How To Get a Regulatory Handle on Social Media

Christopher Greene, D.C.

GOALS:

1. Identify clear parameters regarding licensed HCP conduct when engaging Social Media (SM).
2. Examine benefits and risks associated with SM exchanges.
3. Examine existing regulations regarding SM and chiropractors.
1) What is Social Media

Text Messaging/ SMS (short message service)

1995- .4 texts/month
2000- 35/month
Today- 81% of mobile phone subscribers (most widely used data application in the world).
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Start Dates:
Facebook- 2004
YouTube- 2005
Twitter- 2006
LinkedIn- 2002
Instagram- 2010
Snapchat- 2011
TikTok- 2016
2) Why People Share on Social Media

1) To bring valuable and entertaining content to others
2) To define ourselves to others
3) Grow and Nourish Relationships
4) Self-Fulfillment
5) To get the word out about causes/brands
Why People Share on Social Media

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What would they talk about?

It depended on the setting and the participants
IN A WORD...
MORE

• CONTENT
• SOURCES
• PEOPLE
• OFTEN
• QUICKLY
The Healthcare SEO Trends for 2023

Is your healthcare website Google-friendly? Google is a popular search engine for patients looking for answers to health-related questions.

77% of people use search engines to start their patient journey

7% of all daily Google searches are health-related

70,000 healthcare searches are performed every minute

The Healthcare SEO Trends for 2023

Patients choose their healthcare providers based on what they see online

Local SEO has become more crucial for healthcare digital marketing

82.8% patients use search engines to find a healthcare provider

83% book a doctor's visit through hospital websites

31% healthcare providers do not have a local listing

48% healthcare websites have basic mistakes with their addresses

49.3% patients wouldn't book an appointment with a provider whose online listings were incomplete

71% patients will search for a new provider if the website is lacking information
What do people share on SM?
YOUR DRIVER’S LICENSE IS A PRIVILEGE, NOT A RIGHT

Negligent driving can lead to suspension and revocation
No License = No Driving

Your professional license is a privilege, not a right
NO LICENSE = NO PATIENTS

What are the regulations that apply to HCPs regarding SM?
TEXTING
Privacy/Confidentiality-HIPAA
Network Security
Mobile Device Security

YouTube, TikTok, Facebook
Educational/Public Service Videos/Entertainment?

Professional Conduct - Dishonesty, Misrepresentation
Public Communications - False, Fraudulent, Misleading,
Failure to disclose material facts (technique not taught in schools), Claims of superiority, Failure to disclose financial compensation
The “point system” for HCPs and Social Media is called a Board Complaint

Compliance Programs
What they are and why you need one
The goal of a compliance program is simple: Prevent Improper Conduct.

SM Introduction Recap

1) Social Media is a very public form of communication with a tremendous potential to cross professional boundaries.
2) Patient (and HCP) SM profiles are easily accessed, inviting engagement on all sorts of subjects, including personal and professional.
3) Your HCP license is a privilege, not a right. HCPs are held to standards of professionalism that place conditions on what can be said when communicating with the public.
4) Creating a Compliance Program demonstrates the HCPs commitment to following the rules and embracing the responsibilities that come with the unique societal privileges given to HCPs.
### The Pros and Cons of Social Media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
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<th>Potential Pitfalls</th>
<th>Recommended Safeguards</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communications w/patients using e-mail, text, and instant messaging</td>
<td>Greater accessibility</td>
<td>Confidentiality concerns</td>
<td>Establish guidelines for types of issues appropriate for digital communication</td>
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<td>Immediate answers to non-urgent issues</td>
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<td>Use of SMS to gather information about patients</td>
<td>Observe and counsel patients on risk-taking or health-averse behaviors</td>
<td>Sensitivity to source of information</td>
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<td>Intervene in an emergency</td>
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<td>Consider implications for ongoing care</td>
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<td>Use of online educational resources and related information with patients</td>
<td>Encourage patient empowerment through self-education</td>
<td>Non-peer-reviewed materials may provide inaccurate information</td>
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<td>Supplement resource-poor environments</td>
<td>Scam “patient” sites that misrepresent therapies and outcomes</td>
<td>Refer patients only to reputable sites and sources</td>
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<td>HCP-produced blogs, microblogs, and HCP posting of comments by others</td>
<td>Advocacy and public health enhancement</td>
<td>Negative online content, such as “venting” or ranting, that disparages patients and</td>
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<td>Introduction of physician “voice” into such conversations</td>
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| Use of SMS to gather information about patients | Observe and counsel patients on risk-taking or health-averse behaviors  
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| HCP-produced blogs, microblogs, and HCP posting of comments by others | Advocacy and public health enhancement | Negative online content, such as “venting” or ranting, that disparages patients and colleagues | “Pause before posting” Consider the content and the message it sends about a physician as an individual and the profession |</p>
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Current Social Media Regulations

Research paper discussing social media regulations and guidelines. The text highlights the importance of maintaining privacy and confidentiality while engaging in social media activities. It emphasizes the need to comply with legal and professional obligations, taking into account the unique challenges posed by online communication. The document includes general guidelines for professionals and emphasizes the ethical considerations involved in using social media platforms. It also mentions the importance of being aware of regulations and maintaining appropriate boundaries in professional interactions online.
A member must:

- comply with all legal and professional obligations to maintain privacy and confidentiality in accordance with existing policies. A member may not divulge information through social media that identifies a patient by name or through a combination of other identifying information without their written consent.
- Any communication between a member and patient, such as providing information or scheduling an appointment, must be done through secure private messaging only. A member should have a clear understanding of the privacy settings available in any use of social media, and apply their use accordingly. While patients or members of the public may make themselves publicly known through posting, a member must not breach the privacy or confidentiality of a patient in any context.

- Not provide any clinical advice, communicate a diagnosis and/or guarantee results to a patient or any member of the public through social media. A member may, however, provide general health information related to the chiropractic scope of practice for educational or informational purposes.
- Exercise caution when posting health related information and links to journal articles or academic information to ensure he/she is not infringing on any copyrighted material.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries, and avoid posting information, comments or images that may be perceived as disgraceful, dishonorable or unprofessional. A member is further encouraged to have separate personal and professional social media pages.
- Comply with existing advertising guidelines.
• Understand that information that is posted online cannot be removed easily. A member must consider his/her legal, professional and regulatory obligations and exercise good judgment and caution before posting material to social media.
• Check everything for spelling and grammar errors before you send it out. Everyone understands that mistakes happen, but if they happen frequently it just makes you and the profession look unprofessional.
• You may not impersonate others. The information you share should never be done in a manner that does or is intended to mislead, confuse or deceive others.
• It is inadvisable to accept Facebook friend requests or Twitter follower requests from current or former patients on personal accounts.
• When using images or video on social media, written consent should be sought from both the people (parents or guardians in the case of minors) in the photography/videography as well as from the photographer who took the photo (if it was not yourself). If you are using images that are not your own, make sure they are not copyrighted.

Thank you!

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