

## Social Media

**I manage several RNs who are active on social media. Recently I have seen some conversations which include negative postings about our workplace and several of our clients. What standard are RNs held to when their personal and professional lives mix because they self-identify or reflect on being an RN in a social media setting?**

- Ethically and legally, RNs have an obligation to maintain patient privacy and confidentiality at all times (1).
- Registered nursing is a highly respected profession. Our patients come to us in their most vulnerable state and trust us with their most personal information. As such, RNs are always accountable to their standards of practice (2 and 3).
- RNs should treat the virtual world of social media with the same professionalism as shown in the physical world. If you would not say something about a client in an elevator then avoid posting that same information in cyber world (4 and 5).
- Confidential client information should not be posted. Even an unnamed client can be identified if confidential information is disclosed (6 and 7).
- RNs must not make disparaging remarks about employers or co-workers (6 and 7).
- RNs should avoid using social media to vent or discuss work-related events or to comment on similar postings by others (6 and 7).
- RNs are expected to advocate for high standards of care (8).
- RNs are expected to address concerns about standards of care through the proper channels, not via social media (9).

## Q&A

- **What is the expectation for RNs who want to speak out about unacceptable practices in or out of the workplace?**

RNs are expected to advocate for high standards of care and respects that often RNs identify gaps in care, or issues with the care that is being delivered, when others do not. Registered Nurses contribute to quality improvement initiatives that positively impact client care. The SRNA expects RNs will follow the proper channels to resolve identified concerns about patient care from a system perspective. One resource available to guide and support RNs in addressing concerns is *Tools for Resolving Professional Practice Issues, 2009*. Others might include contacting regional client representatives/ Ministry of Health Quality of Care Coordinators / Patient Advocates, or the SK Health Ombudsman. RNs should explore the most appropriate resources given their care concerns and context of care.

**SRNA Resources**

[Code of Ethics for registered nurses, 2008](#)

[Standards and Competencies for the Practice of Registered Nurses, 2013](#)

[Ask a Practice Advisor: Social Media and Professional Registered Nursing: Can the Two Mix?](#)

[Tools for Resolving Professional Practice Issues, 2009](#)

**External Resources**

[InfoLaw: Social Media](#)

[Social Media Guidelines for Nurses](#)

[A Nurse's Guide to the Use of Social Media, National Council of State Boards of Nursing](#)

[Am I Nurse 24/7?](#)

<b>Resource Key</b>		
<b>Number</b>	<b>Resource</b>	<b>Reference</b>
1	Standards and Foundation Competencies for the Practice of Registered Nurses (2013)	Competency 71, p. 15
2	Standards and Foundation Competencies for the Practice of Registered Nurses (2013)	Competencies 1 and 4, p. 9
3	Code of Ethics (2008)	B3, p. 10
4	Code of Ethics (2008)	E2, p. 15 and E9, p. 16
5	Ask A Practice Advisor (2012)	
6	InfoLaw: Social Media (2012)	
7	A Nurse's Guide to the Use of Social Media (n.d.)	
8	Standards and Foundation Competencies for the Practice of Registered Nurses (2013)	Competencies 9, p. 9; and 61, p. 14
9	Standards and Foundation Competencies for the Practice of Registered Nurses (2013)	Competencies 19, p. 10 and 73, p. 16