

PART A: Office of the Secretary

CHAPTER AP: Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs

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AP.00 MISSION

AP.10 ORGANIZATION

AP.20 FUNCTIONS

AP.00 Mission: The mission of the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs (OASPA) is to serve as the Secretary's principal public affairs policy advisor; to provide centralized professional leadership and continuous monitoring and evaluation of Department wide policies, procedures and operating practices regarding public affairs activities; and to administer the Freedom of Information Act, Privacy Act and other information access statutes.

AP.10 Organization. ^{1/30/2006} The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs, headed by the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs (ASPA) who reports to the Secretary, consists of the following organizations:

- The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs (AP)
- The Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs (Policy and Strategy) (APC)
 - o Communications Services Division (APC1)
 - o Special Outreach Division (APC2)
 - o Web Communication Division (APC3)
- The Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs (Media) ^{70 FR 61621-22;10/25/2005} (APB)
 - o News Division (APB1)
 - o Speech and Editorial Division (APB3)
 - o FOIA/Privacy Act Division (APB4)

Section AP.20 Functions

A. The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs – Provides executive leadership, policy direction, and management strategy for the Department's public affairs programs and activities. Counsels and acts for the Secretary and the Department in carrying out responsibilities under statutes. Presidential directives, and Secretarial orders for informing the general public, specialized audiences, HHS employees, and other Federal employees about the programs, policies, and services of the Department. Establishes and enforces policies and practices which produce an accurate, clear, efficient, and consistent flow of information to the general public and other audiences about departmental programs and activities.

Provides advice, counsel and information to the Secretary, and other HHS policymakers to assure that public affairs impact is considered in the establishment of departmental policies or the conduct of its activities.

Serves as the principal point of contact with senior White House officials regarding

communications and press issues.

Exercises professional leadership and provides functional management of public affairs activities throughout the Department to assure that Secretarial priorities are followed, high quality standards are met, and cost-effective, non-duplicative communications products are developed which accurately and effectively inform its audiences.

Serves as Secretarial surrogate throughout the public and private sector to both represent the views of the Administration and the Secretary, and to inform and educate various audiences.

Ensures coordination among public affairs components. Manages public affairs issues and special activities that cut across Operating Division lines.

B. Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs (Policy and Strategy) – Is responsible for developing effective strategies to publicize Departmental policies, goals and accomplishments, activities related to the Department's communications services and public affairs policy analysis, and management oversight of the Communications Services Division and the Special Outreach Division.

Provides advice and assistance on all public affairs matters, in consultation with the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs; coordinates with the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs (Media) in providing prompt response to media and public inquiries, and in helping the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs generate a strategic focus for stories and other information products that the Department develops and wishes to highlight.

Manages or coordinates the conduct of high priority media campaigns and information programs in the Department. Acts as liaison to private sector organizations, to the Operating and Staff Divisions, to the public affairs units in the HHS Operating Divisions and Regions and to other Federal agencies, including OMB and the Office of Public Liaison at the White House.

Initiates, designs and effects outreach programs for all organizations, associations and individuals concerned with the broad range of policies, programs and issues of the Department.

Serves as confidential advisor to senior staff within OASPA. Performs special assignments which involve and cut across Department programs and activities to achieve broadly defined public affairs management and program objectives. Interacts with internal and external organizations, groups and individuals to secure and provide information concerning matters affecting HHS policy, interests, and initiatives. Represents the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs in conveying official viewpoints and policy considerations of the Department and the Administration.

B.1 Communications Services Division – Provides direction to all audiovisual activities in and for the Department.

Responsible for all aspects of print and audiovisual production and programming in support of the Secretary, the ASPA and senior HHS management. Operates the HHS studio and coordinates activities of other HHS studios as required. Under the direction of the ASPA, develops and implements media campaigns and special projects. Acts as liaison to broadcast organizations.

Establishes departmental policy and procedures for the procurement, design, production, distribution and quality control of media campaigns, audiovisual products, exhibits and

publications.

Reviews and clears all media campaigns, audiovisual products and exhibits produced with departmental funds. Reviews audiovisual aspects of HHS public affairs' components plans to ensure that they support HHS policy.

Reviews and clears all periodicals and publications materials produced with departmental funds. Provides liaison with OMB on matters pertaining to publication and periodicals.

Reviews and approves contracts for public affairs services. Collects and analyzes information on projected departmental public affairs offices' budgets, staffing and communications initiatives.

Monitors clearinghouse and information center activities. Reviews and approves departmental information center requests for contracts and information center operating contracts. Collects operating data from departmental information centers and reports on accomplishments in information dissemination and effectiveness of personnel use and government expenditures.

Responds to inquiries from Congress and other arms of the government that involve the collection of data about HHS public affairs activities.

Responds to requests for speakers and coordinates the scheduling of speaking engagements of various policy-level officials on the Department.

