

Healthcare

Risk Management Bulletin



Social Media Liability

Effective Strategies to Minimize Risk
Jardine Lloyd Thompson Asia

Social media platforms encourage dialogue between medical providers, colleagues and patients, enriching professional collaborations and leading to stronger, more successful patient relationships. Their misuse, however can invite exposure to such perils as unauthorized disclosure of protected patient information, bodily injury due to inappropriate content, infringement of copyright or trademark and network infiltration. This edition of Health Management Bulletin explores the practical strategies to obtain the advantages of social media while mitigating associated risks.

TYPES OF MEDIA PLATFORMS WIDELY USED BY MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS



Social networking sites to promote sharing of news & information



Video & photo sharing sites to facilitate rapid exchange of documents & images



Microblogging sites to encourage interaction via short published messages & links



Weblogs to communicate ideas & opinions in journals or diary format







Business networks to connect job seekers and potential partners to the organization



Forums & discussion boards to support sustained dialogue among community members

WRITTEN POLICIES & PROCEDURES

	<p>Written policies & procedures Written guidelines should be issued to protect data integrity, prohibit misleading and harassing statements</p>
	<p>Staff Training Training should include social networking rules & etiquette, parameters for use during working / non-working hours, potential legal perils, patient confidentiality issues and disciplinary consequences for misuse</p>
	<p>Disclaimer Statements Include a disclaimer statement. Example: All content and information are of an unofficial nature and are not intended to be interpreted as medical advice.</p>
	<p>Incident Response Plan Encompass violations of site rules such as password sharing and compromise, crisis response or posting of unauthorized patient images.</p>

Reference: CNA Hardy

SOCIAL MEDIA SAFEGUARDS

Editorial Control – Written guidelines for user posted comments

No infringement on the rights of any 3rd party, including rights to intellectual property, privacy or branding

Delete all off-topic material, including promotion of outside products, services or organisations

No unlawful, obscene or defamatory material can be posted on the site

Platform settings should disable advertisements when possible

Postings cannot contain specific patient data or other confidential information

GUARD AGAINST BREACHES OF PATIENT PRIVACY

Prohibit staff from using personal owned portable devices such as smartphones or tablets unless specifically approved

Store all sensitive data in a secure server environment

Protect sensitive data from unauthorized access through effective security measures such as password protection techniques, encryption and anti-malware software

Maintain a log of authorized data destruction

Back up authorized portable devices, making sure not to utilize personal home computers or public work stations and servers

Utilize encryption technology when accessing wireless networks

Require documented approval before copying or downloading sensitive data