



# Practice Guideline:

## Physician Use of Social Media (2018)

**Practice Guidelines** are recommendations developed by the College with which members should be familiar and follow whenever and wherever possible and appropriate.

### Physician Use of Social Media

#### Preamble

The College recognizes that use of social media is expanding rapidly and that it provides methods for information sharing in both a physician's private and professional life. Expectations of professional and ethical conduct are the same whether physicians are interacting in person, or online through social media.

#### Practice Guideline

##### Definitions

**Social Media:** web and mobile technologies and practices that people use to search for and share content, opinions, insights, and experiences online. Examples include, but are not limited to: Facebook, blogs, LinkedIn, Twitter, online chat forums.

##### Guidelines

Information posted by a physician on Social Media leaves an electronic footprint and can end up in the public domain.

The College expects physicians to be vigilant in avoiding online situations which may be harmful to patients or professional colleagues and/or harmful to the reputation of the medical profession. The College recommends that physicians adhere to the following guidelines for online professionalism:

- Exercise caution when posting personal information on Social Media platforms. Avoid posting content that could be viewed as unprofessional.
- Maintain clear boundaries with patients. Consider the appropriateness of establishing personal connections with patients.
- Keep medical information confidential. Always maintain the confidentiality of patient information and never post identifiable (or potentially identifiable) patient information or images to Social Media.
- Apply appropriate privacy settings to maintain control over your personal information on Social Media.
- Avoid offering health-related advice unless such advice adheres to the College's Standard of Practice in relation to "Telemedicine".

## Acknowledgements

ARNNL (2013). Social Media  
CPSBC (2017). Social Media

## Document History

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