



# Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board

## *Policy*

### **Registrant Use of Social Media**

Approved May 11, 2018

#### **1. Introduction**

The Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board (“NLPB”) operates to regulate the profession of pharmacy in the public interest. The NLPB’s mandate includes developing standards and policies that outline professional obligations and provide guidance in adhering to federal, provincial, and NLPB legislation, by-laws, standards, guidelines, and the Code of Ethics.

The NLPB recognizes that social media use is expanding and provides many opportunities for information sharing in a registrant’s personal and professional life. Registrants are reminded that the requirement to abide by all federal, provincial, and NLPB legislation, standards, and guidelines, along with expectations of professional and ethical conduct, are the same for registrants whether they are interacting with others in person or through social media, and whether they are interacting in a personal or professional context.

#### **2. Definitions**

- 2.1 Social Media – includes web and mobile technologies and practices that are used to search for and share information, files, opinions, insights, experiences, and other content, including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, websites, blogs, podcasts, and online chat forums.

#### **3. Policy Statement**

- 3.1 Registrants are expected to understand the public nature of social media and to remain diligent in managing the professional and personal risk created by participating in and having a presence on social media platforms. Registrants must remember that any posted content leaves an electronic footprint and may be impossible to remove or control once posted. While applying stringent security and privacy settings is advisable, even strict settings do not preclude authorized viewers from screen-capturing and sharing content in other contexts or on other platforms.
- 3.2 Registrants must avoid any situation that may be harmful to patients, colleagues, or the reputation of the profession.
- 3.3 Registrants must abide by this policy in both professional and personal social media activities.
- 3.4 Registrants have a responsibility to educate support staff and other pharmacy personnel on the principles set out in this Policy.
- 3.5 In using social media, registrants must:
- Apply all practice and ethical standards in the same manner while using social media as required for direct person-to-person interactions.
  - Keep all personal health information and any other information that identifies or could potentially identify a patient strictly confidential. This includes any information that could allow a patient to recognize him or herself.
  - Maintain clear and appropriate boundaries with patients, and consider the appropriateness of establishing personal connections with them.

- Avoid posting any content, including personal information, images, and opinions that could be viewed as unprofessional or detrimental to the profession.
- Avoid offering personal health-related advice via social media.
- Refrain from engaging in any interaction that is or could be considered harassing in nature towards any individual or group.
- Keep in mind that tone and context can be easily misinterpreted in social media contexts.
- Recognize that inappropriate use of social media may result in disciplinary action from the NLPB, disciplinary action from the registrant's employer, civil liability, or prosecution. Posting content anonymously, under a pseudonym, or from a personal account does not protect the registrant from the potential consequences of inappropriate activity.
- Abide by the duty to report outlined in the *Pharmacy Act, 2012* and report any knowledge of a breach of this policy on the part of any registrant.