

Background

The use of social media and other electronic communication is expanding exponentially as the number of social media outlets, platforms and applications available continues to increase. Social media is about interactions between people, using technology as a conduit.

However, social media can pose a risk as it offers immediate posting opportunities with little time for thought and carries the added burden that what is posted on the Internet is discoverable by law even when it is long deleted. Therefore, it is important to provide guidelines for using social media responsibly so nurses can use social media, both personally and professionally, without worrying about repercussions. In December 2011, CARNA Provincial Council endorsed the following Social Media Guidelines adapted from the National Council of State Boards of Nursing's white paper¹.

- 1. Recognize obligations to maintain privacy and confidentiality.**
- 2. Don't disseminate information that will degrade or embarrass the patient.**
- 3. Don't transmit patient-related information.**
- 4. Don't post information that could reasonably identify the patient.**
- 5. Don't refer to patients in a disparaging manner.**
- 6. Don't take photos or videos of patients, unless authorized.**
- 7. Maintain professional boundaries.**
- 8. Consult employer policies.**
- 9. Report breaches of confidentiality or privacy.**
- 10. Be aware of employer policies on the use of computers, cameras, etc.**
- 11. Don't post disparaging remarks about co-workers.**

Reference:

¹National Council of State Boards of Nursing. (2011). White paper: A nurse's guide to the use of social media. Retrieved from www.ncsbn.org/Social_Media.pdf