

POLICY and PROCEDURE BP011

Subject:

Government Relations: Lobbying, Advocacy & Campaigning

Effective Date:

January 1993

Applies to:

All Houston Methodist Entities

Date Revised/Reviewed:

November 2013

Originating Area:

Government Affairs

Target Review Date:

November 2016

I. **POLICY AND GENERAL STATEMENT**

Houston Methodist may find it necessary to communicate a particular position to members of the State and Federal Legislative and Executive branches to i) educate officials on health care issues, ii) lobby directly to influence specific legislation and administrative action (regulations), or iii) lobby indirectly, also known as grassroots advocacy, by influencing the public on legislation, referendums or government initiatives. These activities are highly regulated. This Procedure provides guidance and direction on how to communicate in your official capacity with State and Federal Legislative and Executive branches in compliance with the law.

Campaigning, directly or indirectly, for or against any candidate for political office (Labeled electioneering in the law) is strictly prohibited. Methodist resources, including but not limited to time compensated by Methodist, money, space, equipment and supplies (such as email system, office supplies, phone system) and reputation, may not be used to promote or oppose the election of anyone for public office. These prohibitions apply to campaigns for local, state and national offices, Political Action Committees (PACs), as well as offices in other countries.

Houston Methodist does not regulate the participation of employees in the political process in their personal capacity as long as the following conditions are met:

1. The participation is voluntary
2. The participation is not on Methodist time or premises
3. Any funds expended are personal, and
4. Employees must make it clear that their actions and opinions reflect their personal beliefs and not those of Houston Methodist.

II. **PROCEDURE**

A. Lobbying and Advocacy

1. The Vice President for Government Affairs shall register as “lobbyist” with the Texas Ethics Commission and shall be the official point of communication between Methodist and members of the State(s) and Federal Government.
2. Methodist personnel shall not contact members of the state legislature and Congress or their staff and members of the Executive Branch or their staff, including heads of Texas regulatory and administrative agencies, to influence legislation or regulations, without first conferring with the Vice President for Government Affairs. Methodist personnel shall report company expense related to lobbying and advocacy to the Vice President for Government Affairs, who will direct proper recording of expenses for later reporting to the IRS.
3. Methodist personnel, when acting in their capacity as Methodist employees, shall not advocate to non-government persons for or against a position on any issue without first conferring with the Vice President for Government Affairs. This includes encouraging patients to contact their political representatives to advocate on a particular issue.

B. Other Communications with Government

These communications do not require prior review by the Vice President for Government Affairs, but the Vice President is available to provide assistance.

1. Sharing information with state administrative agencies necessary to conduct normal hospital business (i.e., not intended to affect legislation or regulations)
2. Serving on advisory boards to any branch of government upon the request of or appointment by appropriate government agencies or officials.
3. Testifying (i.e., providing information) at legislative and regulatory hearings
 - a. Persons testifying on behalf of Methodist are encouraged to inform the Vice President for Government Affairs to coordinate efforts
 - b. Persons testifying in a personal capacity shall not reference Houston Methodist or any of its entities and should state at the onset that the opinions offered are personal and do not necessarily reflect the position of Methodist

C. Violation

Non-compliance with this Policy and Procedure may result in legal penalties including government prosecution. In such a case, violators shall pay their own fines and hire and pay for their own defense.

III. **COUNCILS OR COMMITTEES REVIEWING OR APPROVING PROCEDURE AND REVIEW OR APPROVAL DATES**

Business Practices Committee

IV. **AUTHORITATIVE REFERENCES:**

31 U.S.C. § 1352
Texas Government Code 305
Texas Ethics Commission Rules 34

V. **APPROVING EXECUTIVE:**

(Signed Original on File)

Marc L. Boom, M.D.
President and Chief Executive Officer

Date Signed