

## [HEALTH CENTER] SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Effective Date: \_\_\_\_\_, 2023

### **PURPOSE:**

To outline the requirements for [HEALTH CENTER] (“Health Center”) Staff Members when discussing the Health Center, Health Center patients and their families, or their employment or affiliation with the Health Center on Social Media.

### **POLICY STATEMENT:**

It is the policy of the Health Center that all Staff Members conduct themselves in a professional manner when discussing the Health Center, or their employment, or affiliation, with the Health Center, and avoid making any statements that would negatively reflect upon either the Staff Member or the Health Center. Further, all Health Center Staff Members must maintain the confidentiality of all Health Center patient information in accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act and related regulations and guidance (“HIPAA”).

This Policy applies to all Staff Members of the Health Center.

### **I. DEFINED TERMS**

a. *Social Media*. For purposes of this Policy, social media shall mean websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking, including but not limited to: i) networking sites, including, but not limited to Facebook and LinkedIn; ii) blogs, articles, Wikipedia posts, Wikis, online forums, message boards, or Twitter; iii) on-line websites of professional publications, or organizations, iv) photograph and video sharing sites, including, but not limited to, YouTube, Instagram and Flickr and v) Health Center webpages.

b. *Staff Member(s)*. For purposes of this Policy, staff member(s) shall mean all Health Center employees, independent contractors and volunteers, whether full-time or part-time, long-term or short-term, and regardless of title, position, or employment classification.

### **II. APPROPRIATE SOCIAL MEDIAL CONDUCT**

The procedures below apply to all Staff Members and are designed to reduce the likelihood Staff Members’ personal Social Media activities will have an adverse effect on themselves, the Health Center,

other Staff Members, patients and their family members or caregivers, or the Health Center's charitable mission.

a. Staff Members may not participate in Social Media activities during work time, unless required as part of their official job responsibilities. [The use of any Social Media sites that are not professional or educational in nature are expressly forbidden from being used during work time, unless specifically permitted by the Staff Member's supervisor as part of the Staff Member's official job responsibilities, in which case such Social Media sites may only be used for the Staff Member's official job responsibilities.]

b. Staff Members must speak for themselves and not on behalf of the Health Center, unless authorized to do so as part of their official job functions. If a Staff Member posts content online in a personal capacity, and it is relevant to the Health Center, the following disclaimer must be provided: "*The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily represent the opinions or positions of [Health Center]*". Even with a disclaimer, a Health Center Staff Member may never post content that would violate HIPAA.

c. Staff Member may not provide individual patient medical or clinical advice or care on social media, and to the extent they share any information that could reasonably be interpreted by the public as individual patient medical or clinical advice they must add the following disclaimer: "*This information is for informational or educational purposes only and does not constitute providing professional medical or clinical advice or services. The information provided should not be used for diagnosing or treating a health problem or disease. Those seeking personal medical advice should consult with a licensed health care provider.*" Under no circumstances may a Staff Member ever attempt to provide advice outside the scope of their licensure or certification, or advice that is contradictory to professional medical or clinical guidance or standards.

d. Under no circumstances may Staff Members post fake blogs, or create false positive or negative reviews of the Health Center, its Staff Members, or Health Center competitors;

e. Staff Members may not use Health Center images, logos, trademarks or proprietary graphics that would create the appearance they are speaking, or acting, on behalf of the Health Center without prior authorization from the Health Center's [director of human relations, compliance officer, CEO, Executive Director, etc.];

f. Staff Members may not use or disclose any patient information of any kind, including patient images, voice recordings or videos that may contain patient information or patient images, on any Social Media platform or smartphone application. A Staff Member's use or disclosure of patient information outside of the Staff Member's official job responsibilities could constitute a violation of HIPAA, state law, and/or other Health Center policies. Online activities regarding Health Center patients that may compromise a patient's personal dignity or otherwise make the patient question the confidentiality of services provided by the Health Center are expressly prohibited.

g. Staff Members may not disclose any confidential information of or about the Health Center, its Staff Members, or patients and their family members.

- h. Staff Members may be held liability and subject to sanctions, up to and including termination, for any publicly viewable intentionally false statements that damage a Health Center patient or family member, other Health Center employees, the Health Center or the Health Center's reputation.
- i. Staff Members may not use Social Media, including personal e-mail and mobile (text) messaging, to transmit, receive, or store information regarding the Health Center, its Staff Members or patients that is illegal, discriminatory, harassing, libelous, slanderous, and/or protected under HIPAA or state law, or which is confidential in nature.
- j. Staff Members shall not announce news about the Health Center that is not publicly available. Only those Staff Members officially designated by the Health Center have the authorization to speak on behalf of the Health Center.
- k. If a Staff Member is contacted by a blogger, journalist or media representative about the Health Center the Staff Member should immediately notify his or her supervisor before responding.
- l. Staff Members are more likely to meaningfully resolve concerns by speaking directly with coworkers, supervisors or other management-level personnel than by posting complaints on the internet. The Health Center encourages Staff Members to bring concerns regarding the Health Center, or other Health Center Staff Members, to their direct supervisor, who will report the concern to the appropriate individual(s), or if the complaint relates to the Staff Member's supervisor then to the Health Center human resource director, clinical director, or compliance officer, as applicable, so the concern can be properly addressed.

### **III. COMPLIANCE WITH HIPAA**

Staff Members are required at all times to remain in compliance with HIPAA. Staff Member are prohibited from discussing, or disclosing, any patient information, including images and including whether an individual is a patient of the Health Center, outside of the Staff Member's official Health Center job functions.