

## Guidelines for the Appropriate Use of Social Media

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<b>Approver:</b>	Senior Management Committee
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### Definitions

<b>Learner</b>	An undergraduate medical student, visiting medical student, resident, or graduate student that is completing training at Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN).
<b>Personal Health Information</b>	Information that a healthcare professional collects to identify an individual and determine appropriate care. This includes identifiable information about physical and mental health, family history, organ donation, insurance coverage, and prescriptions.
<b>Social Media</b>	Web-based and mobile technologies that allow people to monitor, create, share, or manipulate text, audio, photos or video with others. Examples of social media include but are not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and LinkedIn.

### Overview

The use of social media can create challenges for learners, faculty, and staff within the Faculty of Medicine (FoM). Members of the FoM community are affiliated with numerous institutions through their status as an employee or learner of Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN), member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Newfoundland and Labrador (CPSNL), and/or employee of a Regional Health Authority. Consequently, FoM learners, faculty, and staff have unique ethical and professional obligations that must be upheld in both their professional and personal life. The appropriate use of social media, whether in a private or public capacity, is part of this

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obligation. Learners, faculty, and staff are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that upholds the professional and ethical standards of the medical profession and MUN.

### **Purpose**

To provide clarity and direction to FoM learners, faculty, and staff regarding what is considered acceptable behavior when using social media.

### **Scope**

These guidelines will apply to all learners, faculty, and staff in the FoM at Memorial University.

### **Guidelines**

#### **1.0 Learners, faculty, and staff should consider the following when using social media:**

##### **1.1. General Considerations**

- 1.1.1. All individuals must assume personal responsibility for information they post online.
- 1.1.2. It should be assumed when posting information on social media that the information will be shared to some degree. Anything written online can be accessed and made public and permanent.
- 1.1.3. To maintain control over access to your personal information, make yourself aware of your privacy settings for your social media accounts and monitor them on a regular basis. Keep in mind that privacy settings are imperfect and can be compromised.
- 1.1.4. Postings to social media sites are subject to the same laws of copyright, libel and defamation as any other forms of communication (written, oral etc.).
- 1.1.5. Refrain from making posts on social media that use institutional intellectual property, copyrights, or trademarks (e.g. a university crest or hospital logo) without explicit written permission.

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- 1.1.6. Ensure you are familiar with, and follow, the policies and procedures in place regarding the use of social media for the health care institutions, Colleges, and organizations to which you belong.
- 1.1.7. Learners, faculty, and staff who are involved in the administration of social media pages and accounts that represent the official, institutional presence of MUN must comply with the [Memorial University Social Media Guidelines](#).
  - 1.1.7.1 Individuals who would like information and support regarding social media channels and possible opportunities can contact the FoM Marketing and Communications office ([communications.office@med.mun.ca](mailto:communications.office@med.mun.ca)).

### **1.2. Professionalism Considerations**

- 1.2.1. When posting to social media, learners, faculty, and staff must not imply that they represent, or are expressing the opinion of, Memorial University, the CPSNL, and/or a Regional Health Authority. Before making any posts, ask yourself: What is my message? What online presence am I projecting? Would the post reflect poorly upon me, the institutions I am associated with, or my profession?
- 1.2.2. Do not transmit or post material online that is considered to be demeaning, discriminatory, or harassing in nature.
- 1.2.3. Do not misrepresent your professional and/or academic qualifications online.
  - 1.2.3.1 Learners should not offer medical advice in any non-educational setting, including social media.
- 1.2.4. Be proactive in removing content from your online profiles which may be viewed as unprofessional.
- 1.2.5. Maintain professional boundaries with colleagues and supervisors online, respecting their right to privacy.

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- 1.2.6. Retain the appropriate boundaries of the patient-physician relationship when dealing with individual patients during interactions on social media. The same standards of professionalism that would apply in face-to-face physician-patient interactions also apply in electronic interactions.
  - 1.2.6.1 Exercise caution when considering accepting invitations to become online 'friends' with patients and their families.
- 1.2.7. Be mindful of standards of patient privacy and confidentiality. Patient information, including images, should never be posted online.
  - 1.2.7.1 The provincial Personal Health Information Act (PHIA) and the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (ATIPPA) must be followed at all times.

### **Related Links**

[Canadian Medical Association – Social Media Use](#)

[Canadian Federation of Medical Students Guide to Medical Professionalism: Recommendations For Social Media](#)

[Memorial University Student Code of Conduct \(2015\)](#)

[Personal Health Information Act \(PHIA\)](#)

[Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act \(ATIPPA\)](#)

[CMPA – Social Media: The opportunities, the realities](#)

[CMPA - Top 10 tips for using social media in professional practice](#)