else are you interviewing?
 - What is your deadline?
- **Don't agree to interview – YET.**
- **Ask for reporter's contact info** and best way to reach them during the next 30 minutes.
- **Tell reporter when you will call back** to confirm whether you will do the interview.

The media calls...

Do we do the interview?

- Are we “the expert” or is someone else?
- Do we have jurisdiction or authority (i.e. Water Quality)?
- Is it an opportunity to promote services or priority issues?
- Is it controversial? Will interview make County Commissioners feel “*happy, happy, happy*”?
- Discuss with the program supervisor and/or health director.

Coordinate the interview

- **Request approval** - email a summary of interview focus, talking points, HHS branding message and suggested spokesperson.
- If approved, **call reporter** to arrange time and place of interview.
- **Give a “heads up”** to everyone & their brother!
- Work with approved spokesperson to complete the **Media Checklist form**. Anticipate difficult questions and practice bridging back to the key talking points.

Basics for doing interviews

- Avoid bureaucratic language and acronyms; explain in plain terms.
- Explain complex issues in simple, easy to understand terms.
- Give facts, not opinions or speculation.
- Don't comment about things outside of your area of expertise.
- **Never lie.**
- Stay on the record. Assume that anything you say while with a reporter can be shared with the public.
- Never say "no comment." If you can't answer a question, tell the reporter why.
- Be patient and never be argumentative, condescending, confrontational or lose your temper with a reporter.

During the interview...

QUESTIONS:

- Should the PIO or other staff person stay with the spokesperson during the interview?
- What if you didn't get to state any of your key talking points?
- What do you do if the reporter goes off in a different direction?

After the interview...

- Inform media coordinator or health director how you feel it went (if someone isn't with you)
- PIO will log the interview (accreditation – accreditation – accreditation!)
- Identify people to monitor media for the story and save as needed.

Share what works for you...

- Helpful tips for spokespersons
- Lessons learned
- Other?

My contact information

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