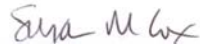

Policy Title and Number: Use of Internet and Social Networking Sites

Original Date: July 2010

GMEC Endorsed: Aug 2010

Revision Date: Aug 2012

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Susan M Cox'.

Susan M Cox, MD
DIO and Chair GMEC

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to residents / fellows regarding the appropriate use of the internet and social networking sites. Social and business networking Web sites (e.g. My Space, Google Docs, Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, LinkedIn, You Tube, Wikipedia and others yet to be named) are increasingly used for communication by the residents and medical students. Physicians' professional images are important and should be protected. Portrayal of unprofessional behavior may impair a physician's ability to effectively practice medicine, become licensed, and participate in positions of trust and responsibility in the community.

GUIDELINES

1. Residents should expect no privacy when using institutional or hospital computers.
 - a. Internet use must not interfere with the timely completion of educational and clinical duties.
 - b. Personal blogging or posting of updates should not be done during work hours or with institutional computers.
2. All material published on the web should be considered public and permanent.
3. The individual is responsible for the content of his/her own blogs/posts, including any legal liability incurred (i.e. HIPAA).
 - a. Avoid discussing any sensitive, proprietary, confidential, private health information or financial information about the institution (including but not limited to UT Southwestern and the affiliated health systems).
 - b. Any material posted by a resident that identifies a hospital in which the resident is working should have prior written authorization by the appropriate offices of that institution.
4. The tone and content of all electronic conversations should remain honest, respectful and professional. Respect among colleagues and co-workers must occur in a multidisciplinary environment.
 - a. If a negative post or comment is found online about the institution, the hospital, or yourself, do not counter with another negative post. Instead, seek help from the UT

Southwestern Corporate Communications department in defusing these types of situations.

- b. Refrain from posting any material that is obscene, defamatory, profane, libelous, threatening, harassing, abusive, hateful or embarrassing to another person or any other entity.
5. Privacy and confidentiality between physician and patient is of the utmost importance. All health care providers have an obligation to maintain the privacy of patient health information as outlined by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).
6. It is inappropriate to "friend" patients on any social networking site or to check patient profiles unless done with the patient as part of that patient's course of therapy.

Corrective Action

Failure to follow the guidelines set forth in this policy will result in corrective action and the level of corrective action, which may include unpaid suspension or termination of employment, is dependent upon the severity of the violation.