

2013-2015 Business Plan

Public Affairs

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Washington State
Department of Social
& Health Services

Vision

Safe, healthy individuals, families,
and communities

Mission

The Department of Social & Health
Services will improve the safety and
health of individuals, families, and
communities by providing
leadership and establishing and
participating in partnerships.

Values

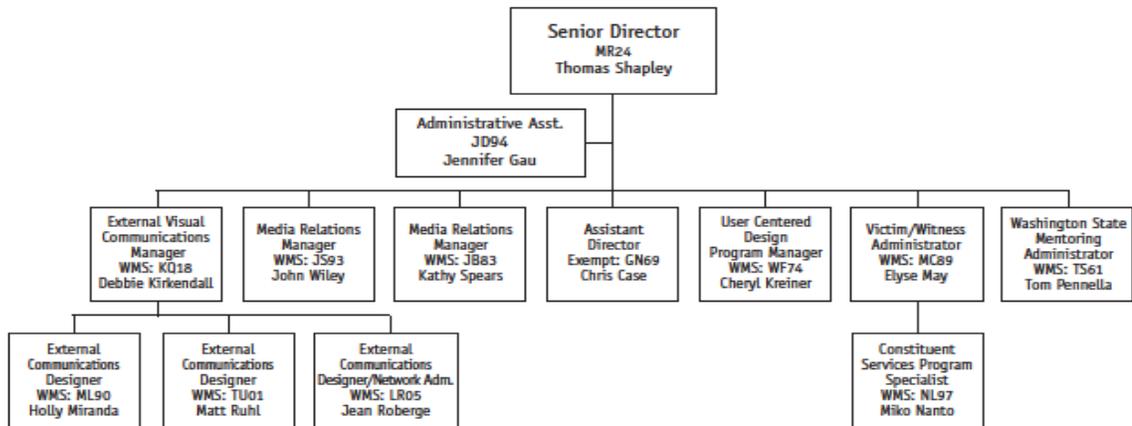
Excellence in Service
Respect
Collaboration and Partnership
Diversity
Accountability

Organizational Chart



Public Affairs Division

6/2012



Introduction

The DSHS Public Affairs Division supports the mission by telling the DSHS story. This begins with the guidance role of offering DSHS leadership and staff with professional communication advice, ideas and products on specific issues. Public Affairs provides strategic and crisis communications direction, action and follow-through.

Public Affairs provides senior-level to the Secretary, Assistant Secretary for Administration and External Relations, other Assistant Secretaries and program managers in making key decisions related to disseminating information and news to the electronic and print media, the public, legislators, stakeholders, tribes and employees about the Department.

Public Affairs leadership and staff anticipate public and media reactions to incidents and issues involving Department policies and practice. The Division works to prevent or mitigate impacts on the Department's institutional reputation through strategic, accurate and timely communication to various audiences.

Public Affairs Division includes several areas of responsibility:

- Media Relations (news media response, news releases and media alerts, promotion of progress and performance story ideas, strategic and crisis media communications)
- Visual Communications (developing and disseminating printed, Web and electronic public information and material for diverse external and internal audiences)
- Constituent Services (Department response to inquiries and complaints statewide to ensure efficient and effective resolution of client casework to serve government and citizens and promote positive legislative and public relations)
- Victim/Witness Notification Program (notification of enrolled crime victims and witnesses on the release, transfer or escape of offenders under our authority – Special Commitment Center, state psychiatric hospitals and Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration)
- Mentoring (public-private partnership to match young people with suitable adult mentors)

DSHS Goal 1

Improve the health status of vulnerable populations.

DSHS Goal 2

Improve economic stability, employment and self-sufficiency.

DSHS Goal 3

Improve individual and public safety.

DSHS Goal 4

Improve individuals' readiness and ability to succeed in school.

DSHS Goal 5

Increase public trust through strong management practices that ensure quality and leverage all resources.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies, Performance Measures

DSHS Goal 5: Increase public trust through strong management practices that ensure quality and leverage all resources.

