

USE OF TECHNOLOGY

CHECKLIST #5

MANAGEMENT OF NEGATIVE ONLINE REVIEWS

Dentists recognize that along with their practice websites, public websites such as Yelp, Healthgrades, and Rate MDs, and social media sites like Facebook and Twitter, can be used as marketing tools to inform the public of their services. The online community, however, is afforded an opportunity to respond, rate, and, at times, complain about those services. These statements and reviews are readily accessible to anyone with an internet-ready device.

While there is a basic instinct to immediately respond to negative online reviews, dentists must remember that privacy rules make a complete response via social media inappropriate, and responding directly to an online post puts the provider at risk of disclosing (PHI) protected health information. Your response may not contain any identifying statements, but the mere recognition of a patient-provider relationship is a potential HIPAA violation.

	YES	NO
1. All social media posts are critically reviewed for accuracy and authenticity. While some negative statements regarding the performance of the dentist(s) or staff may be difficult to read, these reviews are evaluated to determine if there is any opportunity for learning or process change.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. We do not engage in online arguments or retaliation—especially if the comments made are particularly negative and potentially detrimental to the reputation of the practice or dentist(s).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. In order to protect patient privacy, all patient concerns and complaints are resolved by our practice through direct patient contact and not through social media.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

MANAGEMENT OF NEGATIVE ONLINE REVIEWS (continued)	YES	NO
<p>4. A standard response that also serves as a marketing opportunity for our practice is used for social media responses. Some examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “[Insert name] Practice is proud to have been providing dental care in the community since [insert year] and takes our treatment of its patients and their privacy seriously. Because federal privacy laws govern patients’ protected health information, it is not the policy of [insert name] Practice to substantively respond to negative reviews on “ratings” websites, even if they provide misleading, unfair or inaccurate information. We welcome all our patients and their families to address any concerns/requests or information about their care with us directly, as we strive to continue to provide individualized care in our community.” • “At our practice, we strive for patient satisfaction. However, we cannot discuss specific situations due to patient privacy regulations. We encourage those with questions or concerns to contact us directly at [insert phone number].” 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>5. Local authorities are notified if at any time the safety of the staff is threatened or at risk.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If the patient’s complaint has disrupted the provider-patient relationship, discharging the patient from your practice is considered. This action may be viewed as retaliatory by the patient and may set off a new series of negative posts. Attorneys at Fager Amsler Keller & Schoppmann, LLP are available to assist with this process. They can be reached by calling **(855) FAKS-LAW (855-325-7529)**.