

SOCIAL NETWORKING POLICY

Social and business networking websites (i.e., Instagram, LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, etc.) and cell phone texting are increasingly being used for communication by individuals as well as businesses and universities. As such, it has become necessary to outline appropriate individual and University of Connecticut School of Medicine (UConn SOM) Graduate Medical Education (GME) sanctioned use.

Guiding Principles

- Privacy and confidentiality between physician and patient is of the utmost importance.
- Respect among colleagues and co-workers must occur in a multidisciplinary environment.
- The tone and content of all electronic communication must remain professional.
- The individual is responsible for the content of his/her own blogs/posts/texts.
- Material published on the web should be considered permanent.
- Any information posted on the Internet is public information.
- Texts may be intercepted and should not be considered secure communication unless using any approved system provided by UConn GME. Such as, Tiger-Text, Voalte, etc.
- All health care providers have an obligation to maintain the privacy of patient health information as outlined by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).
- Residents/fellows should adhere to all principles outlined in the Residents/Fellows Policies and Procedures Manual and [Code of Conduct](#) for Residents/fellows when interacting on the internet.
- Internet use and texting must not interfere with the timely completion of job duties.
- Personal blogging or posting of updates should not be done during work hours or with work computers.
- It is always inappropriate to “friend” or “follow” patients on any social networking site or to check patient profiles.
- Texting about and posting of any sensitive, proprietary, confidential, private and PHI or financial information about UConn SOM or any affiliated site is prohibited.
- Obtaining cell phone photographs or videos of any patient is prohibited.
- Refrain from posting or texting any material that is obscene, defamatory, profane, libelous, threatening, harassing, abusive, hateful or embarrassing to another person or any other entity. This includes, but is not limited to, comments regarding UConn Health or any other affiliated hospitals or employees of them.
- Any personal legal liability imposed for any published content will be the responsibility of the resident/fellow. Texts are discoverable even if deleted from the cell phone.
- Social networking sites and texting can be the source of cyber bullying, harassment, stalking, threats or unwanted activity. Contact the [UConn Health Police](#) Department or the [Graduate Medical Education Hotline](#) for assistance.

Patient Information

Identifiable protected health information (PHI) should NEVER be published on the Internet. This applies even if only the patient is able to identify him/herself from the posted information. Residents/fellows must adhere to HIPAA principles at all times.

Communication Regarding UConn SOM or affiliated sites

Unauthorized use of UConn SOM information or logos is prohibited. No phone numbers, email addresses, web addresses, name of the department or UConn SOM may be posted without permission from an authorized departmental individual. For identification purposes, a resident/fellow may list the affiliation with the UConn SOM.

In all communication where a resident/fellow is listed as being affiliated with the UConn SOM or a department of UConn, a **disclaimer** must be attached such as: "All opinions and views expressed, in my profile (on my page) are entirely personal and do not necessarily represent the opinions or views of anyone else, including other faculty, staff, residents/fellows or students in my department at UConn. Neither my department nor UConn have approved the material contained in this profile (on this page). I take sole responsibility for this content."

Offering Medical Advice

It is never appropriate to provide medical advice on a social networking site.

Privacy Settings

Residents/fellows should consider setting privacy at the highest level on all social networking sites.

Disciplinary Action

Resident/fellow discipline follows the policy on Non-Academic Deficiencies/Misconduct/Allegations of Misconduct. Disciplinary action will be determined by the Program Director and will vary depending on the nature of the policy violation.