

BEST PRACTICES FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

at Your Skilled Nursing Center or Assisted Living Community

Social media is a unique and ever growing way to connect. To ensure the privacy and dignity of patients and residents, long term and post-acute care facilities must carefully consider a number of aspects. Policies and procedures must be in place whether using social media as a business or in training staff members.

ENSURE THE PRIVACY OF RESIDENTS AND PATIENTS BY...

- ◆ Adhering to privacy requirements
- ◆ Incorporating these requirements into your existing policies
- ◆ Acquiring the approval of patients and residents to use their images via authorization forms before posting to your company's communication, including social media
- ◆ Provide training to staff both during employee orientation and on a regular basis

WHEN USING SOCIAL MEDIA AS A COMPANY OR A CENTER

- ◆ Create and continuously update policies and procedures on social media practices that ensure the privacy of patients and residents
- ◆ Dedicate specific staff to manage your company's social media channels. Only those individuals should have authorization to post on behalf of the company or center
 - ◆ Provide training to all staff to ensure adherence to policies and procedures and to remain up to date on the latest channels and trends
 - ◆ If a staff member managing a social media channel leaves the organization, immediately update the company's account settings or change passwords to social media channels
- ◆ When posting to social media, only use images of patients, residents and staff members who have given proper written authorization to use the images
- ◆ Be prepared for engagement with online users, but don't debate online. Reach out to create personal connection if necessary

COMMUNICATE WITH AND TRAIN STAFF

- ◆ Ensure policies for staff members include the use of social networking sites and any other Internet activities
 - ◆ Clearly state that company policies apply to both on- and off-duty use of social networking sites
 - ◆ Include specific examples of the kinds of statements on social networking sites that are prohibited
 - ◆ Clearly state the consequences of such prohibited activities
 - ◆ Ensure such policies protect the rights of employees per the National Labor Relations Act
- ◆ Distribute social networking policies both as a part of employment manuals and separately as stand-alone policies
- ◆ Require employees to acknowledge receiving, reading, and understanding these policies
- ◆ Provide training to staff members on such policies both during employee orientation and on a regular basis
- ◆ Adhere to policies when staff violate social media policies. Report the staff member to the proper authorities if they have committed a crime