

From: Galatas, Kate (CDC/OD/OADC) [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, July 17, 2020 10:35 AM
To: Redfield, Robert R. (CDC/OD) [REDACTED]; McGowan, Robert (Kyle) (CDC/OD/OCS) [REDACTED]
Cc: Bonds, Michelle E. (CDC/OD/OADC) [REDACTED]; Witkofsky, Nina (CDC/OD/OCS) [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Reminder and question
Importance: High

Dr. Redfield and Kyle –

Please see below. We will handle the meeting with [Name]

Please intervene and have someone else at CDC send the appropriate program person's name to Mr. Caputo related to the NHSN matter **by COB today**.

I respectfully request that you not require me to do so. I also respectfully request that he not be given only the comms name; but, rather the name of the program SME who made the call that this data should come down in the first place. Based on my knowledge of how this process works at CDC, I highly doubt that a comms person took this action on his/her own.

Many thanks,
Kate

Kate Galatas, MPH
Acting Associate Director for Communication
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Office: [REDACTED]
Cell: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]



From: Caputo, Michael (HHS/ASPA) [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, July 17, 2020 10:17 AM
To: Galatas, Kate (CDC/OD/OADC) [REDACTED]
Cc: Redfield, Robert R. (CDC/OD) [REDACTED]; Bonds, Michelle E. (CDC/OD/OADC) [REDACTED]; Witkofsky, Nina (CDC/OD/OCS) [REDACTED]; Lepore, Loretta (CDC/OD/OCS) [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Reminder and question

Thank you for your response.

I want to speak to [Name] about this immediately. My office will organize the interview with appropriate representation. If he wants an HR or union representative on the WebEx, that's preferable.

Copying Madeleine in my office to organize this discussion. Please provide her his contact information.

I want the name of the COMMS person responsible for the pages where the data was disabled. I understand they may not have done this themselves, but I want to hear the full story from the public affairs person who is most closely responsible. I need that name by close of business today.

Michael R. Caputo

Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
US Health and Human Services

Work Cell: [REDACTED]

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On Jul 17, 2020, at 10:10 AM, Galatas, Kate (CDC/OD/OADC) [REDACTED] wrote:

Michael—

As I noted in my email to you on Wednesday evening we have been looking into this issue. It took time, but here's what we found.

First, to address the NPR interview with Dan Pollock:

There were two requests to CDC from the same NPR reporter, during the approximate same timeframe (July 2 – 6), involving the same CDC program office. One was about COVID impacts on Dengue work and the other about COVID impacts on NHSN. Unfortunately, the program press officer added the latter one (COVID on NHSN) on top of the original Dengue request. Once the OADC senior press officer [Name] realized there were two similar but separate requests, he should have initiated an entirely new email thread for clearance of the COVID/NHSN one, but that did not happen. There was sloppy work done that resulted in an unauthorized interview that took place at 3PM on Monday, July 13; I am unaware of your reference below to three interviews.

I have attached two email trails that outline the basics of the above-referenced media requests and how they were inappropriately combined within the same email thread. Although other emails exist on this issue, in my opinion, these two are at the heart of how the confusion started and demonstrate what I consider to be sloppy work on [Name] end.

Since the time of being alerted to this issue, we have taken many steps:

- we immediately began our internal investigation into what happened;
- we've addressed the mis-steps directly with [Name];
- we've begun the process with CDC human resources to issue [Name] a formal letter of reprimand; and

- we held a meeting with all the press officers in our office to review internal SOPs and reinforce the importance of following all HHS clearance protocols, including the most recent directives from your office to clear all CDC media responses through Nina before sending to ASPA.

About the NHSN website issue yesterday:

Our office is responsible for the CDC.gov overall website architecture; however, we do not manage all content within the site. Rather, each programmatic area within CDC manages their respective pages. Consequently, I am unaware of how the NHSN data issue happened or who was involved. I understand that other CDC senior leaders are looking into this matter, and I am sure Dr. Redfield can advise of who you should connect with on that.

