

## Louisiana State Board of Examiners of Psychologists (LSBEP)

### Media/Public Information Policy

#### Scope

This policy pertains to requests from the public and the professional media to the Louisiana State Board of Examiners of Psychologists (herein after referred to as LSBEP or Board), its members, and its staff.

#### Intent

This policy is not intended to curtail, circumvent, or in any other manner prohibit the public and media from making legitimate requests for defined public information from the Board. Nor does this policy exempt the Board from compliance with state laws/regulations governing public access to documents and proceedings under the public records law as cited in R.S. 44:1 et seq; or the open meetings law cited in R.S. 42:11 et seq.

The intent of this policy is to preserve legitimate public access to information while at the same time insuring that such information is as accurate as possible. It is also intended to insure that the Board provides the public and media consistency in its release of information to avoid the potential for misinformation, contradictory statements, or other avenues for misinterpretation.

It should also be recognized that no one member or staff of the Board can represent or speak for the Board unless authorized to do so by the Board. In addition, the Board is a regulatory body empowered by the state to grant a license to practice psychology; regulate the practice of psychology; and to take defined actions against anyone who violates the law governing the practice of psychology. Based on these statutory responsibilities and the need to remain impartial when making decisions, it is critical that the Board not engage in unauthorized communications with the public or media that could in the future, compromise the Board's ability to make decisions regarding granting a license to practice, renewing a license to practice, or taking action against a licensee or non-licensee who violates the scope of psychology practice law.

#### Policy

In order to preserve the status of the Board as an unbiased regulatory body; to avoid any potential or unforeseen compromise to the integrity of the Board; and to prevent or minimize risks to any possible future actions taken by the Board as a regulatory authority under the law, the following positions are hereby adopted:

- Information that is publicly available is accessible through the Board's website.

- Public information about Board meetings is posted on the Louisiana State Boards and Commissions website. This includes agendas of upcoming and past meetings as well as minutes of past meetings. In addition, the Board holds a public hour at each of its announced meetings inviting the public to attend and observe the open section of the meeting as well as provide comments when invited to do so by the Chair. When attending Board meetings, the public / media are expected to adhere to the restrictions on public / media participation defined in R.S. 42:17(C).
- Other publicly available information can be accessed through appropriate filing of freedom of information (FOI) requests. Such requests must comply with FOI rules and the Board reserves the right to seek legal counsel when responding to such requests.
- No member of the Board is authorized to speak for the Board. Therefore, members of the Board should not be contacted by the public/media to discuss any matters that could come before the Board in due course as a regulatory body. No member of the Board can offer the public /media any opinions or consultations on real or 'hypothetical' scenarios as this could compromise the integrity of the Board in any future action related to such a scenario. The Board, however, welcomes inquiries from the public/media on practice issues if submitted in writing for discussion by the Board in its official capacity.
- Staff of the Board similarly is not authorized to speak for the Board. Staff may only provide information of a factual nature to the public/media on Board policy and procedure that is already publicly available through the Board's website or through the referential state statutes and regulations from which the Board derives its operational authority.
- As a general rule, Board members and staff are not authorized to grant interviews to the media. Exceptions to this rule would require a formal decision by the Board on a case-by-case basis. However, the Board can be invited to provide a position statement in response to a written question on a defined specific question from the public/media. Such a request must be reviewed formally by the Board before any response can be issued, and may include a response of 'no comment'.