



Do's and Don'ts for Social Media Use By Physicians

Do's

1. Educate yourself about CHOC Children's social media sites, policies and guidelines.
<http://www.choc.org/about/social-media-guidelines/>
2. Respect patient privacy and follow HIPAA rules and guidelines, as well as other state and federal regulations governing your profession. Note: Federation of State Medical Boards offers guidelines for appropriate use of social media and social networking in medical practice:
<https://www.fsmb.org/Media/Default/PDF/FSMB/Advocacy/pub-social-media-guidelines.pdf>
3. Take ownership of your online reputation.
 - a. Google yourself. Use different variations of your name, e.g.: John Smith, M.D., Dr. Jonathan Smith, John K. Smith, M.D. Search will likely reveal listings on third-party rating or review sites. There are roughly 50 or more of these sites, which pull information from licensing databases and other public sources, including the National Physician Index. Information may be incorrect or outdated. To correct information, you must claim the listings. Specifics for doing so differ among sites, as do methods of authentication. Before you proceed down this path, note the process can be tedious.
 - b. Partner with CHOC's marketing and communications department to:
 - i. Update your physician profile on choc.org. Physician profiles on choc.org also come up high in searches for individual physicians, even more so for physicians with updated, comprehensive profiles.
 - ii. Create and distribute useful content: blog posts, podcasts, news articles, videos, infographics, presentations, white papers.
 - c. Create a professional profile on LinkedIn. These profiles tend to show high in search results, enhanced by frequent updates and status updates of appropriate professional content.
 - d. Claim your Doximity profile. The site feeds the US News "Find a Doctor" directory, and its members are invited participants in the "Best Hospitals" reputation survey. Note the site's membership is limited to physicians. CHOC's marketing and communications department can send you instructions for claiming your profile.
 - e. Consult with CHOC's marketing and communications and legal/risk departments about any concerns you have regarding online conversations about you or CHOC.
 - f. Continue to provide the best possible care and experience to patients and families.
 - g. Listen to constructive criticism and make changes in your practice, as appropriate.
 - h. Encourage patients/families to share positive reviews and engage with CHOC on our social media sites.

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Don'ts

1. Don't fear social media and the Internet. You're practicing medicine in an era of transparency, when approximately 7 out of 10 Internet users access health-related information online, including researching physicians.
2. Don't engage in an online battle. Take the conversation offline, if appropriate. Beware of the Streisand effect, whereby an attempt to hide, remove or censor a piece of information has the unintended consequence of publicizing the information more widely.
3. Don't cross professional boundaries. In general, it's best not to "friend" patients, but rather steer them towards professional pages or other means of more appropriate communications.
4. Don't post material that infringes on the rights of any third party; that is unlawful, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, abusive, slanderous, hateful or embarrassing; that is off-topic or redundant; that violates the privacy of patients and their families.

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