Finally, let me assure you I understand the high stakes involved in this matter. There is one thing I take most seriously as a professional, and it is the oath I swore when accepting my civil service position – and for 20 years, I have demonstrated steadfast commitment to the American people in my contributions to CDC’s mission of saving lives and protecting the public’s health. That has not and will not change.

Kate
Kate Galatas, MPH
Acting Associate Director for Communication
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Office: [REDACTED]
Cell: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]
<image002.jpg>

From: Caputo, Michael (HHS/ASPA) [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 16, 2020 5:54 PM
To: Galatas, Kate (CDC/OD/OADC) [REDACTED]; Redfield, Robert R. (CDC/OD) [REDACTED]
Cc: Bonds, Michelle E. (CDC/OD/OADC) [REDACTED]; Witkofsky, Nina (CDC/OD/OCS) [REDACTED]; Lepore, Loretta (CDC/OD/OCS) [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Reminder and question

Kate and Michelle

I have not received a response to my email for 20 hours. This is unacceptable.

Please report to me the name of the press officer who approved three Pollock/NPR interview by close of business Friday, July 17.

Additionally, please tell me the name of the CDC communications staffer who removed important COVID information from the CDC Web site, including the hospital data map, also by close of business Friday, July 17.

These actions were reckless, damaging to the coronavirus response, and damaging to the trust Americans have in their government.

I need this information to properly manage department communications. If you disobey my directions, you will be held accountable.

Thank you,

Michael R. Caputo

Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
US Health and Human Services

Work Cell: [REDACTED]

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On Jul 15, 2020, at 9:46 PM, Caputo, Michael (HHS/ASPA) [REDACTED] wrote:

This is an HHS issue. I need to know who did it and we will look into the matter.

Dr Redfield is copied.

Michael R. Caputo

Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
US Health and Human Services

Work Cell: [REDACTED]

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On Jul 15, 2020, at 9:27 PM, Galatas, Kate (CDC/OD/OADC) [REDACTED] wrote:

Turns out that one of our press officers misinformed our SME that this interview was approved. We are looking into how exactly this happened, but recognize that it has resulted in an unapproved interview. As I understand it, this interview request came in from NPR last week and the interview happened on Monday.

This is not an issue of us not knowing the proper HHS clearance protocols or of disregarding them. It was a mistake that is being addressed with our employee.

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Kate

Kate Galatas, MPH
Acting Associate Director for Communication
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Office: [REDACTED]
Cell: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]
<image003.jpg>

From: Caputo, Michael (HHS/ASPA) [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 15, 2020 8:15 PM
To: Bonds, Michelle E. (CDC/OD/OADC) [REDACTED]
Cc: Witkofsky, Nina (CDC/OD/OCS) [REDACTED]; Lepore, Loretta (CDC/OD/OCS) [REDACTED]; Galatas, Kate (CDC/OD/OADC) [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Reminder and question

I need answers right now.

Michael R. Caputo

Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
US Health and Human Services

Work Cell: [REDACTED]

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On Jul 15, 2020, at 4:56 PM, Bonds, Michelle E. (CDC/OD/OADC) [REDACTED] wrote:

I'm looking into this. I recall a media inquiry from NPR for Dan Pollock came in last week. I will get back with you once I the clearance down.

Michelle E. Bonds, MBA
Director, Division of Public Affairs
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Office: [REDACTED]
Email [REDACTED]

www.cdc.gov
<image001.jpg>

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From: Caputo, Michael (HHS/ASPA) [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 15, 2020 4:48 PM
To: Witkofsky, Nina (CDC/OD/OCS) [REDACTED]; Lepore, Loretta (CDC/OD/OCS) [REDACTED]; Bonds, Michelle E. (CDC/OD/OADC) [REDACTED]; Galatas, Kate (CDC/OD/OCS) [REDACTED]
Subject: Reminder and question

All:

According to longstanding policy, no media interviews are permitted without HHS ASPA clearance. There are no exceptions.

With your professional responsibilities in mind, please advise how this interview happened: <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2020/07/15/831706/white-house-strips-cdc-of-data-collection-role-for-covid-19-hospitalizations>

Thank you.

Michael R. Caputo

Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
US Health and Human Services

Work Cell: [REDACTED]

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