



Nova Scotia College of Chiropractors

Social Media Regulation

*Approved by
the Board of
the NSCC*

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2*

INTENT & OBJECTIVES

To outline the uses of social media in a professional context.

To provide recommendations to members on how to engage in social media while continuing to meet legal, regulatory and professional standards and obligations.

Members are reminded to remain professional on both professional and personal social media platforms. You are considered a licensed professional in any and all interactions.

DESCRIPTION OF REGULATION:

Introduction:

The use of social media is expanding rapidly. ‘Social media’ describes the online and mobile tools that people use to share opinions, information, experiences, images, and video or audio clips and includes websites and applications used for social networking. Social media may present opportunities to enhance patient care, education about chiropractic, intra and inter-professional communication and collaboration, as well as opportunities for continuing education and professional development. It has become widely used by people as a means of communication and in many instances, has become the preferred method of communication. Common sources of social media include, but are not limited to, social networking sites such as Facebook and LinkedIn, blogs, Twitter, content-sharing websites such as YouTube and Instagram, as well as discussion forums and message boards.

People use social media for many things, but some of the same rules and guidelines tend to apply no matter what platform you use or for what purpose. Whether an online activity is able to be viewed by the public or is limited to a specific group of people, members need to maintain professional standards and be aware of the implications of their actions, as in all professional circumstances. Members need to be aware that information circulated on social media may end up in the public domain, and remain there, irrespective of the intent at the time of posting. Ultimately, a member should ask themselves before posting, *“How does this look to a patient or member of the public?”*

Members should be aware of their ethical and regulatory responsibilities when they are interacting online, just as when they interact in person. This document provides guidance to chiropractors on understanding their responsibilities and obligations

when using and communicating on social media. A member is expected to comply with all existing legal, regulatory and professional obligations when engaging in the use of social media, including all relevant legislation, regulation, standards of practice, policies and guidelines. The following guidelines identify some of those obligations as they relate to the use of social media.

Regulation:

A member must:

- comply with all legal and professional obligations to maintain privacy and confidentiality in accordance with existing policies. A member may not divulge information through social media that identifies a patient by name or through a combination of other identifying information without their written consent.
- Any communication between a member and patient, such as providing information or scheduling an appointment, must be done through secure private messaging only. A member should have a clear understanding of the privacy settings available in any use of social media, and apply their use accordingly. While patients or members of the public may make themselves publicly known through posting, a member must not breach the privacy or confidentiality of a patient in any context.
- Not provide any clinical advice, communicate a diagnosis and/or guarantee results to a patient or any member of the public through social media. A member may, however, provide general health information related to the chiropractic scope of practice for educational or informational purposes.
- Exercise caution when posting health related information and links to journal articles or academic information to ensure he/she is not infringing on any copyrighted material.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries, and avoid posting information, comments or images that may be perceived as disgraceful, dishonorable or unprofessional. A member is further encouraged to have separate personal and professional social media pages.
- Comply with existing advertising guidelines.
- Understand that information that is posted online cannot be removed easily. A member must consider his/her legal, professional and regulatory obligations and exercise good judgment and caution before posting material to social media.
- Check everything for spelling and grammar errors before you send it out. Everyone understands that mistakes happen, but if they happen frequently it just makes you and the profession look unprofessional.
- You may not impersonate others. The information you share should never be done in a manner that does or is intended to mislead, confuse or deceive others.
- It is inadvisable to accept Facebook friend requests or Twitter follower requests from current or former patients on personal accounts.
- When using images or video on social media, written consent should be sought from both the people (parents or guardians in the case of minors) in the photography/videography as well as from the photographer who took the photo (if it was not yourself). If you are using images that are not your own, make sure they are not copyrighted.