

**Department of  
Veterans Affairs**

# Memorandum

Date: **JUN 13 2019**

From: Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management (10N)

Subj: Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Media Interview and Query Policy

To: Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) Directors (10N1-23)

1. The purpose of this memorandum is to reiterate VA's policy for responding to media queries and interview requests for public affairs specialists and all other staff.
2. Queries that may yield negative coverage or are controversial in nature must immediately be forwarded for review to the appropriate regional Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs (OPIA) staff and VISN public affairs contacts, who will work with local officials, OPIA leadership and VHA's media relations team to generate an approved response.
3. Regardless of subject, any query from national outlets also requires the same review. This includes outlets such as the Associated Press, Reuters, New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, Newsweek, USA Today, Huffington Post, National Public Radio, TIME magazine, CNN, and the network news and magazine programs of ABC, CBS, Fox, NBC and PBS.
4. Generally, facility-level public affairs specialists may respond directly to local media queries that are not negative in nature and involve local programs and issues.
5. VISN and Medical Center Directors are encouraged to work on, pitch and promote positive news stories. Employees who are not authorized to speak on behalf of VA should refer the media request to their facility or VISN public affairs office.
6. VA employees are responsible for obtaining appropriate authority before speaking in an official capacity for the agency or for the organizational activity in which they participate. VA employees may not accept or seek opportunities to appear on radio, or television programs for or on behalf of VA without authority to act in such capacity.
7. Employees may not use their official titles, VA stationery, or duty time to engage in activities involving the communication of comment or opinions directed to media without the expressed consent of the highest official, or designee, of the facility to which assigned.

Page 2

Veterans Health Administration Media Interview and Query Policy

8. Whether interviews are done in a personal or official capacity, employees should conduct themselves in a professional manner.
9. Please contact Mr. Alan Greilsamer, Director of Media Relations, VHA Office of Communications, at [Alan.Greilsamer@va.gov](mailto:Alan.Greilsamer@va.gov) for any questions regarding this memo.

  
Renee Oshinski