

PHYSICIAN REVIEW SITES

Exercise caution and restraint in dealing with negative online comments



20%

of patients say that physicians' ratings on websites are very important

According to a 2014 JAMA article¹, nearly 20% of surveyed patients said that physicians' ratings on websites are very important, and 40% said the websites are somewhat important, when looking for a primary care physician. Of those who used the web to search for physicians, 35% say they picked a doctor based on good ratings, while 27% reported avoiding those with bad ratings.

A JANUARY 2016 MEDSCAPE ARTICLE² TITLED, "TRASHED ON THE INTERNET: WHAT TO DO NOW" OFFERED THIS ADVICE REGARDING PHYSICIAN REVIEW SITES:

- Recognize that negative reviews can happen to any physician.
- Most review sites allow you to submit a complaint if you believe a comment is fraudulent; they may be able to track down the IP address of the reviewer and, if the post is illegitimate, remove it.
- Reviews that sound irrational to you are likely to sound irrational to others.
- If you respond, keep it polite, general, and only respond once; be sure any response is HIPAA-compliant—some providers who have responded to negative reviews have inadvertently made the mistake of revealing protected health information.
- Many reviews focus on a provider's indifference, bedside manner, or customer service rather than his or her medical skills. Consider these types of comments as opportunities to improve your practice.

OTHER ACTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN MONITORING YOUR ONLINE REPUTATION:

- On a regular basis, do a search on your name and/or the name of your practice to see what comes up.
- Set up Google Alerts (www.google.com/alerts) for your practice name and the names of your physicians.
- If you are listed on a physician review site, review your profile to make sure the information is up-to-date and accurate.
- Some review sites provide resources to help encourage your patients to post reviews. For example, Healthgrades offers postcards to give to patients that include a personalized link they can use to complete a survey about you.

¹ JAMA. 2014;311(7):734-735. doi:10.1001/jama.2013.283194

² <http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/851005>

Some Popular
Online Physician
Review Sites

www.healthgrades.com
www.vitals.com
www.ratemd.com
www.yelp.com
www.angieslist.com