Strategic Objectives

- *Build and sustain public trust and credibility in the Department of Social and Health Services, its priorities, its programs, its leadership and its employees*
- *Create consistent look, feel and experience for clients, employees, tribes, partners and stakeholders across all Department communication media (phone, e-mail, publications, posters, brochures, videos, Web)*
- *Identify and manage brand image*
- *Create an informed, inspired and engaged workforce*
- *Create an informed and engaged public*

Strategies/Actions

- *Be the first and best source of information about what we do and the people we serve*
- *Identify and explain issues, innovations and information involving our work, our employees and our clients*
- *“No surprises” policy and practice ensuring that the following are well-informed:*
 - *The Secretary*
 - *The Executive Leadership Team*
 - *Employees*
 - *Tribes*
 - *Stakeholders*
 - *Partners, including labor*
 - *Legislators*
- *Frame the Department as:*
 - *One Department with one vision, one mission and one core set of values*
 - *A valued partner and leader in serving and protecting vulnerable adults and children and other people in need*
 - *Committed to having impact in the lives of people in Washington state*
 - *Invested in leveraging and aligning resources across government and the community*
- *Develop and maintain a communications and issues-management architecture:*
 - *Direct, collegial, confidential, open-door relationship with the Secretary, as well as clear, unfiltered direction and accountability.*
 - *Predetermined risk assessment framework to evaluate potential risks and opportunities and systemic distribution of the assessment*

- *Communicator assignments across the Department, including all ELT areas; infrastructure, finance, risk management*
- *Public Affairs staff need to have access to program executives and Assistant Secretaries*
- *Strong, collegial relationships with all members of the Executive Leadership Team*
- *Agency-wide Communications Team, which includes a communications lead from each major program, who reports to the program executive and the Assistant Secretary and attends program leadership meetings. Each Agency-wide Communications Team member is in turn linked to a go-to person in the program or administration who has approval authority for statements, etc.*
- *Administrative assistant who serves as “air traffic controller” for Public Affairs Team and reports to the Public Affairs Senior Director and Assistant Director*
- *Strategic use of and control over management of the Department Web content assets of Internet, Intranet and social media such as FaceBook, Twitter, internal blog, including tracking online news media and blogs to update and correct information published there*
- *Venues for regular communications with Department rank and file*
- *Public Affairs Team member on Department’s Public Disclosure Committee*

Interdependencies: Who are our key business partners?

Public Affairs’ key business partners include: all members of the Executive Leadership Team, Governor’s Communications Office leadership and staff, other executive agency communications directors and staff, Attorney General’s Office (communications staff and legal staff), legislative staff (communications and policy) print and broadcast media, private and non-profit organizations engaged with the Department, communications and administrative support staff in Administrations, Divisions, institutions and Offices across the Department, regional administrators, key program staff, labor union communications staff, law enforcement communications staff.

Key Performance Indicators

Public Affairs objective performance indicators are difficult to identify, absent the use of public opinion survey tools. Although we would be delighted to engage in longitudinal measurements of the general public’s perceptions of the Department.

Other objective measurements such a number of news releases produced, number of stories published or broadcast or counting “positive” vs. “negative” stories about the Department are too arbitrary, subject to error and difficult to appropriately gauge (How does one assess 12 stories in Real Change vs. three stories in The Seattle Times?)

We are left with subjective assessments, such as evaluation by the Governor’s Communications Office, other agency communications teams and feedback from stakeholders, partners and employees.

Another subjective measurement is how well we are able to adapt and improvise in emergent situations and how successful we are and applying lessons learned to inform and improve our preparation and response going forward in both strategic and crisis situations.

Additional Goal: Enhance and expand Department's social media knowledge, skills, abilities and effectiveness.

Strategic Objectives

- *Use web-based communications systems to reach as many people as possible across as many platforms as possible*
- *Enable interactive communication so say we are able to not simply inform but to be informed as well*
- *Ensure that information and messaging is accurate and consistent across all Department communications platforms*

Strategies/Actions

- *Use various program pilots to determine best practices in use of Intranet, FaceBook and Twitter accounts for disseminating information briefly and quickly to staff, media, partners, stakeholders, tribes, clients and the general public*
- *Expand abilities to create brief, engaging and effective video presentations for posting on YouTube and other social media*
- *Formalize authority and accountability for Web content review and approval*
- *Utilize Visual Communications' recently acquired computers and software, in concert with additional training as available to build a reputation of being as adept at Web communications as we are at print communication*
- *Work with ISSD leadership and staff to assess and best utilize abilities to disseminate content to staff via Internet and Intranet*

Interdependencies: Who are our key business partners?

Secretary, Executive Leadership Team, ISSD, program Web masters, Governor's New Media Team, colleagues in other executive departments who have solid track records in using Web-based communications

Key Performance Indicators

- *Response to news media inquiries: Same day, even at night and on weekends.*
- *Response to programs reporting contact from media and requesting assistance: Same day, even at night or on weekends.*
- *Response to requests for drafting, designing and editing materials for programs, administrations and ELT members: Initial response within one business day, timeline for estimated work completion within five business days.*

- *Response to constituent, legislative and gubernatorial inquiries: Refer all legitimate requests to the programs within 48 hours when received during business hours. Reply back to all legislative and gubernatorial inquiries that come directly to DSHS Constituent Services.*