**POLICY**

It is the policy of the Upstate Carolina NCORP (UC-NCORP) for the members to adhere to their institution’s specific social media policy and procedures first and foremost.

Social media provide powerful tools for clinical research collaboration, and a medium for connecting with our patients and community stakeholders. Social media channels are valuable to scientific cooperation, professional development, and promotion of UC-NCORP and its members and member institutions. UC-NCORP encourages the use of social media among members and staff. However, inappropriate online behavior may risk the privacy and/or reputation of UC-NCORP, our members, or our affiliate institutions.

This policy and related guidelines apply when UCNCORP members and staff participate in social media for professional purposes –but should also be considered if personal social media activities may give the appearance of speaking for or about UC-NCORP.

**DEFINITIONS**

Social Media: websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.

**GUIDELINES**

All UC-NCORP member institutions are encouraged to use social media to engage community members to further increase awareness and participation in NCI funded clinical research.

The use of social media by UC-NCORP manner related to NCI research activities will adhere to professionalism and will reframe from any reference to individual patients. Professional networking, professional networking, shared insights, and celebrated successes is encouraged. You are encouraged to be honest and open in your posting, while also using appropriate discretion, and following the house rules posted on the social media page (Facebook, Twitter)

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Confidentiality and Privacy

Online postings and conversations are not private. Remember that what you post may be around for a long time, and could be shared by others with or without your consent. Revealing confidential and protected information about others, including patients, fellow UC-NCORP members or staff, or partner institutions, unless you have their expressed permission is prohibited. Obtain permission before posting pictures of others or before posting copyrighted information. As a UC-NCORP member, you will be privy to information that is not appropriate or designed for the general public, patient test results or member phone numbers. Never discuss proprietary information such as protocol designs or pharmaceutical agreements.

Patient Engagement

Patients and patient advocates are increasingly using social media to learn about and seek out clinical trial participation opportunities. This online conversation can provide valuable insights for clinicians and researchers, who are looking for opportunities to improve their recruitment strategies or trial experience.

However, participating in these conversations may inadvertently put you or your patients’ privacy at risk. Before you engage with any patient posts, consider these important tips:

* Avoid “friending” patients across any social media platform.
* Do not post patient images without appropriate written consent.
* Avoid engaging with patient updates that include mention of personal information or specific medical condition. By “Liking” or sharing these posts, you could disclose patient status on their behalf.
* Be sure to understand the 18 unique identifiers protected under HIPAA.
* Always adhere to your institution’s specific social media policy.

Trial Recruitment: Researchers may leverage these platforms to promote and recruit for their trials, so long as they follow the appropriate process and federal protections. Prior to using social media to advertise a trial, be sure that it is IRB approved.

Media Engagement

Only specifically designated UC-NCORP staff members are authorized to communicate with the media on behalf of UC-NCORP and member institutions. If a member of the media approaches you, including bloggers or online media, let them know you are not authorized to speak on the organization’s behalf.

The opinions or views expressed on UC-NCORP social media platforms, including but not limited to Facebook, represent the thoughts of individual users and online communities, and not necessarily those of UC-NCORP as a network or individual members of its leadership.

Use of Content: Any content shared or posted on UC-NCORP social media platforms will be treated as non‐confidential and nonproprietary. Do not post or share content that cannot be reproduced, used and distributed by UC-NCORP or members of its social media communities.

Prohibited Actions

* Using any UC-NCORP social media platform in violation of local, state, national or international law
* Posting material that infringes on the IP rights of others or on the privacy or publicity rights of o thers
* Posting material that is unlawful, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, abusive, slanderous, hateful, or embarrassing to any other person or entity
* Posting advertisements or solicitations, or distributing viruses
* Harvesting or collecting information about other users, such as e‐mail addresses
* Posting the same material repeatedly, i.e., “spamming”

Monitoring: While UC-NCORP makes reasonable efforts to monitor and moderate content posted on its social media platforms, neither UC-NCORP nor its staff or member administrators have the ability to moderate all comments at all times and cannot always respond immediately to online requests for information.

**REFERENCES:** SWOG Policies & Procedures, Social Media Disclaimer 4/2017, Social Media Procedures 10/2017

**ASSOCIATED FORMS:** NA

**COMMITTEE APPROVAL:** Policy and Procedure Committee