

# KOOTENAY BOUNDARY DIVISION OF FAMILY PRACTICE POLICY

**Section:** 4. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

**Subheading:** 1. Communications

**Policy Number:** 4.1.2

**Policy Title:** External Communications Guidelines

## **Policy Statement:**

Directors, staff, and contractors, when conducting KBDFP business, will adhere to the following standards of communication:

1. Respect the audience, whether it be colleagues or members of the public
2. Use clear vocabulary, avoiding acronyms and jargon
3. Express one's own point of view and encourage and make it comfortable for others to do so;
4. Use language that is not disparaging of others;
5. Support the decisions made by teams (e.g. Board, Committee) even if they do not fully reflect one's personal position or opinion;
6. Do not discuss the confidential proceedings of meetings outside the meeting room (Confidential matters include differences of opinion, personnel matters, or any item which has been requested to be held in confidence.)
7. Act as spokesperson for the organization only when authorized to do so;

## **Application Guidelines:**

- a) The default spokespersons are the Executive Director and Board Chair, and they speak for the organization under the guidance of the Board of Directors
- b) Messages will be based on approved organization documents, including communications briefs, mission statement, strategic plan, board approved actions and positions.
- c) If a representative of the media contacts a Director, the Director should:
  - i. Never respond immediately, even if you are the designated spokesperson.
  - ii. Verify the credentials and affiliation of the person
  - iii. Commit to getting back to the person in a reasonable amount of time
  - iv. Determine who is the designated spokesperson for the topic. If in doubt, connect with the Executive Director or Board Chair and pass on the relevant information.
- d) If you are the designated spokesperson,
  - i. Ask if you can get the questions in advance or at least the topic of discussion, so you can prepare your response; **do not agree to begin immediately.**
  - ii. Ask how long the interview will be and how much of your response will be used.
  - iii. Ask if they will be talking to anyone else about the topic.

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- iv. Request to hear the final edit before your response goes to press or on air.
  - v. Prepare your response. Write down main points and practice saying them simply and positively. Include examples if possible.
  - vi. Avoid jargon and acronyms.
  - vii. Feel free to repeat key points.
  - viii. Avoid “no comment” as a response.
  - ix. Never comment “off the record”.
  - x. Feel free to end the interview if you are not happy with the direction it is taking.
  - xi. Thank the reporter for her/his time and interest in your story and the organization.
- e) When in doubt about the message or your role in communication, consult with the Executive Director or Board Chair.

**Responsibility:** Board of Directors

**Approved by:** Board of Directors

**Reviewed/Revised by:**

**Reference:**

**Date:** March 22, 2017

**Date:**