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TAKE ACTION

Reviews are rarely detail-accurate. An unhappy patient might leave out pertinent details, or misrepresent events. However, a falsified review is something completely different. Maybe a patient is telling blatant lies about what happened in your office, or maybe the person was never there at all.

Fake reviews from disgruntled employees, competitors, or vengeful patient are rare—but they happen, and they can be devastating, especially if there are multiple instances. The good news is, most platforms have an option to report fraudulent reviews. The bad news is, you have little recourse if the host refuses to take it down.

If someone is attempting to sabotage your practice with fraudulent reviews, report the falsified review

using the links or instructions provided by the host site. Don't report reviews that are based on truth, even if they are skewed in a negative light.

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BURY THE BAD STUFF

Your best weapon against bad reviews is good reviews. Fortunately, for most ophthalmologists, the happy patients far outnumber the unhappy ones. Therefore, the more reviews your practice accumulates, the less credibility negative ones will have. Be proactive and focus on building your reputation at all times, but redouble your efforts if a negative review shows up.

There are numerous ways of increasing patient feedback. Whether it is in the form of a simple verbal request, an automated email, or a text message, people are more likely to leave reviews if you just ask. This strategy encourages

patient feedback. Be sure to provide instructions for posting reviews on your preferred sites, and request permission to share testimonials on your own website.

Never make patients feel pressured to leave a review, and don't share any testimonials without written permission.

FINAL NOTE: PLAY IT SAFE

Learn the law, and consider appointing a compliance manager at your practice. When in doubt, consult your attorney. Violations of privacy are not only legal infractions, but also violations of patient trust. Never take chances. ■

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