

## NOHT-ESON Policy Template

Policy Name: <b>News Media Policy</b>	
Issued by: <b>Communications and Engagement Working Group (CEWG)</b>	
Approval Date: January 2022	Review Date: January 2022
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### Acronyms:

**NOHT-ESON:** Niagara Ontario Health Team - Équipe Santé Ontario Niagara

**CEWG:** Communications and Engagement Working Group

**MEDIA:** This term includes print, radio, television and digital outlets.

**Purpose:** The News Media Policy outlines the responsibilities of NOHT-ESON to facilitate responsive and balanced coverage of NOHT-ESON issues, events and interests by fostering positive relationships with journalists and media organizations.

**Scope:** This policy applies to all partners and collaborators of the NOHT-ESON.

### Policy:

NOHT-ESON recognizes the importance of fair, balanced and consistent media coverage of its messaging as a contributing factor in building the public reputation of the partnership and is committed to building and fostering positive relationships with journalists and media organizations.

NOHT-ESON places the highest priority on the protection of patients'/clients' privacy rights and expectations of confidentiality regarding the public release of personal information, in accordance with the Personal Health Information Protection Act (2004).

NOHT-ESON is committed to establishing processes and procedures designed to foster and promote fair and balanced representation of its members and partners.

Designated by the Planning Table, the Communications and Engagement Co-ordinator is responsible for co-ordinating media relations activities for NOHT-ESON and to act as the official news source and principal contact for all communication between the media and NOHT-ESON designated media representatives.

CEWG is responsible for ensuring that media inquiries are managed effectively and with accuracy and may designate one of its members as a spokesperson for NOHT-ESON.

## **Spokespersons**

Only individuals approved through the Planning Table and the CEWG are permitted to speak publicly to the media on behalf of NOHT-ESON and its working groups in an official capacity.

The Co-Leads of the Planning Table and co-leads of each working group will be designated spokespeople.

Other partners or collaborators may be selected as spokespeople as deemed appropriate.

The NOHT-ESON Communications and Engagement Co-ordinator will communicate with the media under two circumstances.

1. When background or already publicly communicated information is required.
2. As a liaison between the media and the appropriate spokesperson.

## **Guidelines:**

The designated Communications and Engagement Co-ordinator is the principal point of contact between NOHT-ESON and news media representatives.

Requests from the media for information and/or interviews, photography or video about NOHT-ESON must be submitted via text, email, phone call etc. to the Communications and Engagement Coordinator.

The designated media contact in consultation with the CEWG will direct news media requests to the most appropriate spokesperson. Spokespeople will be comprised of the co-leads of each working group and other appropriate partners deemed relevant to the media request.

Media representatives are required to clearly identify themselves to NOHT-ESON representatives when they are serving in an official, professional media-related capacity, in person or otherwise.

NOHT-ESON partners and collaborators who are not official NOHT-ESON media spokespeople, and are requested by CEWG to speak with the media about a particular issue, may decline the request.

CEWG is committed to providing open access to NOHT-ESON for all media representatives, within the limits of this policy. NOHT-ESON cannot guarantee exclusivity for any story to a media representative.

## **Directing Media Inquiries**

The Communications and Engagement Co-ordinator will receive and process media inquiries on behalf of the NOHT-ESON.

Media requests made during evenings, weekends and holidays involving matters deemed to be of an administrative or routine operational nature will be deferred until regular weekday hours when appropriate resources are available.

## **Guidelines for NOHT-ESON Partners/Collaborators Contacted Directly by the Media**

NOHT-ESON partners/collaborators contacted directly should promptly refer all NOHT-ESON related media requests, without responding, to the CEWG. The CEWG will clarify the request, identify appropriate spokespersons and generally provide assistance in accordance with NOHT-ESON media procedure, ensuring compliance with this policy.

No NOHT-ESON partner/collaborator who is not a designated spokesperson shall represent him/herself as a designated spokesperson for NOHT-ESON.

Each NOHT-ESON partner/collaborator, when addressing media regarding any public issue or participating in interviews on topics relating to the organization they represent, is required to inform members of the media that his or her comments are on behalf of the organization they represent and do not reflect official positions held by NOHT-ESON.

All news items/releases are approved and released through the CEWG.

## **Definitions:**

**Reference to Related Documents:** Social Media Policy, Code of Conduct.