

AGENCY FOR MENTAL HEALTH POLICY MEMORANDUM PUBLIC SPEAKING OPPORTUNITIES

I. Purpose

This Directive establishes the Agency for Mental Health (AMH) policy with respect to the acceptance of public speaking invitations by AMH employees and formally implements the AMH Speakers Bureau. It is designed to ensure all employees are aware of, and comply with, current policies, legal statutes, and ethical standards that currently apply to federal government employees.

II. Scope

This Directive applies to all employees throughout AMH invited to participate in their official capacity at any and all events sponsored by a non-federal entity or forums attended by the public of any type.

III. Policy and Requirements

It is the policy of AMH to encourage qualified personnel at all levels to engage in public speaking opportunities in an official capacity at events of common public interest and benefit as a means of keeping the public informed of AMH programs, policies, and missions.

A. Requests for AMH personnel to speak, in their official capacity, before non-federal entities or at forums attended by the public are directed to the AMH Office of Public Affairs and Office of Ethics for coordination. AMH personnel are to comply with all laws and policies safeguarding from the unauthorized disclosure of official information or misuse of appropriated funds.

B. AMH employees complete a Speakers Bureau Request Form and send to SpeakersBureau@amh.gov for review.

C. AMH speakers do not officially endorse, or appear to endorse, any non-federal entity event, product, service, or enterprise, including membership drives or fund-raising activities. AMH speakers ensure that neither their participation in an event nor the content of their remarks, in any way, may be interpreted as endorsing or appearing to endorse a non-federal entity, its programs, or fund-raising activities. Official titles, positions, or organizational affiliations of AMH personnel are not to be used to suggest official endorsements or preferential

treatment of non-federal entities.

D. AMH will not approve personnel speaking before organizations that restrict membership based on race, creed, color, nationality, sexual orientation or gender and whose constitution, bylaws, membership qualifications, or ritual are withheld from the general public.

E. AMH personnel acknowledge the presence of media while presenting official speeches. However, any media interviews are to be coordinated with the AMH Office of Public Affairs.

IV. Procedure

AMH employees are encouraged to contact the Speakers Bureau at SpeakersBureau@amh.gov with any questions or concerns regarding a speaking engagement at anytime. Below are the procedures AMH employees must follow to participate in a speaking engagement.

A. The approval process starts at least 2 weeks prior to the event, barring extenuating circumstances.

B. AMH employees must first seek permission from their supervisor for approval, pending clearance from the Speakers Bureau, to accept a public speaking invitation.

C. **At least 2 weeks prior to the event** and once supervisor permission is obtained, complete and review the AMH Ethics Review of Speaking Engagements: *Checklist*. This checklist is intended to help employees self-identify common ethical concerns with public speaking appearances. The checklist is not a substitution for approval from the Speakers Bureau whether or not ethical concerns are self-identified.

D. Complete AMH Speaker Approval Form in its entirety and submit it to the Speakers Bureau at speakersbureau@amh.gov. It is important to provide as much detailed information as possible in order for AMH to promptly review each request. The Speakers Bureau will review this form and inform the employee whether their request is granted and notify the employee of any ethical concerns.

E. Before the event, review AMH's Engaging with the Public and Non-Federal Entities handout. This handout is intended to provide AMH employees with dos and don'ts about public speaking.

F. Following approval, coordinate with AMH travel as necessary before attending the event.

V. Questions

Address any questions or concerns regarding this Directive to the Office of Public Affairs Speakers Bureau at SpeakersBureau@amh.gov.