9. PROFESSIONALISM AND SOCIAL NETWORKING

Policy on Social Networking: The Ohio State University College of Medicine

Social networking is a common activity that has the potential to increase our ability to interact with each other in positive ways. However, the ability of the internet to instantly reach millions of people, both within and outside of the medical profession makes it imperative that we take safeguards to insure that social networking does not erode the values of the medical profession or damage the reputation of the profession or the medical center.

Definitions

Social Networking: The use of various internet sites to connect people via web based technology. This includes but is not limited to Facebook, MySpace, Flicker, web blogs, chat rooms.

Publically Disseminate: to distribute to a wide audience, either through posting to a non-secure website, sending content in an email, posting flyers.

Values of the Medical Profession: altruism, respect, confidentiality, prudence, tolerance, integrity and a commitment to personal excellence.

The policy of the OSUCOM regarding student and faculty use of social networking sites is delineated below. Students and Faculty of the College of Medicine:

- Should take steps to insure that their social networking sites have the appropriate privacy settings to avoid inadvertent dissemination of material to audiences beyond their control.
- Should include a disclaimer with postings that clearly state that the expressed opinions belong to the writer alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of the College of Medicine.
- May not write about patients in a manner that could in any way convey the patient’s identity, even accidentally. They are cautioned that patients with rare diagnoses, physical appearances, and specific locations within the medical center may be easily identifiable even in the absence of names and medical record numbers.
- May not write defamatory comments about faculty, staff, students, and health professionals within the medical center.
- May not post someone else’s work (including from internet sites) without attribution.
- May not post pictures or descriptions that demonstrate participation of students, faculty, or staff engaging in unprofessional behavior.
Faculty within the College of Medicine are strongly discouraged from inviting students/trainees who are actively enrolled in the College of Medicine or in the OSUMC residency programs to participate in any social networking community that involves their personal lives. Social networking communities limited to professional work are acceptable.