

The Forum Social Media Policy

Date: 1/28/20

PURPOSE:

Social media tools are powerful forms of communication that can benefit an organization in multiple ways. The Forum's purpose for utilizing Social Media follows the acronym SLIM:

- *Sharing:* Members may share videos, photos, educational materials, and PEARLS learned from meetings and experience. Members may share accolades. Members may share details regarding upcoming meetings or talks / presentations.
- *Learning:* Members may blog about interesting articles or concepts introduced at a meeting. Members may blog about innovative procedures, techniques or devices.
- *Interacting:* Case discussions may be facilitated utilizing private forums and discussion threads. Twitter can notify members when important information has surfaced on the website and can also serve to link The Forum with current topics and ideas on private, national and international levels.
- *Marketing:* Social media tools will allow The Forum to promote its members and The Forum's Mission and Values. This may lead to opportunities for collaboration, mentorship, and committee and/or corporate board involvement. Certain social media tools may be accessed by current and potential sponsors, which can facilitate increased industry and corporate support.

Social media tools can have a significant impact on organizational, professional and individual reputations. The Forum respects the right of its members to use Social Media as a medium of self-expression. However, members' use of Social Media can pose risks to The Forum's mission, values and reputation. It can also expose The Forum to discrimination and harassment claims, and can jeopardize the organization's compliance with business rules and laws. As a responsible organization, The Forum has ethical, business, legal and regulatory obligations to protect the private information of its members and business. To minimize these business and legal risks, and to ensure communication systems are used appropriately, as explained below, The Forum expects its members to adhere to the following guidelines and rules regarding Social Media use.

"Social Media" includes all forms of public, web-based communication, whether existing at the time of this policy's adaption or created at a future date, including, but not limited to the following:

- Social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn)
- Video and photo-sharing websites (e.g., Instagram, YouTube)
- Micro-blogging sites (e.g., Twitter)
- Blogs (e.g., company blogs, personal blogs, media-hosted blogs)
- Forums and discussion boards (e.g., Yahoo! Groups, Google groups)
- Collaborative publishing (e.g., Wikipedia)

If a member is unsure about whether something falls within the definition of Social Media under this policy, she/he should contact a member of the Board for clarification.

The proliferation of Social Media provides prospective and existing members with opportunities to gain information that might assist them in making important decisions. For these reasons, The Forum members must be cognizant of the impression they create about The Forum and others when they create and/or participate in Social Media and must ensure that their communication is ethical and consistent with The Forum's Mission and Values.

Members must exercise care when participating in Social Media, as the lines between personal and professional content, lawful and unlawful, and between public and private content, are often blurred. Whether participating personally or on behalf of The Forum, members should follow the same standards of behavior "online" as they would if "in person". All postings on The Forum site or linked sites should be professional and respectful of our colleagues. Remember that the Internet is not anonymous, and it does not forget.

The purpose of this policy is to encourage clear and consistent communications with our members and the public, and to promote compliance with state and federal laws.

POLICY:

1. Members are strictly prohibited from posting any information on Social Media that would reveal patient information, or other information which is not in the public domain and may be confidential to The Forum. Similarly, members are prohibited from posting any personal or health information about patients, patient images, someone else's health information, or any information that would violate patient privacy.
2. Before members post any information related to The Forum and/or membership, they must carefully consider the impact of such disclosure and whether the post is prohibited by this policy.
3. Because the livelihood of The Forum members depends in large part on our patients' confidence in the quality of health care services provided, it is important that all members carefully consider whether communications associated with The Forum are ethical and consistent with The Forum's Mission, Values and Service Standards.
4. Any member participating in Social Media and promoting, supporting, or endorsing The Forum's business, products or services must be truthful and accurate and disclose his or her affiliation with The Forum.

5. At no time and under no circumstances may a member state or imply that she or he is speaking on behalf of The Forum unless given express authorization to do so by the Board.
6. Members shall not express, communicate or link to comments that are vulgar, obscene, threatening, pornographic, harassing or which are a violation of The Forum's policies against discrimination, hostility or harassment on account of age, race, religion, sex, ethnicity, nationality, disability, or other protected class, status, or characteristic.
7. The Forum reserves the right to:
 - a. Delete comments that are abusive, off topic, or contain foul language, spam or advertisements for commercial products.
 - b. Monitor, restrict, block, suspend or discontinue access to the The Forum's social media sites, at any time, with or without advance notice, and for any reason.
 - c. Suspend, change or discontinue any aspect of The Forum's Social Media at any time.
 - d. Disclose your communications and activities with The Forum's Social Media in response to lawful requests by governmental authorities, judicial orders, warrants or subpoenas, or for the protection of The Forum's rights.
8. Neither The Forum nor its content or service providers guarantee or warrant The Forum's social media sites against errors, defects, delays, omissions, interruptions or losses, including losses of data. Files downloaded from The Forum's social media sites are not guaranteed to be free of viruses, bugs, worms or other such destructive threats.
9. Members who choose to blog anonymously are also responsible for complying with this policy. Whether they choose to identify themselves or not, members are cautioned that they must have no expectation of privacy while posting or blogging on the Internet. Member's posts/blogs can be reviewed by anyone. The Forum reserves the right to monitor comments about The Forum, its members, visitors, vendors and the health care industry as a whole, whether posted by members or non-members. The Forum reserves the right to use content management tools to monitor, review or block content on internal postings/blogs that violate The Forum's posting/blogging rules and guidelines.
10. Members are expected to uphold The Forum's Mission Statement and Values.
11. Members are encouraged to seek guidance from the Board if they have any doubts as to whether any of the restrictions of this policy apply in a given set of circumstances.
12. Use of The Forum's social media tools does not create a physician-patient relationship, and members cannot offer medical advice, diagnosis or treatment on Social Media. Nothing on The Forum's social media sites should replace the health advice or clinical diagnosis of a licensed health care professional. Users should consult with a medical, health or other competent professional before taking any action or drawing any inferences based on the information accessed or viewed through The Forum's social media sites. Any action users take in response to information from The Forum's social media sites is at the user's discretion.

