

Health Information Compliance Alert

Include These 7 Steps in Your Social Media Audit

Though you may not want to admit it, social media is necessary to running a successful medical practice today. However, despite how easy it is to get online, promoting your medical wares is not as easy. Because of state and federal privacy regs as well as the every present worry of exposing patients' protected health information (PHI), organizations must be on top of possible problems.

Social media is fraught with risks for practices, so you may want to add it into your risk analyses protocols and HIPAA planning. And because social media needs continual review, audits should be done often to ensure compliance with standards.

Review these seven tips on your social media audit checklist:

- 1. Choose fiscally-viable sites.** What social media sites are having a positive impact on your practice financials and patient retention? Do these sites safeguard your practice secrets and patients?
- 2. Review bios and digits.** Are the providers' names and background information correct? Is practice data - including services, specialty, location, email, phone and fax, and portals - correct and updated?
- 3. Document statistics.** Where are you getting the most likes and what is your primary demographic? Why are you generating interest and are popular posts HIPAA-compliant?
- 4. Compare and contrast with local peers.** Are other specialists in your area performing better on social media? What are they doing to increase their viewership? What sites are most popular?
- 5. Strategize for improvement.** Are you safeguarding patients while posting? Is your health IT (username, passwords, network etc.) protected?
- 6. Weigh the risks.** Is your social media outreach truly advantageous? How are you managing the PHI risks while promoting your practice online?
- 7. Input HIPAA.** Are your patient authorization forms up to date? Are your business associates also protecting your patients' PHI and keeping HIPAA in mind on their social media?