District of Columbia Department of Health **Communications Management – Social Media Standards**		**PROCEDURE 620.30** **Implementing Office:** Office of the Director **Training Required:** No **Originally Issued:** 4/24/14 **Revised/Reviewed:**
Approved by: LaQuandra S. Nesbitt MD, MPH Agency Director	**Review by Legal Counsel:** Phillip Husband, Esq. General Counsel	**Effective Date:** Jan. 4, 2016 **Valid Through Date:**

I. Authority	Reorganization Plan No. 4 of 1996; Mayor's Order 1997-42 OCTO0007 Social Media Access and Use Policy This policy shall supersede and replace the prior version of Procedure 620.30 issued on 4/24/2014
II. Reason for the Policy	The purpose of this written policy is to establish expectations and standards for the use of official DOH social media accounts while engaged in official Department activities. This written policy also establishes rules for ensuring that legal rights and dignity of other individuals (co-workers, those served by DOH programs, and members of the public) are not placed at risk, purposefully or accidentally, by a DOH employee's use of social media.
III. Applicability	This policy applies to all DOH employees, contracted staff, volunteers, interns, summer youth employees and designated vendor representatives.
IV. Policy Statement	1. The Director of the Office of Communications and Community Relations (OCCR), or his/her designee, is the only employee permitted to represent DOH officially on a social media account. He/she is also the only employee with the authority to create a new official DOH social media account, or delete a DOH social media account. The Director of OCCR may delegate this authority. Such a delegation of authority extends only to the stipulated social media platforms and accounts. The Director of OCCR may withdraw this delegation at his/her discretion. An employee may not access official DOH social media accounts once delegation of authority has been withdrawn. 2. Passwords selected for social media accounts should have a level of complexity consistent with best practices for online

	security and be changed every 90 days. Only the OCCR Director, and staff specifically delegated to manage social media accounts, are authorized to possess passwords to access official DOH social media accounts. 3. The Director of OCCR may issue written memoranda with specific guidance to staff responsible for the management of DOH official social media accounts. These memoranda shall be consistent with this SOP and the District of Columbia's official social media policy. 4. The Director of OCCR has final approval authority over any content posted on an official DOH social media account and may order the deletion of any content in violation of written guidance or deemed by the Director of OCCR to be inappropriate. 5. Any DOH employee, or employee of a vendor under contract to DOH, whose job duties include providing direct services to the public will abide by the highest ethical standards to protect patients. This includes, but is not limited to: (a) a restriction on any identifying patient information appearing on any social media account; (b) a restriction on connecting with a current or former patient on the practitioner's personal social media account; (c) avoiding any actual, or perceived, conflicts of interest. Specifically, health information contained in any postings must be truthful and not deceptive or misleading. As referenced in the Federation of State and Local Medical Boards' *Model Policy Guidelines for the Appropriate Use of Social Media and Social Networking in Medical Practice*, "[practitioners] should strive to ensure that information provided is, whenever possible, supported by current medical peer-reviewed literature, emanates from a recognized body of scientific and clinical knowledge, and conforms to minimal standards of care." 6. Any employee posting Inappropriate Content on an official DOH social media account may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. All violations will be reported to OCTO per policy OCTO0007. 7. Any DOH employee purporting to represent DOH on a social media account without delegated authority from the OCCR Director may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

8. Each DOH employee is solely responsible for his/her electronic communications on *all* social media platforms. Any incoming or outgoing content that adversely impacts fellow employees, D.C. residents, visitors to the District, vendors, people who work on behalf of the District of Columbia or the Department, the Department's legitimate business interests, or the public's confidence in the Department is prohibited.

9. DOH shall fully cooperate with investigations including, but not limited to, investigations internal to the District government as well as civil and criminal investigations related to allegations of an employee's inappropriate use of social media.

10. Employees should refrain from using social media while on duty and while operating Department equipment, unless such use is work-related as authorized by the applicable manager or consistent with Department policy, District policy, or District law. Employees should understand that the use of District electronic equipment may be monitored. District email addresses may not be used for personal use to register on social networks, blogs, or other online tools utilized for personal electronic communications.

11. This policy does not prohibit employees from the following:

    a. Reporting violations or concerns under the District Whistleblower Protection Act. Information can be found at http://dchr.dc.gov/page/whistleblower-protections-and-obligations.

    b. Reporting waste, fraud, and abuse. Information can be found at http://oig.dc.gov/services/suggest.shtm.

    c. Disclosing or discussing information regarding terms and conditions of employment.

    d. Notwithstanding any other provision of this policy, an employee is not prohibited from posting to social media if: (a) he or she is not on duty; (b) it is clear that he or she is expressing a personal viewpoint and not that of the Department; (c) he or she does not appear in a Department uniform or clothing with a Department logo or insignia or the posting cannot otherwise be associated with the Department by use of its name, logo, insignia, or other identifying marks;

	(d) he or she does not post any information or material which was received as a result of his or her employment; and (e) he or she does not violate any District of Columbia law, rule, regulation or policy of general applicability. e. Notwithstanding any other provision of this policy, an employee shall not be prohibited from exercising his or her freedom of speech rights.
V. Definitions	Social Media - all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort (messages, pictures, video, etc.) on the internet, including to an individual's web log or blog, journal or diary, personal web site, social networking or affinity website, web bulletin board or a chat room, whether or not associated or affiliated with the Department. Inappropriate content - Electronic communication that includes but is not limited to, discriminatory remarks, harassment, retaliation, sexual innuendo, threats of violence, or similar content which violates established ethical standards or Federal or District laws. Additionally, any electronic communication which unlawfully or unethically discloses protected or confidential information about a third party without consent.
VII. Procedures	None
VIII. Contacts	Director of the Office of Communications and Community Relations-202-724-7481
IX. Related Documents, Forms and Tools	None