



## “How Online Reviews Can Lead to HIPAA Violations,” McKnights Long-Term Care News

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While it can be tempting for any business to respond to negative reviews posted online, in an article published on May 10, 2023 in McKnights Long-Term Care News, Kelli Carpenter Fleming and Angie Cameron Smith discussed risks for long-term care facilities if they are not careful with their responses to avoid potential HIPAA violations.

“While providers naturally will want to defend themselves against negative online posts, doing so could result in a HIPAA violation,” said Fleming and Smith. “Health care providers should review their current policies related to the use and disclosure of protected health information and specifically confirm that they address use and disclosure of patient information online, including prohibiting the use of patient information in responding to reviews.”

The risk stems from potentially disclosing information about the patient or service rendered. “The safest approach when dealing with online reviews is to not respond at all, as it is sometimes difficult to craft an appropriate response without running afoul of HIPAA,” Fleming and Smith said. “If a provider feels the need to respond, which is understandable, the provider should only provide a general response that in no way confirms whether someone was a patient.”

To read the full article, [click here](#).

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