

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES



SUBJECT: RESPONSES TO INQUIRIES FROM THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

POLICY NO. 745.1

PURPOSE:: To establish uniform guidelines for handling requests for information from Board offices.

POLICY:: Inquiries from members of the Board of Supervisors or their staffs shall be handled through the appropriate Deputy Director whenever possible. Issues which are of Department- wide importance or of particularly sensitive content shall be responded to by either the Director or the Chief Deputy Director.

GUIDE:: **Written Communications:** Authority to respond in writing to Board members shall be limited to the Director, the Chief Deputy, the Deputy Directors and the Medical Director.

All written communications received from Board members shall be immediately forwarded to the office of the appropriate Deputy Director, or in the case of sensitive situations described above, to the Director or the Chief Deputy Director.

Written communications from Board offices shall be responded to within five working days from the date received by the Department. If the requested information cannot be provided within this time, the requesting Board office shall be contacted to establish a mutually agreeable response date.

Verbal Communications: Any employee who receives a direct verbal communication from Board members or their staffs shall respond directly to the inquiry in a prompt, courteous and forthright manner. At no time shall an employee intentionally mislead or misinform any Board member or their staff.

Employees shall immediately inform their supervisors of the contact for channeling to the appropriate Deputy Director. Verbal communications from Board offices shall be acknowledged within two hours and the requested information provided within twenty-four hours. If the response cannot be provided within twenty-four hours, the requesting Board office shall be contacted to establish a mutually agreeable response time.

Release of Information: If the information requested cannot be provided due to legal constraints (such as maintaining confidentiality of a patient's medical record), the reasons for withholding such information shall be clearly stated and explained by the appropriate Deputy Director.

If the information released must be held in strict confidence (such as cases involving pending litigation), this shall also be clearly stated and explained by the appropriate Deputy Director.

Follow-Up: A copy of all correspondence sent in response to an inquiry from a Board office shall be forwarded to the Director. A brief description of any verbal

contact should be forwarded to the appropriate Deputy Director within one working day of the contact. A description of the outcome of any significant verbal contact should also be forwarded to the Director.

Examples of verbal contact not considered significant are: information calls regarding addresses and phone numbers of DHS facilities, hours of services; or individual billing complaints, individual admission problems and individual payroll problems.

CROSS REFERENCE:: Public Information, Policy No. 150
Relations with the Public, Policy No. 151
Handling of Complaints, Policy No. 440
Contact with Members of the Board, Policy No. 745

EFFECTIVE DATE: May 05, 1980

SUPERCEDES: March 15, 1976

APPROVED: Signature on File
