



# *When a reporter calls...*

## **Guidelines for those who answer phones**

### **UMHS Public Relations is here to help with any calls from reporters!**

If you need help, call us at 764-2220 and ask to speak with a media coordinator. After hours and on weekends or holidays, ask the hospital operators (936-4000) to page the PR person on call.

### *Other tips for when a reporter calls....*

- Ask for the person's name, news organization, and phone number. If you're not familiar with their news organization, ask whether it's a TV station, newswire, newspaper, radio station, magazine, Web site or another kind of news service.
- Ask for the reporter's deadline: When is the last possible time by which he or she needs to talk to the source? (Often, the deadline is during the same day they're calling!)
- Find out whom the reporter is calling for, and what the reporter wants to talk to that person about. If the person is not immediately available, give the reporter some idea when that individual might be able to call back, and transfer the call to Public Relations.
- If that person is not available within the reporter's deadline, does not wish to speak to the media, or is not the best person for the reporter to talk to, if possible, refer the reporter to another individual on campus who might be able to serve as a source.
- If no one is available to talk to the reporter, or if you have any concerns or questions, refer the reporter to Public Relations. We always have a staff member on call who can help.
- If a faculty or staff member, or a patient, in your area agrees to do an interview with a reporter, call Public Relations immediately. A PR person must escort any cameras in patient areas, and obtain consent from patients.
- Please do not ignore a reporter's calls or leave a message sitting for hours or days. Public Relations will be happy to handle any calls from reporters if you are unable to assist them – for example, if the person they are asking for is in clinic or out of town.