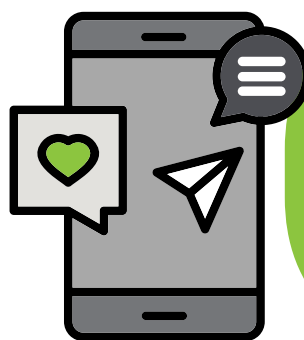


Social media risk management for physicians

Many physicians use social media to promote their practice, engage with colleagues, and provide trustworthy health education to patients and the general public. According to a 2025 report from [Market.us Media](#), 91% of healthcare professionals now use social media for professional purposes. While social media can be extremely helpful for engaging with patients, it doesn't come without risk.



\$10K

average indemnity for privacy claims where social media was a top contributing factor¹

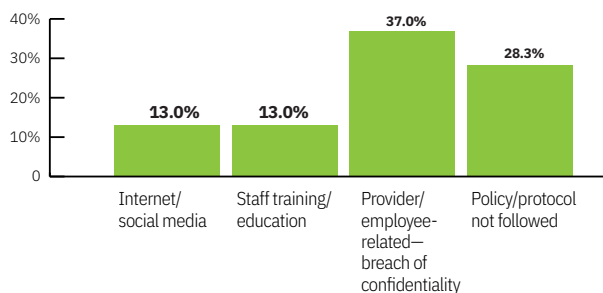
Risks associated with social media

- Online violations of patient privacy or confidentiality (Note: the patient's name does not have to be included to constitute a violation)
- Online misrepresentation of credentials
- Failure to reveal conflicts of interest online
- Online derogatory remarks regarding a patient or other physicians
- Reputational risk
- Discriminatory language or practices online
- Inappropriate communication with patients online
- Unethical marketing involving misrepresentations of potential outcomes of treatment
- HIPAA fines or Medical Board Investigations

Claims data

While the number of privacy related claims is low, internet/social media was the top contributing factor in 13% of medical malpractice privacy related cases.¹

Top contributing factors for privacy related claims¹



Social media recommendations

- Follow [AMA Ethics Opinion](#): Professionalism in the Use of Social Media.
- Do not participate in a war of words online. Refrain from responding to harassing, untrue or inflammatory comments written about you. In the case of a negative review on Yelp or other rating sites, physicians and administrators may respond in a general way, but should not provide any clinical information or even verify that the reviewer is a patient of the practice, as this would likely be considered a HIPAA violation. Invite the reviewer to contact the practice to discuss their concerns. MIEC can assist in crafting an appropriate response.
- Develop a social media policy for employees and staff. Establish guidelines that include confidentiality and privacy expectations, and the consequences of failing to adhere to the policy. Caution staff against posting information to their personal accounts that could be damaging to the reputation of their employer or their profession. Have an attorney versed in employment law or an HR expert review the policy to ensure employee rights to free speech on personal time are balanced appropriately against the employer's rights to dictate employee conduct.
- Do not dispense medical advice. Give general medical information with the disclaimer that this is not to be construed as patient-specific medical advice or treatment.



Explore the **MIEC Knowledge Library**, which contains valuable patient safety and risk management content.

Data Driven Risk Management: MIEC partners with independent sources to supply detailed data that allows for analysis and insight. This information is intended to help MIEC members evaluate their practices and procedures.

Notes: 1. Candello Discover (N=46, 2018-2025)

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