

Contact

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Top Skills

Journalism
Storytelling
AP Style

Honors-Awards

Beat of the Week
Best Special Feature in a Web Site -
Enterprise
Knight Science Journalism Fellow
2013 Medical Evidence Boot Camp

Michael Felberbaum

Assistant Commissioner for Media Affairs at FDA
Silver Spring, Maryland, United States

Experience

FDA

8 years 5 months

Assistant Commissioner for Media Affairs

January 2022 - Present (1 year 8 months)

Silver Spring, Maryland, United States

Advises the Commissioner, Chief of Staff, Associate Commissioner for External Affairs and other senior coordinating officials on public information and agency programs relating to media communications;

Directs and manages all aspects of the Office of Media Affairs (OMA) commonly referred to as the "Press Office"; Plans, directs and executes media relations efforts to inform and educate general and specialized public about FDA programs, actions and accomplishments;

Serves as spokesperson for FDA on high-profile and sensitive agency issues; Briefs the Commissioner and other senior leaders for agency media events; Cultivates and maintains effective working relationships with members of the media, particularly with FDA "beat" reporters; Facilitates press conferences, media briefings, media availability and media interviews with agency senior officials and prepares officials on advisable conduct during agency news events; Provides expert advice and guidance on all aspects of communication to press officers, subject matter experts, principals and other agency officials; Acts quickly and effectively as a senior communication counsel to staff as well as senior officials in providing sound media relations advice for major roll outs, agency announcements and key initiatives; Responds to questions and/or criticism for members of the news media concerning sensitive and complex subjects; Serves as immediate supervisor to GS-12 through GS-15 public affairs specialists. Assigns work, and reviews and evaluates completed work; and Serves as Agency focal point for formulation and dissemination of public warnings as well as general news of FDA activities.

Assistant Commissioner for Media Affairs (Acting)

August 2020 - January 2022 (1 year 6 months)

Silver Spring, Maryland, United States

Advises the Commissioner, Chief of Staff, Associate Commissioner for External Affairs and other senior coordinating officials on public information and agency programs relating to media communications;

Directs and manages all aspects of the Office of Media Affairs (OMA) commonly referred to as the "Press Office"; Plans, directs and executes media relations efforts to inform and educate general and specialized public about FDA programs, actions and accomplishments;

Serves as spokesperson for FDA on high-profile and sensitive agency issues;

Briefs the Commissioner and other senior leaders for agency media events;

Cultivates and maintains effective working relationships with members of the media, particularly with FDA "beat" reporters; Facilitates press conferences, media briefings, media availability and media interviews with agency senior officials and prepares officials on advisable conduct during agency news events; Provides expert advice and guidance on all aspects of communication to press officers, subject matter experts, principals and other agency officials;

Acts quickly and effectively as a senior communication counsel to staff as well as senior officials in providing sound media relations advice for major roll outs, agency announcements and key initiatives; Responds to questions and/or criticism for members of the news media concerning sensitive and complex subjects; Serves as immediate supervisor to GS-12 through GS-15 public affairs specialists. Assigns work, and reviews and evaluates completed work; and Serves as Agency focal point for formulation and dissemination of public warnings as well as general news of FDA activities.

Senior Advisor, Office of Media Affairs

August 2019 - August 2020 (1 year 1 month)

Silver Spring, MD

Drive and support media relations activities for the FDA to effectively communicate the agency's regulatory, enforcement and scientific initiatives and actions and its contributions to public health. Partner closely with all functions of the Office of External Affairs and agency communicators in supporting robust, integrated rollout/announcement plans and strategies on all areas regulated by FDA. Develop plans and create opportunities to communicate with and build relationships with key national-level and policy-focused consumer, health and regulatory reporters, editors and bloggers. Address cross-cutting media inquiries and in pitching FDA news, initiatives, events and leadership interview opportunities to the media. Ensure that the FDA's messages on scientific and regulatory topics are expressed in ways that are clear, accurate and strategic. Work with reporters, gathering facts and developing/clearing responses on sensitive or multifaceted topics, such as

public health crises and new/emerging topics. Prepare leadership and subject matter experts to serve as spokespersons on complex issues. Represent the Office of Media Affairs (OMA) at internal meetings and in meetings and calls with other federal departments and agencies. Develop metrics for measuring communications effectiveness and engage regularly in media/social media monitoring and analysis to drive performance improvements in how the agency communicates important public health matters. Staff the Commissioner and other senior officials at public appearances. Provide input and review of OMA press activities, position papers and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reports. Establish and direct complex communications that involve the support and expertise of multiple Centers and the agency's external stakeholders. Serve in an acting capacity as assistant commissioner for media affairs and for OMA's supervisory public affairs specialists as needed, conducting various supervisory duties.

