



## CEC POLICY ON SOCIAL MEDIA INTERACTION

**PLEASE READ CAREFULLY, SIGN & RETURN YOUR SIGNATURE SHEET TO THE CEC WITH YOUR RECORDS REVIEW PACKAGE. This version as of Winter 2016.**

Social media offers wonderful and innovative ways for the CEC staff to interact with our patients and non-patients alike, and for us to offer positive contributions to the broader endometriosis community. However, the tenets of professionalism and patient-physician relationship must govern our interactions at all times.

Recommendations instituted by oversight bodies offer ethical guidance for preserving trust in patient-physician relationships and our profession when using social media; these recommendations specifically and strongly discourage doctors and their staff from “interacting with current or past patients on personal social networking sites such as Facebook” [Federation of State Medical Boards. Model Policy Guidelines for the Appropriate Use of Social Media and Social Networking in Medical Practice. Euless, TX: Federation of State Medical Boards; April 2012.]

Subsequently, in accordance with the strict policies set forth by the American Medical Association, American College of Physicians, Federation of State Medical Boards, and Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act (HIPAA), the CEC staff including and especially our physicians is bound to maintain a respectful and safe environment for all of our patients. ***This includes, but is not in the least limited to, discussing specific treatments or other personal details with potential, new or existing patients on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc. Similarly, preservation of professional boundaries is absolutely critical to the integrity of an appropriate patient-physician relationship.*** The online setting is an important tool in facilitating health discussions in the modern age, but it must be used and limited/restricted appropriately, particularly regarding the following factors: intended purpose of exchange and content of conversation; inappropriate expectations regarding response time; maintaining confidentiality; and above all else – adhering to ethical and legal requirements.

It is entirely appropriate to post general questions on our Facebook page wall, for example. It is also acceptable to engage in general, broad discussions with any staffer in a group setting where you may both be members. Conversely, it is not appropriate whatsoever to post personal details about yourself - or another individual - on any staffer's personal wall, in groups whether private or public, in ‘mailbox/in-box’, on pages, etc. and/or tag a CEC staff member for specific information. Doing so creates blurred professional and personal boundaries, violates privacy, and lessens the quality of our interaction with you.

You can help us to protect your privacy, maintain appropriate and professional ethical boundaries with our surgeons and staff, and safeguard our digital encounters by **avoiding use of ‘tagging’ staff in posts, seeking specific advice or treatment information about your case via groups or ‘inbox’ - or personal walls - instead of calling our office via proper protocol, and by following proper channels in seeking new or ongoing care with us.**

As a professional medical office and surgical practice, we have staff on call 24/7/365 ready to assist you with your personal needs both during normal business hours and thereafter. It is never appropriate or permissible to communicate your needs via open channels vis-a-vis social media or outside the normal channels of professional conduct. We use social media as a tool to augment in-person care - not as a replacement. While we recognize patients and non-patients alike desire ease of communication with our staff, as professionals, we must be cognizant of not trading communication quantity for quality. Please help us to help you by using your best judgment regarding personal communications between you and our staff and surgeons online at all times. Online technologies present both opportunities and challenges to professionalism – they offer innovative ways for our staff to interact with our patients and can positively affect the health of our broader community, but the tenets of professionalism and of the patient–physician relationship should govern all interactions.

***As such, your use of CEC Social Media Sites [hereinafter referred to as ‘site(s)’] is implied acceptance of this Policy and has the same effect as if you had actually physically signed an agreement. To wit:***

You are prohibited from posting any personal health content on any CEC site(s).

**Moreover, you agree that you will not:**

- violate any local, state, federal and international laws and regulations, including but not limited to copyright and intellectual property rights laws regarding any content that you send or receive via this Policy;
- transmit any material (by uploading, posting, email or otherwise) that is unlawful, disruptive, threatening, profane, abusive, harassing, embarrassing, tortuous, defamatory, obscene, libelous, or is an invasion of another's privacy, is hateful or racially, ethnically or otherwise objectionable as solely determined in CEC's discretion;
- impersonate any person or entity or falsely state or otherwise misrepresent your affiliation with a person or entity;
- transmit any material (by uploading, posting, email or otherwise) that contains software viruses, worms, disabling code, or any other computer code, files or programs designed to interrupt, destroy or limit the functionality of any computer software or hardware or telecommunications equipment; harass another; or collect or store, or attempt to collect or store, personal data about third parties without their knowledge or consent; or to share confidential pricing information of any party.

The CEC reserves the right to monitor, prohibit, restrict, block, suspend, terminate, delete, or discontinue your access to any of our sites, at any time, without notice and for any reason and at its sole discretion. ***You understand and agree that CEC may disclose your communications and activities with us in response to lawful requests by governmental authorities, including Patriot Act requests, judicial orders, warrants or subpoenas, or for the protection of CEC rights.***

You agree that in the event that CEC exercises any of its rights hereunder for any reason, the Center for Endometriosis Care/Kenny R. Sinervo, MD FRCSC LLC has no liability to you.

You expressly acknowledge that you personally assume all responsibility related to the security, privacy, and confidentiality risks inherent in sending any content over the internet. By its very nature, a website and the Internet cannot be absolutely protected against intentional or malicious intrusion attempts. CEC does not control third party sites or the Internet over which you may choose to send us confidential personal or health information or any other content and therefore, we do not warrant any safeguard against possible interceptions or compromises to your information.

When posting any content on any site(s), think carefully about your own privacy in disclosing detailed or private information about yourself and your family.

**You agree that any claim or dispute relating to your posting of any content regarding our Center shall be construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Georgia without regard to its conflict of law's provisions and you agree to be bound and shall be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the local, state or federal courts.**

**THIS POLICY MAY BE UPDATED AT ANY TIME WITHOUT NOTICE.**

*Thank you so much for taking the time to read and appreciate our position on this matter.*

**I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE POLICIES LISTED ABOVE:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date