



**BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE
NEW MEXICO HEALTH INSURANCE EXCHANGE**

Policy Title: Communications Policy

Issue Date: December 18, 2013

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I. Purpose

The New Mexico Health Insurance Exchange (NMHIX) strives to provide the public with accurate and timely information regarding its implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and the New Mexico Health Insurance Exchange Act, and its efforts to improve access of New Mexicans to affordable health care insurance. The NMHIX shall communicate about its activities in a professional manner and in accordance with applicable laws regarding public information, including the Inspection of Public Records Act (IPRA).

This policy provides external communications guidelines for all NMHIX employees, members of the Board of Directors, and NMHIX Contracting Partners.¹

This policy addresses communications through various media, including, but not limited to:

- Media relations such as requests for interviews, news releases, and media inquiries;

¹ The term Contracting Partners includes those vendors and entities with which the NMHIX contracts to provide services to the NMHIX. Contracting Partners does not include entities, such as the Office of the Superintendent of Insurance, the Human Services Department, or health insurance issuers with which the NMHIX may cooperate with through memoranda of understanding or other necessary agreements.

- Printed materials such as newsletters, articles, brochures and rack cards; and
- Electronic materials such as email, postings to web sites or social media sites.

The NMHIX recognizes that persons associated with the NMHIX may be asked to comment on NMHIX matters outside of their official role with NMHIX. Therefore, this policy also provides guidelines to be followed when communicating as a private citizen on matters pertaining to NMHIX business.

II. Goals of NMHIX Communications

As an organization, NMHIX seeks to:

- Clearly and concisely communicate the mission of the NMHIX as well as its services, activities, goals, partnerships and accomplishments;
- Be transparent in addressing any issues, concerns or complaints regarding communications and activities of NMHIX;
- Update the media and external parties on progress toward measurable milestones such as enrollments, outreach activities, procurements and vendor selections and other business of NMHIX;
- Be fair, professional, timely and consistent in responding to media requests, IPRA requests and other requests for information;
- Be timely and accurate in posting news to the NMHIX website;
- Keep NMHIX board and staff members informed of media coverage of NMHIX;
- Develop and maintain key stakeholder relationships and lists to assist in reaching out to the community beyond the media; and
- Consistently work to improve and refine all NMHIX communications activities

III. NMHIX Affiliate Specific Provisions

The following provides guidelines for communications for:

- NMHIX Employees
- NMHIX Board of Directors

- NMHIX Contracting Partners

A. General guidelines for Employees

All NMHIX employees have a responsibility to help communicate accurate and timely information to the public in a professional manner.

Handling General Requests:

All staff is responsible for communicating basic and routine information to the public in relation to their specific job duties. Requests for private data or information outside of the scope of an individual's job duties should be routed to the Director of Communications and Outreach, or in their absence, the Chief Executive Officer or other designated staff member or consultant. Requests for public records pursuant to the Inspection of Public Records Act shall be directed to the Records Custodian immediately.

Communicating on behalf of the NMHIX

The NMHIX Director of Communications, Chief Executive Officer, and/or designated consultants are authorized to communicate on behalf of the NMHIX in interviews, publications, news releases, on social media sites, and related communications. Other employees may represent the NMHIX if approved by one of the individuals above to communicate on a specific topic. When acting on behalf of the NMHIX:

- Employees must identify themselves as representing the NMHIX. Account names on social media sites must clearly be connected to the NMHIX and approved by the Chief Executive Officer or Director of Communications and Outreach.
- All information must be respectful, professional, and accurate. Corrections must be issued when needed.
- Employees shall refrain from expressing personal opinions related to NMHIX activities.
- Employees who have been approved to use social media sites on behalf of the NMHIX should seek assistance from the Chief Executive Officer, Director of Communications and Outreach, or designated consultant if they have questions about what is to be included in a post or statement.
- Employees shall limit the use of personal technology (including cell phones, home computers, cameras, etc.) when conducting NMHIX activities. If an

employee needs to use personal technology, the employee shall first notify the Chief Executive Officer or Director of Communications and Outreach. NMHIX activities conducted using personal technology, including the data transmitted or stored on personal technology, shall remain subject to applicable NMHIX policies, including this communication policy, and may be considered a public record under IPRA.

Handling Media Requests:

All requests for interviews or information from the media are to be routed to the Director of Communications and Outreach, or in their absence, the Chief Executive Officer or other designated staff member or consultant. Media requests include anything intended to be published or viewable to others in some form such as television, radio, newspapers, newsletters, web sites, or social media. When responding to media requests, employees should follow these steps:

1. An employee who is not authorized to respond to a particular media request should decline to respond. The employee should inform the requester of the appropriate contact for the request, and should offer to collect the necessary information to allow the NMHIX to respond promptly and appropriately.
2. Collect the following information:
 - Reporter name
 - Media outlet
 - Phone number
 - Email address
 - Question/topic they are inquiring about
 - Deadline
3. Send the above information to media@NMHIX.com for follow-up by the Director of Communications and Outreach, the Chief Executive Officer, or other designated staff member or consultant.

