

Social Media Policy

UTRGV Graduate Medical Education Policy	Effective: July 1, 2016
General Policies and Procedures	

Background:

Social networking sites can be an effective way to keep in touch with colleagues; in medical education, and discussion boards are already heavily utilized. Social media such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google+ and Instagram have grown in popularity and application, allowing users to post content and share with virtually anyone. Organizations, including healthcare institutions, are rapidly integrating the use of social media into their education, outreach and marketing strategies.

While this creates new opportunities for communication and collaboration, it also creates vulnerabilities for individuals and institutions, especially those involved in the healthcare environment. Depending on our privacy settings, anyone with access to the Internet can see our profiles; photos and posted opinions and can share them anywhere. The potential impact on one's image and the institution's image is an important consideration.

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to address the proper use of various forms of social media by residents.

Guidelines:

- All material published on the web should be considered public and permanent. Nothing should be posted that would not be appropriate in a public forum, and all content should be respectful and professional.
- Residents should expect no privacy when using institutional or hospital computers.
- Internet use must not interfere with the timely completion of educational and clinical duties.
- Personal blogging or posting of updates should not be done during work hours or with institutional computers.
- The individual is responsible for the content of his/her own blogs/posts, including any legal liability incurred (i.e. HIPAA).
- Do not discuss any sensitive, proprietary, confidential, private health information
- The tone and content of all electronic conversations must remain honest, respectful and professional. Language that is illegal, threatening, infringing of intellectual property rights, invasive of privacy, profane, libelous, harassing, abusive, hateful or otherwise injurious to any person or entity is prohibited.
- Use good ethical judgment when posting and follow all University policies and all applicable

laws/regulations such as, but not limited to, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Consequences/Corrective Actions:

Local Consequences: Failure to follow these guiding principles may be considered a breach of professionalism, resulting in any and all consequences deemed appropriate by the individuals program and leadership.

Other Consequences: State medical boards have the authority to discipline physicians for unprofessional behavior relating to the inappropriate use of social networking media, such as:

- Inappropriate communication with patients online
- Use of the Internet for unprofessional behavior
- Online misrepresentation of credentials
- Online violations of patient confidentiality
- Failure to reveal conflicts of interest online
- Online derogatory remarks regarding a patient
- Online depiction of intoxication
- Discriminatory language or practices online

State medical boards have the option to discipline physicians for inappropriate or unprofessional conduct while using social media or social networking websites with actions that range from a letter of reprimand to the revocation of a license.