

Social Media Policy

Effective 01/11/2019

Reaffirmed by GMEC 06/14/2024

Previous 01/23/2023

McGaw trainees must demonstrate the highest standard of conduct, through sound judgment, personal perception, integrity, and accountability when using all forms of social media, including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, Snapchat, Reddit, blogging, etc. Posting items that release patient health information or otherwise violate HIPAA standards or Northwestern University or base hospital policies on social networking sites is prohibited and will result in disciplinary action. Photography of patients and cadavers is never allowed.

Trainees are entrusted with a wealth of confidential patient information. Sharing patient information verbally or electronically is illegal and unethical. As a medical professional in training, it is your responsibility to uphold a professional, discreet demeanor in all your correspondences and posts. Photographs of patients are not to be posted at any time. Even posting de-identified information such as date of service and age along with a patient history may be a HIPAA violation.

Assume that everything posted is permanent. Even if you remove materials from a site, or delete your account altogether, those materials will remain in cyberspace forever. Anyone on the internet can easily print photos or save text, images, and videos to a computer. Once material is posted, it is out of your control forever.

Take the time to establish privacy settings on all social networking sites you use. These settings will help to protect your identity and personal information. Even privately posted content could be shared, saved, or printed. Therefore, privacy settings do not obviate the need to comply with this policy.

Search yourself. On a regular basis, search yourself online to audit what is posted about you.

If you are contacted on social media by a patient, you generally should not respond. If that patient expresses any issues of concern regarding recent medical care that was provided by your team, you should inform your attending and your Program Director.

Please note that nothing in this policy prohibits you from engaging in protected activity under the National Labor Relations Act. That law supersedes anything in this policy that you may read to conflict with the law. Among other things, the law protects your right to engage in communications with others about your compensation, benefits, hours, working conditions, or other terms and conditions of employment. You can find a more detailed description of your rights under the National Labor Relations Act by reviewing the employee notice posting (in various languages) found [here](#).