



Media & Electronic Communication Policy Master of Nursing

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the policy is to provide direction to MN students, faculty, and staff in professionally navigating various forms of media communications.

DEFINITIONS:

Media: any form of publicly accessible communication or expression of ideas.

Social media: an internet website or internal or external platform that allows for the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Social media includes, but is not limited to, social networking, blogging, microblogging, video hosting, wikis, and social bookmarking.

News media: news that is delivered to the general public or a target population in print media, broadcast news, or internet format.

Personal information: recorded information of any kind, excluding health information, stored in any format, which identifies an individual (e.g. contact information, race, employment, criminal history, personal views, and opinions).

Personal Health information: information, stored in any format that identifies an individual's health history, diagnosis, treatment, and/or health care.

POLICY SCOPE:

This policy applies to all students in the MN program, faculty, and staff participating in any form of media communication.

POLICY STATEMENT(S):

1. The nursing profession provides numerous opportunities for Registered Nurses to access both personal and health information. Those who have access to such information have the

professional and legal responsibility to protect the privacy and confidentiality of information (CNA, 2008).

2. When participating in media activities, individuals need to be aware of the risk of breaching privacy and confidentiality by disclosing personal or health information and take necessary action to prevent intentional or unintentional breaches.
3. Expectations to maintain privacy and confidentiality exist beyond the nurse/patient and student/faculty relationships. For example, students, staff, and faculty members may be privy to sensitive information about the educational institution, other students in the program, or program stakeholders. Individuals are obligated to also protect this information.
4. It is not the intention of this policy to discourage or diminish media engagement; rather, it is to establish and promote awareness of the shared accountability for protecting privacy and confidentiality during engagement in media communication.
5. Personal and health information communicated by email is also bound by professional and legal responsibilities to protect privacy and confidentiality.

SPECIFICS OF THE POLICY:

1. When participating in news media opportunities, particularly if information about the MN program or the University of Lethbridge may be discussed, please contact the appropriate University of Lethbridge Dean for guidance in navigating such opportunities.
2. Participating in social media in a manner that protects personal and health information has many unique elements to consider, including the reputational risk potentially incurred for the program, students, and faculty.
3. For the security, privacy, and confidentiality of personal and health information, all safeguards, standards, and policies of the agencies/institutions shall be adhered to. Such information shall be made available to students and faculty.
4. If a student is concerned or has questions about appropriate participation in media opportunities, or if he/she becomes aware of activities that may place personal or health information at risk, he/she should seek guidance from program leadership at the relevant agency/institution and/or the Chair of the MN Program Committee.
5. Depending upon the jurisdiction, students may be in the position to communicate with patients/clients or other health care professionals by email with respect to collecting or disclosing personal or health information. It should be noted that *e-mail is not a secure environment*. Further, the student may be required to sign agency/institution agreements. It is the responsibility of the student to confirm the following:
 - a. The agency/institution is approved (as per jurisdictional requirements) to transmit personal and health information by email;
 - b. The agency/institution email system is secure.

This being said, it is recommended that no personal or health information is shared electronically.

6. For all types of electronic communication (including emailing, texting, and social media), the student will follow related agency/institution guidelines and policies, and where it is appropriate to use, sign related agency/institution confidentiality agreements and obtain client/patient consent to receive such electronic communication with personal/health information.

APPENDIX

N/A

RELATED POLICIES/ASSOCIATED GUIDELINES:

- Alberta Health Services Social Media Policy <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/Policies/ahs-pol-social-media.pdf>
- CARNA Social Media Guidelines [http://www.nurses.ab.ca/content/dam/carna/pdfs/DocumentList/Guidelines/Social Media](http://www.nurses.ab.ca/content/dam/carna/pdfs/DocumentList/Guidelines/Social_Media)
- FOIP Act http://www.qp.alberta.ca/1266.cfm?page=F25.cfm&leg_type=Acts&isbncIn=9780779762071
- Canadian Nurses Protective Society infoLaw bulletin: A Legal Information Sheet for Nurses www.cnps.ca
- Canadian Nurses Protective Society infoLaw bulletin: Social Media www.cnps.ca
- University of Lethbridge Social Media Guideline www.uleth.ca/policy/Social%20media%20guidelines_Apr2028-12.pdf

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Alberta Health Services. (2011). Social Media Policy. Retrieved from <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/Policies/ahs-pol-social-media.pdf>

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Canadian Nurses Association. (June 2008). Code of ethics for registered nurses. Centennial Edition. Retrieved 25/08/08, 2008, from http://www.cna-nurses.ca/CNA/documents/pdf/publications/Code_of_Ethics_2008_e.pdf

Revised By/Date: 15/12/15	Approved by/date: MN Program Committee
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