

USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

I. Definition

Social media is a type of online media that expedites conversation as opposed to traditional media, which delivers content but doesn't allow readers/viewers/listeners to participate in the creation of the content.

The term social media defines various activities that integrate technology, social interaction and the construction of words and pictures. Examples of social media include Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Delicious as well as blogs, forums and other social networking sites.

II. Policy

1. Patient experiences and information are prohibited from being digitally recorded or posted on the internet.
 - a. Use of the internet includes posting on blogs, instant messaging [IM], social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, MySpace, Twitter), email, posting to public media sites, mailing lists and video-sites.
 - b. In addition, patient information should never be saved on personal USB memory devices or recording devices.
 - c. Patient information may only be emailed within a hospital's secured network or within UNLV-SOM's secured network. Patient information must not be emailed outside of these systems.
 - i. Such actions are a direct violation of the patient's privacy and confidentiality per the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).
 - ii. The HIPAA Privacy Rule protects all "individually identifiable health information" and requires that individuals involved in health care maintain the security of patient records in any form (i.e., electronic, paper, or oral).
 - iii. The University of Nevada Las Vegas School of Medicine (UNLV-SOM) Resident Information Technology (IT) policy specifically states that "residents are expected to comply with all HIPAA policies as set forth, and particular care should be taken to avoid copying sensitive patient information onto removable devices such as flash drives, PDAs, etc."
 - iv. UNSOM Resident IT policy states that all network connections through UNSOM should be for purposes of education, research, and public service.
 - v. Please refer to the UNLV-SOM Resident IT policy.
2. UNLV-SOM hospital partners' policies prohibit accessing websites that are not directly related to education or patient care.
3. Information (written or digital) about colleagues and co-workers should not be posted anywhere without their consent and if posted should be truthful and accurate.

4. When posting information on the internet, consider the following:
 - a. The impact of the information you disseminate via social networking sites prior to posting material. Respect for one's colleagues, co-workers, and institution is essential to maintaining a professional work environment.
 - b. The permanency of published material on the internet – once posted on the internet, things live forever.
 - c. The fact that patients regularly Google their physicians and that posts reflect UNLV-SOM as an institution.
 - d. Disclosure of patient information on social media may violate state and federal laws and lead to enforcement actions by agencies such as the State Board of Medical Examiners and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
5. The patient-physician relationship relies on mutual respect and professionalism. Social networking with patients, including communicating with patients or giving medical advice via social networking sites should not be done.
6. Postgraduate trainees must not represent or imply that they are expressing the opinion of the organization by using hospital or institution proprietary information such as logos or mastheads. Trainees must comply with the current hospital or institutional policies with respect to such information.
7. If residents and fellows create blogs, clear disclaimers that the views expressed by the author in the blog are the authors' alone and do not represent the views of the hospital or school of medicine must be posted. Such posts must:
 - a. Be clear and write in the first person;
 - b. Make the writing clear and that it is coming from an individual and not on behalf of either the respective hospital or school of medicine; and
 - c. Be compliant with policies in the Resident Handbook including, but not limited to, provisions concerning discrimination, harassment, and professionalism.

III. Procedures

1. Inappropriate use of the internet and social networking sites may result in:
 - a. Documentation in professionalism score/report card
 - b. Professionalism academic remediation
 - c. Discipline for breach of hospital or institutional policy
 - i. Loss of computer privileges at hospital or UNLV-SOM
 - ii. Potential suspension
 - iii. Potential termination

- d. Other assignments and/or remediation plans based upon the infraction
2. Any violation of HIPAA can result in potential dismissal from program as well as possible criminal and/or civil penalties. A violation of HIPAA may also negatively impact your license to practice medicine.

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