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## DANE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES SOCIAL MEDIA USE CONSENT FORM

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FEBRUARY 2026

Dane County Department of Human Services is bound by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). HIPAA is a federal law that created standards to protect the privacy and security of client and patient health information. As such, we are required to carry out services and communication in ways that comply with HIPAA standards.

Most social media platforms (WhatsApp, Facebook, Snapchat, etc.) are *not* bound by HIPAA. This means that there is **no guarantee that health information shared on these platforms is safe or secure**. Because of this, DCDHS cannot use social media platforms to share health information unless patients understand and are willing to accept the risks that come with using the platforms.

When Dane County communicates with a client using one of these platforms, Dane County shares information with that platform. The platform then forwards that information to the client. Clients should understand that once Dane County shares information with one of these platforms for the purposes of client communication, Dane County cannot guarantee the continued privacy of that information. Dane County cannot guarantee that any privacy protections offered by the platform are actually followed.

### Benefits and Risks

- We know that for some individual families, social media platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger are familiar platforms of communication. This familiarity can make these platforms feel comfortable and/or easy.
- As described above, most social media platforms are *not* HIPAA compliant. This means social media companies are not required to keep your health information safe and secure.
- Any client or patient that wants to continue to use social media platforms for communication with DCDHS staff can do so if they sign this informed consent form which acknowledges that you know the risks of doing so.

### Voluntary Participation

Your participation in using social media platforms for communication with from Dane County Department of Human Services (DCDHS) is voluntary. DCDHS discourages the use of social media platforms because of the risk to the safety and security of your health information. However, we recognize that for some clients and patients, social media platforms may still be the preferred method of communication, even knowing the risks.

You can also decide to stop using social media platforms for communication at any time. If you decide to stop using the platform, please let us know that you no longer want to use the platform for communication with us. It is your right to end the use of the social media platform at any time.

## CONSENT ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Do you agree to receive communication about your health information from Dane County Department of Human Services (DCDHS) employees through social media platforms, even knowing the risks to the safety and security of your health information?

- Yes
- No

I understand that receiving communications about my protected health information through these platforms will require that Dane County share that protected health information with these platforms. I consent to Dane County sharing my protected health information with these platforms.

- Yes
- No

By signing this document, I agree to and acknowledge the following statements:

- I understand the risks to the safety and security of my health information when using social media platforms.
- I have been allowed to ask any questions I have. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction.
- I have been told whom to contact if I have additional questions.
- I understand and release from Dane County Department of Human Services (DCDHS) and Dane County from any liability if something happens to my health information as a result of using social media platforms.
- I have read this consent form and agree to its terms.

*The signature I have provided denotes my acknowledgement of the terms on this document.*

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

If you have questions concerning HIPAA or this agreement, please contact Dane County HIPAA Privacy and Security Officer at [hipaa@danecounty.gov](mailto:hipaa@danecounty.gov).