HR POLICY #514: Use of Social Media by Medical Associates Physicians and Employees

EFFECTIVE: Revised July 17, 2013

PURPOSE:
Medical Associates recognizes the importance of the Internet in shaping the public image of our company as well as our current and future employees, patients, partners and customers. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to Medical Associates physicians and staff on how to appropriately utilize the Internet and various other forms of social media (such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs, etc) in a way that avoids compliance and policy related issues. This policy is intended to provide guidance for general social media usage, including activity that takes place outside of working hours.

SCOPE:
All employees, including physicians

STATEMENT OF POLICY:
Below are several basic guidelines for your adherence:

1. **When at work, always make effective use of working time.** You should always ensure that your Internet usage, e-mail communication, blogging, texting, and other forms of electronic communication do not interfere with your work commitments or your ability to make productive use of working time.

2. **Always follow all Medical Associates policies.** For example, you must not share confidential or proprietary information about Medical Associates, our patients, or customers. Our Annual Compliance Plan, along with our written policies, provides a robust overview of the expectations of appropriate behavior at Medical Associates.

3. **Speak for yourself.** Make sure it is clear that you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of Medical Associates. Consider using this phrase where appropriate: “The views expressed are my own and do not reflect the views of my employer.” Use a personal ID and/or e-mail address (not your Medical Associates e-mail address) as your identification.

4. **Ensure full disclosure.** If you communicate in public about Medical Associates or related matters, make sure you disclose your relationship to the company. Use good judgment and strive for accuracy. Poor or inaccurate word choice may result in liability for you or Medical Associates.

5. **Be professional and respectful to others.** Do not blog, post, or utilize other electronic communication methods to spread information that is harmful to others. You should also avoid communicating items that are inconsistent with or would negatively impact Medical Associates reputation or brand.

6. **Foster a positive sense of community.** One core essence of social media is that it exists to support others so that they, in turn, can support you. Do your part to create an environment of sharing, connecting and helping.
7. **Respect copyrights and fair use.** Always give credit to others when using their ideas, and make sure you have the right to use something before you share it.

8. **When in doubt, ask.** You can always speak with an executive member of Administration or Human Resources regarding what is appropriate. A good basic guideline is that if you wouldn’t want your manager or others at work to see your comments, it is unwise to share them electronically.

9. This policy shall not be interpreted in a way that creates a conflict with any element of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA). All forms of protected speech as defined by the NLRA are respected by Medical Associates and are not prohibited by this policy.