



SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDE

The Social Media Guide for HealthCare Providers

Social media websites and their use have exploded of the last decade, creating a “new territory” of legal and ethical obstacles for all healthcare providers. Social media introduces potential risks to residents, patients, employees and providers, and can result in the distribution of protected personal health information resulting in damage to the employer professional image, breaches in patient privacy, violations of personal and professional boundaries creating licensing and legal issues. The following is a checklist and reminder for all healthcare professionals to follow.

- ❑ Keep personal social media accounts separate from care center accounts.
- ❑ Avoid “friending” patients or families.
- ❑ Recognize that even a deleted post text message or picture can still exist in cyberspace.
- ❑ Understand that posts on a private page can still be accessed by users other than friends or followers.
- ❑ Understand that HIPAA personal identifiers (e.g., pictures, neighborhoods, birth dates, etc.) must remain private.
- ❑ Know that even if a patient posts information, staff should not share in any form this information on their personal pages.
- ❑ Be aware that commenting on a patient’s social media page may go to other friends and individuals.
- ❑ Avoid taking any unauthorized photos of a patient (written authorization is required).
- ❑ Avoid transmitting any electronic media image or recording of a patient.
- ❑ Recognize that any privacy or confidentiality breach must immediately be reported to center management.
- ❑ Refrain from posting any protected information about the care center on social media – in particular, do not use the center logo or trademark.
- ❑ During parties or events, ensure that all patient files or other confidential items are put away before a group photo is taken. Don’t forget to cover the white boards; and obtain the appropriate consent form from the patient and/or family to post the photo.
- ❑ If the patient, his/her family or staff members have any questions about social media, they should be directed to the care center’s management staff.

Reference: <https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/2991535/2016-Social-Media-Guidance.pdf>

To learn more about Social Media Compliance visit www.pedagogyeducation.com/main