Manages the Hispanic Communications function which provides Spanish language news services and Hispanic media liaison, Spanish language print and audiovisual clearances, advises HHS components on Hispanic communications strategies and serves as a contact for public liaison with Hispanic groups and individuals.

Coordinates all activities of private sector initiatives of the White House.

B.2 Special Outreach Division – The Special Outreach Division, in concert with the Special Coordinator and the Communications Services Division establishes liaison with the public information officers in the Operating Divisions (OPDIVs). Through information sharing and collaborative efforts with the OPDIVs, advances the objectives of the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs to highlight the programs and initiatives of the OPDIVs and obtain coverage of the activities of the Secretary and other senior Administration officials.

B.3 Web Communications Division (APB4): Leads the review of HHS Web information content, presentation, uses and technologies, and recommends and/or implements web-based information policy, guidance and tools for the Department, as appropriate.

Leads the review of the content of all proposed Department-wide and OS-level sites to ensure they are consistent with Departmental policies and goals.

Leads the development of Department Internet policy and public affairs issues as well as a development of a Department-wide policy on the creation and clearance of Web sites.

Manages daily operations of the main HHS public Web site. Manages additional Office of the Secretary-level Web sites, as appropriate.

Manages daily operations of the HHS intranet, and tools in support of HHS Web and intranet sites.

C. The Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs (Media) – Is responsible for policies and activities related to the Department’s speech and editorial services and for providing the public with information about the Department’s policies and programs through the news media.

Provides advice and assistance on all public affairs matters, in consultation with the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs and in coordination with the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs (Policy and Strategy), provides prompt responses to media and public inquiries; and generates a strategic focus for stories and other information products or outputs that the Department develops and wishes to highlight.

Is responsible for management oversight of the Speech and Editorial Division, the News Division and the FOIA/Privacy Act Division.

Conducts an active communication program with the public on behalf of the Department through the media and other avenues of communication in order to further public understanding of its policies, programs and issues.

Coordinates press activities with the White House Press Office and other government departmental press operations.

Oversees the departmental message center, preparing Presidential and secretarial messages for deserving individuals and organizations.

Serves as a writing resource for the Secretary, a source of news clippings from major newspapers, a filing source for Secretarial materials and a resource for public affairs preparation and planning.

Responds to inquiries from Congress, other arms of the government, media and the public that involves the collection of data.

C.1 News Division (APB1) – Plans, directs and coordinates the issuance of public information from HHS to the press and broadcast media.

Prepares news releases and other news material for the Secretary and other top Department officials. Reviews and clears all news releases and other news materials prepared by HHS components.

Identifies news opportunities for the Secretary.

Makes recommendations concerning press releases on upcoming publication of regulations or other actions.

Identifies likely media questions for news conferences and interviews, assists in preparing background briefings for encounters with the press.

Briefs the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and Chief of Staff, in conjunction with other departmental experts for all media events.

Responds to press queries, either directly or by steering reporters to appropriate public affairs personnel in Operating Division press offices. Reviews for approval all media interview requests received by HHS components.

Coordinates press conferences for the Secretary. Acts as a liaison for reporters requesting interviews and for newspaper editorial boards wishing to meet with the Secretary. Monitors major national media, and selected local media when appropriate, and distributes articles of interest throughout the day to key staff.

Leads the planning, development and implementation of emergency incident communications strategies and activities for the Department.

C.2 Speech and Editorial Division (APB3)– Serves as the principal resource with the Department for reviewing and editing written materials reflecting the views of the Secretary, Deputy Secretary and Chief of Staff.

Prepares speeches, statements, articles, and related material for the Secretary, Deputy Secretary and Chief of Staff and other top Departmental officials.

Researches and prepares OP Ed pieces, features, articles, and stories for the media.

Reviews all regulations and other policy memoranda, and advises the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs (Media) of appropriate response.

C.3 FOIA/Privacy Act Division (APB4) – Administers information access and privacy protection laws and HHS regulations implementing these laws to ensure Department wide consistency in information disclosure, confidentiality policies, practices and procedures. Such laws include the Freedom of Information Act and the Privacy Act, as well as the open meetings provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, the Government in the Sunshine Act and the disclosure provisions of the Ethics in Government Act.

In concert with Office of General Counsel staff, assists in development of regulations implementing these statutes and develops policy interpretations and guidelines as well as procedural materials and training programs for all Department components.

Develops policy guidelines and training programs for all HHS components regarding FOIA and related legislation , i.e., the Privacy Act, Federal Advisory Committee Act and the Government in the Sunshine Act.

Provides responses to requests made under the Freedom of Information Act and determines the availability of records and information under the law and HHS Regulations.

Resolves questions which overlap the FOIA and the Privacy Act regarding release of records.

Provides policy guidance on and maintains the index of materials required by FOIA.

Analyzes and recommends action on FOIA and Privacy Act appeals for documents denied by officials in the Office of the Secretary.