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Social media

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Policy

Health practitioners and health organisations have a legal obligation to keep patient information confidential and protect the privacy of patients' information. This must be complied with when using social media as the same laws apply to online content.

A code of conduct for doctors in Australia states that you should be 'ensuring that your use of social media is consistent with your ethical and legal obligations to protect patient confidentiality and privacy' (AMA, 'A guide to social media and medical professional').

This means that when using social media, staff must not discuss patients or post pictures of procedures, case studies, patients, or sensitive material. This type of material posted online may enable patients to be identified without having obtained consent. Staff need to be prepared to delete and block information uploaded to their social media webpages in order to comply with privacy obligations.

Procedure

This practice uses social media and has social media accounts for business related activities on facebook and instagram for health promotion and communication. .

Regardless of whether social media is used for business related activity or for personal reasons, the following standards apply to members of our practice team, including general practitioners. Practitioners and team members are legally responsible for their postings online. Practitioners and team members may be subject to liability and disciplinary action including termination of employment or contract if their posts are found to be in breach of this policy.

Our practice has appointed the Practice Manager and the Principal GP as the social media officers with designated responsibility to manage and monitor the practice's social media accounts. All posts on the practice's social media websites must be approved by this person.

When using the practice's social media, all members of our practice team will not:

- Post any material that:
 - Is unlawful, threatening, defamatory, pornographic, inflammatory, menacing, or offensive
 - Infringes or breaches another person's rights (including intellectual property rights) or privacy, or misuses the practice's or another person's confidential information (e.g. do not submit confidential information relating to our patients, personal information of staff, or information concerning the practice's business operations that have not been made public)
 - Is materially damaging or could be materially damaging to the practice's reputation or image, or another individual
 - Is in breach of any of the practice's policies or procedures

- Use social media to send unsolicited commercial electronic messages, or solicit other users to buy or sell products or services or donate money
- Impersonate another person or entity (for example, by pretending to be someone else or another practice employee or other participant when you submit a contribution to social media) or by using another's registration identifier without permission
- Tamper with, hinder the operation of, or make unauthorised changes to the social media sites
- Knowingly transmit any virus or other disabling feature to or via the practice's social media account, or use in any email to a third party, or the social media site
- Attempt to do or permit another person to do any of these things:
- Claim or imply that you are speaking on the practice's behalf, unless you are authorised to do so
- Disclose any information that is confidential or proprietary to the practice, or to any third party that has disclosed information to the practice
- Be defamatory, harassing, or in violation of any other applicable law
- Include confidential or copyrighted information (e.g. music, videos, text belonging to third parties), and
- Violate any other applicable policy of the practice.

All members of our practice team must obtain the relevant approval from our social media officer prior to posting any public representation of the practice on social media websites. The practice reserves the right to remove any content at its own discretion.

Any social media must be monitored in accordance with the practice's current policies on the use of internet, email and computers.

Our practice complies with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) national law and takes reasonable steps to remove testimonials that advertise our services (which may include comments about the practitioners themselves). Our practice is not responsible for removing (or trying to have removed) unsolicited testimonials published on a website or in social media over which we do not have control.

Any social media posts by members of our practice team on their personal social media platforms should:

- Include the following disclaimer example in a reasonably prominent place if they are identifying themselves as an employee of the practice on any posting: 'The views expressed in this post are mine and do not reflect the views of the practice/business/committees/boards that I am a member of', and
- Respect copyright, privacy, fair use, financial disclosure and other applicable laws when publishing on social media platforms.

Social media activities internally and externally of the practice must be in line with this policy.