

# Southern Illinois Regional EMS System

## A-22 SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

ALS/ILS/BLS/FR

### Purpose:

- Southern Illinois Healthcare (SIH) / Southern Illinois Regional EMS System (SIREMS) is committed that the internet conduct of its EMS System participants complies with all applicable laws and does not damage our reputation and business interests. SIH/SIREMS has a legitimate business interest in monitoring internet activity, regardless of when or where it occurs, when the activity could violate patient privacy or otherwise adversely affect our patients, our reputation, the reputation of others, the trust others place in us, or our working relationships with other organizations. SIH/SIREMS has a fundamental interest in protecting confidential patient information, proprietary information about the organization, as well as the reputation of SIH/SIREMS.
- The intent of this policy is not to restrict the flow of appropriate and useful information, nor to prohibit the lawful exercise of EMS System participant's rights under applicable state and federal law. The intent of this policy is to help avoid claims against SIH/SIREMS or its participants for things like: HIPAA violations, invasion of privacy, breach of confidentiality, defamation, and slander.
- This policy is designed to balance our EMS System's participant's desires to engage in social networking and information sharing with SIH/SIREMS interests in protecting patient privacy, proprietary information, and the reputations of ourselves and our system participants.

### Scope:

- This policy applies to all SIREMS System participants. Internet media includes, but is not limited to, social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, etc., and other social interaction media (such as web blogs) – virtually any website where system participants can post information. In short, this policy generally applies 24/7 to any content posted on the internet, unless otherwise prohibited by federal or state law.

### Procedure:

- Unless prohibited by law, SIH/SIREMS may monitor the internet activity of its EMS System participants, consistent with the terms of this policy. SIH/SIREMS will apply this policy in a fair and non-discriminatory manner, consistent with all applicable laws. SIH/SIREMS may discipline EMS System participants if it is determined the participant's internet conduct violates this policy or any other policy in the SIREMS System Plan.
  - When SIH/SIREMS Will Monitor Internet Activity:
    - When there is a legitimate business interest, including but not limited to:
      - Safeguarding Protected Health Information (PHI)
      - Keeping SIREMS System participant morale high
      - Protecting SIH/SIREMS confidential and proprietary information
      - Protecting SIH/SIREMS from lawsuits
      - Protecting the reputation of SIH/SIREMS
      - Protecting the reputation of others including SIH/SIREMS business partners or patients

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## A-22 SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY (continued)

- What Internet Sites SIH/SIREMS May Monitor:
  - Unless prohibited by law, any website, including social networking profiles, and similar sites.
  - SIH/SIREMS will not attempt to gain access to private websites through false or deceptive means.
- What EMS System Participants May NOT Post On the Internet:
  - Protected Health Information (PHI)
    - Anything that could possibly be used to identify a patient
      - Name
      - Address
      - Age
      - Race
      - Religion
      - Extent or nature of illness or injury
      - Hospital destination
    - No information should be posted about any patient-related incident
  - Photos, videos, or images that could potentially identify patients, addresses, vehicle license numbers, or any other PHI.
  - Confidential or Proprietary Information about SIH/SIREMS or its partners:
    - Includes, but is not limited to:
      - Company policies
      - Business plans
      - Personnel
      - Staffing
  - Content That Could Disparage SIH/SIREMS, Services, Participants, Employees, or Partners:
    - Includes, but is not limited to criticism of:
      - SIH/SIREMS
      - Staff
      - Partners
  - Content That Could Disparage Any Race, Religion, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Disability, or National Origin
  - Sexually Explicit Content
  - References To Illegal Behavior
- General Expectations of SIREMS System Participants:
  - Always consider the confidential nature of our work with any interaction or communications with others.
  - Maintain the privacy, respect, and dignity of the patients we serve.
  - Never describe a patient encounter in a way that could potentially identify the patient.
  - Remain cognizant that any comments made on the internet about SIH/SIREMS should be general in nature and reflect favorably on our organization and our profession.
  - EMS System participants should exercise sound judgment and common sense before posting on the internet.

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## A-22 SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY (continued)

- EMS System participants should not engage in social networking activities during patient care activities.
- Use a disclaimer when posting about health care issues
  - Whether you publish a blog or some other form of social media, make it clear that what you say there is representative of your views and not necessarily the views of SIH/SIREMS.