

KP GSJA GME Statement on Social Media

This is a statement on developing one's professional identity online and is not intended to form or create a new policy. A policy statement on online medical professionalism from the American College of Physicians and the Federation of State Medical Boards notes that "Professionalism is the foundation for the social contract between physicians and society [\(22\)](#). In exchange for the privilege of caring for patients, as well as the status, respect, and financial compensation that accompany that privilege, society expects physicians to practice in a professional and empathetic manner [\(23\)](#) and to self-regulate [\(4\)](#)"

As medical students, residents, and fellows, you are on a journey toward becoming independently practicing physicians. Your behavior on social media affects the community's and society's perception not only of you as an individual, but also of the medical profession and of Kaiser Permanente (KP). As a result, we urge you to exercise good judgment and conduct yourselves professionally, including in your online presence.

Recommendations

- **Pause before you post.** Be aware that you may not be able to control your post once it is on the web. Your content can be copied by other sites and taken out of context. Even if you delete it or have strong privacy settings, your post may remain permanently accessible. Consider the digital footprint you are creating for yourself and its potential impact on your patient–physician relationships and your future career.
- **Always adhere to all KP policies**, including the Principles of Responsibility and KP's Code of Conduct. If you reference KP or display KP identifiers (e.g., clothing, badges) in your social media content, you are representing KP—whether or not you are officially speaking on its behalf (even if you explicitly state "my views are my own"). Regardless of privacy settings, your posts have the potential to reflect on KP. [KP National Social Media Policy v.3 Social Media](#)
- **KP has a zero-tolerance policy for including PHI or proprietary information in social media posts.** Please obtain permission from individuals featured in photos or posts before sharing them online. Legal action may still occur even if you believe you have removed all PHI, particularly if patients can identify themselves in a post. Official KPSJ social media accounts are intended for promoting programs, not for expressing individual views. If there are posts that do not align with these guidelines, then the program leadership will work with you to determine the appropriate course of action. KP's social media training, "*BeKP Spread the Word*," available on KP Learn, should be completed before contributing to official social media platforms.

References

Please refer to the following link for specific details:

[Social Media Training - Spread The Word](#)

KP National Social Media Policy v.3 Social Media

Reference: <https://doi.org/10.7326/0003-4819-158-8-201304160-00100>