

# Practices should set rules for staff social media use

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(HealthDay)—Medical practices can take steps to avoid problems

related to use of social media by staff members, according to an article published in *Medical Economics*.

Some practices encourage [staff](#) members to keep their phones turned off during work hours. Others allow staff smartphones during breaks, but with some guidelines. For example, personal social media accounts must include no protected patient data or other office-related data. A more challenging issue is social media relationships between staff and patients. When these exist, all practice-related communications should flow through normal channels rather than social media.

It is more difficult to control staff members' social media behavior outside the office, but rules should still be established. Staff members should not talk about or post photos of patients, co-workers, or employees on social [media](#). However, if a staff member is a friend or relative of a patient, it is acceptable to post pictures showing the patient in an out-of-office setting.

Patient care "is at the center of any medical practice," and anything that distracts from or interrupts that care, such as inappropriate use of [social media](#), should be avoided, Nitin S. Damle, M.D., of South County Internal Medicine in Wakefield, R.I., said in the article.

**More information:** [Abstract/Full Text](#)

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