Public Affairs Specialist (Press Officer)

April 2015 - August 2019 (4 years 5 months)

Responsible for planning, developing, managing and executing strategies for communicating cross-cutting agency policies and actions for the FDA, which protects the public health by assuring the safety, effectiveness, and security of human and veterinary drugs, vaccines and other biological products for human use, and medical devices. The agency also is responsible for the safety and security of our nation's food supply, cosmetics, dietary supplements, products that give off electronic radiation, and for regulating tobacco products. Facilitate greater understanding of key priorities such as tobacco and nicotine regulation, opioids and marijuana policy, as well as agency-wide budgets and regulatory reform initiatives among news media through communications assets such as press releases, statements, social media, talking points and responsive materials. Provide counsel to colleagues within the Office of Media Affairs and others FDA offices, centers and agency leadership on communications strategy and content. Ensure coordination of communication strategies with other FDA external affairs and public health and industry stakeholder relations offices. Coordinate and staff interviews for broadcast, print and online media with senior agency leadership and subject matter experts on regulatory, public health and policy actions. Foster positive working relationships with FDA beat reporters and respond to media inquiries on agency policies and actions. Coordinate communications with U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and other HHS operating divisions, as well as other federal agencies. Received numerous awards for superior achievement of the agency's mission through teamwork, partnership, and collaboration, and

excellence in communication and information sharing of agency public health policy priorities and actions.

The Associated Press

12 years

Newsman

July 2005 - April 2015 (9 years 10 months)

Richmond, Virginia

Responsible for day-to-day news coverage and long-term features concentrating on state, regional and national business as well as public health, technology, entertainment and general assignment stories, including federal/state court decisions. Served as the organization's first-and-only tobacco writer, covering companies including Altria Group Inc./Philip Morris USA, Reynolds American, Lorillard, Philip Morris International and Swedish Match. Tracked public health policy and tobacco industry trends such as harm reduction and electronic cigarettes, as well as reporting on litigation and FDA regulation. Responsible for other spot news, including federal/state court decisions. Responsible for coordinating day-to-day/long-term multimedia projects. Trained in supervisory shifts. Trained staff to capture, edit and file sound to AP Broadcast News Center and assisted in AP Radio news coverage.

Editorial Assistant

October 2003 - July 2005 (1 year 10 months)

Raleigh, North Carolina

Responsible for weekly features digest and day-to-day editorial tasks. Wrote state, regional and national spot news including the tobacco industry, election coverage and university research. Wrote technology and entertainment features such as retro and family-friendly gaming, the iPod revolution, video game reviews and product reviews like iPod mini. Wrote national stories on "American Idol" Season 3 and North Carolina natives Clay Aiken and Ben Folds. Covered the NHL's Carolina Hurricanes.

Stringer

May 2003 - October 2003 (6 months)

Covered the NHL's Florida Panthers hockey games, provided up-to-date information on Hurricane Isabel from the National Hurricane Center for bureaus throughout the East Coast, World Series 2003 fan reactions throughout South Florida.

Barnes & Noble

Bookseller

August 2001 - October 2003 (2 years 3 months)

Columbia, Missouri and Coral Springs, Florida

Columbia Missourian

Reporter/Copy Editor

May 2002 - May 2003 (1 year 1 month)

Columbia, Missouri

Responsible for covering education beat and copy editing daily newspaper.

Education

University of Missouri-Columbia

Bachelor of Journalism (Cum Laude) · (1999 - 2003)

University of Missouri-Columbia

Bachelor of Arts, Political Science · (1999 - 2003)

J.P. Taravella High School, Coral Springs, Florida

· (1996 - 1999)