13. You agree to defend, indemnify and hold The Forum and its content providers and service providers harmless from any and all claims, liabilities, losses, damages, settlements, judgments, costs and expenses, including attorneys' fees, arising in any way from your use of or access to The Forum's social media tools. The Forum reserves the right, at its sole expense, to assume the exclusive defense and control of any matter otherwise subject to indemnification by you, and in such case, you agree to cooperate with The Forum's defense of such claim.
14. In no event, including but not limited to negligence, shall The Forum, or any of its directors, officers, agents or content or service providers be liable for any direct, indirect, special, incidental, consequential, exemplary or punitive damages arising from, or directly or indirectly related to, the use of, or the inability to use, The Forum's social media tools or the content, materials and information related to user's provision of information via The Forum social media, lost business or lost sales, even if advised of the possibility of such damages in advance.

The Forum members are subject to additional social media policies as published.

GUIDELINES:

The following are general guidelines for members' participation in Social Media and online communications. These guidelines are to assist members in their adherence to the policy above.

Members are expected to use good judgement and to ask questions from the Board if they need clarification on any of these guidelines. Violations of the policy may result in corrective action, up to and including the loss of active membership in The Forum.

A. Take Responsibility and Be Transparent

1. You are responsible for anything you write or do online, including emails.
2. Think about the consequences of what you are posting. Assume your writings will be viewed by your colleagues and that your comments may be shared.
3. While engaging in social media activity, members may not hold themselves out as representing The Forum's views nor those of any person or organization affiliated with or doing business with The Forum.
4. In the event that a member uses social media for any testimonials or endorsements of The Forum or its products, the member must clearly and conspicuously disclose his or her relationship with The Forum to members or readers of the social media site or post.
5. Be accurate and truthful.
6. Do not pretend to have expertise, information or authority you do not have.
7. If you see what you perceive as a violation, you should report this to the Board.

B. Respect Your Audience and Your Colleagues

1. Communications or postings must not display comments about colleagues or The Forum that are vulgar, obscene, threatening, intimidating, harassing, **compromising**, or a violation of The Forum's policies against discrimination, hostility or harassment on account of age, race, religion, sex, ethnicity, nationality, disability, or other protected class, status, or characteristic.
2. Do not express, communicate or link to libelous, defamatory, harassing, pornographic, or other similarly offensive content, even by way of example or illustration.

C. Respect the Property of Others

1. Be respectful of copyrights and other intellectual property rights of The Forum and others. For The Forum's protection as well as your own, it is critical that you abide by laws governing copyright, fair use of copyrighted material owned by others, trademarks, and other intellectual property, including The Forum's own copyrights, trademarks, and brands.
2. Always give others credit for their work and get permission before posting their work.

D. Protect Your Own Privacy and the Privacy of Others

1. Maintain confidentiality. Do not post, share or disclose any protected health information. All of The Forum policies that apply to protection of confidential information apply to social media activity.
2. Members may not post on social media sites photographs or videos of other members without permission from those individuals. Exceptions to this may be pictures from the scientific program or the organized FORUM group photo.

E. Respect The Forum's Interests

1. Do not use The Forum's namesake to endorse or promote any product or political candidate. It must be abundantly clear to all readers that any opinions are your alone and not the views of The Forum.
2. If you find negative posts by a third party about The Forum or its members that you feel need a response, please notify the Board.

F. Be Wary

1. People who communicate with you online may not be who in they claim to be. They could be media or others seeking "insider information" about The Forum or its members.
2. Everything written online can be traced back to its author. Additionally, information is often repeated and linked to other sources, so you never know when a comment can spread.

Obligations to Report Violations Policy:

If a member becomes aware of a violation of this policy, please report it to a member of the Board. If a member feels she or he is being harassed, discriminated against or retaliated against for reporting a violation of this policy, she or he should report this to the Board President.

THIS IS AN ORGANIZATIONAL POLICY. THIS SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY SUPERCEDES AND REPLACES ANY AND ALL PRIOR SOCIAL MEDIA POLICIES AND INCONSISTENT VERBAL OR WRITTEN POLICY STATEMENTS.

APPROVALS:

Legal Review by:

Final Review and Approval by: Erin McLemore, MD (The Forum President)

Erin McLemore