Reporting Errors:

Any employee who identifies a mistake or inaccuracy in the presentation of information about NMHIX should immediately bring the error to the attention of the Director of Communications and Outreach, or in their absence, the Chief Executive Officer

Personal Communications and use of social media

It is important for employees to remember that personal communications may reflect on the NMHIX. The following guidelines apply to personal communications including, but not limited to, various forms of social media (Facebook, Twitter, blogs, YouTube, etc.), letters to the editor of newspapers, and personal endorsements.

- Remember that what you write is public, and will be so for a long time. It may also be spread to large audiences. Use common sense when using email or social media sites. It is a good idea to refrain from sending or posting information that you would not want your boss or other employees to read, or that you would be embarrassed to see in the newspaper;
- If you come across conversations online that would benefit from a response from NMHIX, please bring them to the attention of the Director of Communications and Outreach or Chief Marketing Officer;
- If you are not authorized to speak on behalf of NMHIX and you publish something that is related to NMHIX business, identify yourself and include a clear and concise statement that you are an employee of the New Mexico Health Insurance Exchange but you are expressing your own opinions and your opinions do not represent those of the New Mexico health Insurance Exchange; and
- Personal social media account names or email names should not be tied to the New Mexico Health Insurance Exchange (e.g., Patricianmhix).

Trademark:

Regardless of whether the communication is in the employee's official NMHIX role or in a personal capacity, employees must comply with all laws related to trademark, copyright, software use etc. Employees must also follow all applicable NMHIX policies.

B. General guidelines for members of NMHIX Board of Directors

As public officials, Directors may be asked to comment in public or to media on NMHIX activities, the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in New Mexico, or the ACA in general. Directors are expected to adhere to the following provisions when making official communications regarding the NMHIX:

- The Chair of the Board of Directors shall be the primary spokesperson for the Board of Directors regarding NMHIX activities.
- Directors are not authorized to speak on behalf of NMHIX unless given permission by the Director of Communications and Outreach or the Chief Executive Officer. Directors that communicate to media on NMHIX activities should include a clear and concise statement that the Director expresses a personal opinion and the opinion does not represent the opinion of the New Mexico health Insurance Exchange.

- Directors should notify the Director of Communications and Outreach if they have been asked to give an interview and/or provide comment on NMHIX activities. Directors should let the Director of Communications and Outreach know if they need any information or background for the interview and/or if they want someone to accompany them to the interview.
- Directors should take down the name of the reporter, their media outlet, their contact info (if available) and when the story is expected to run and send this information to the Director of Communications and Outreach to ensure the story is tracked and fact-checked following publishing.
- If a Director does not have adequate information or feels uncomfortable about answering a question, the Director should feel free to decline comment and direct the question to the Director of Communications and Outreach.

C. General guidelines for Contracting Partners

It is anticipated that partner organizations to the NMHIX will be asked to comment publicly about their role with NMHIX. Contracting Partners are expected to follow the policy below in communicating about NMHIX:

- Contracting Partners shall not speak on behalf of NMHIX to media. All media requests related to their role as an NMHIX organization should be directed to the NMHIX Director of Communications and Outreach;
- Contracting Partners that speak to the media without authorization should be clear to media that their opinions and comments are their own as a private organization and do not represent those of the New Mexico Health Insurance Exchange.
- Contracting Partners shall consult with the Director of Outreach and Communications regarding NMHIX approval for communicating publicly about their activities relating to the NMHIX. For example, Contracting Partners involved in enrollment events or promotion of activities in the community may be expected to communicate publicly regarding the events..
- Contracting Partners should send copies of any coverage their organization receives related to the NMHIX or to their role in implementing the Affordable Care Act to the Chief Executive Officer and the Director of Communications and Outreach so that the NMHIX can keep the information on file.

IV. Rapid Response Policy

It is anticipated that situations may arise that require the NMHIX to respond quickly, effectively and with a single, unified voice. In such situations, Board members and staff shall adhere to the following organized framework for assessing and responding to issues in order to ensure a strategic and streamlined process.

The New Mexico Health Insurance Exchange has a Rapid Response team that consists of:

- NMHIX Chief Executive Officer
- NMHIX Director of Communications and Outreach
- NMHIX Legal Counsel
- Contracted Media consultants
- Other individuals designated by the NMHIX Chief Executive Officer

If an issue arises that needs the attention of the Rapid Response team, please contact the Director of Communications and Outreach, or in their absence the Chief Executive Officer, immediately.

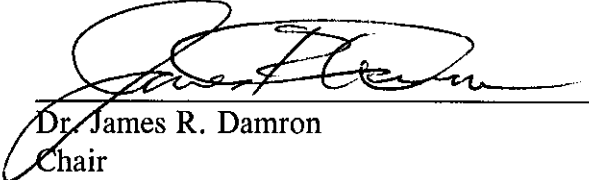
V. Questions

Questions related to this policy or to communications issues in general should be directed to the Director of Communications and Outreach or to the Chief Executive Officer.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED this 17th day of October, 2014.

NEW MEXICO HEALTH INSURANCE EXCHANGE BOARD

Approved by:



Dr. James R. Damron
Chair