UP COLLEGE OF MEDICINE
SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINE
APPROVED BY THE COLLEGE COUNCIL 4 JUNE 2019

Social media is a platform for self-expression. The exercise of freedom of expression comes with a responsibility and a duty to protect the rights of others.

Section 1. SCOPE
This is intended to guide social media activity that *associate or identify* faculty (full time/ part time, visiting), consultants, mentors, trainers, consultants administrative staff, researchers, employees, students, trainees, or other persons practicing their profession, working or fulfilling academic or clinical requirements at University of the Philippines College of Medicine (UPCM), the Philippine General Hospital (PGH), or in the community they are assigned, whether temporary (contractual, job order) or permanent. This guideline is also intended for UPCM organizations (registered or recognized by the University e.g. student groups, fraternities, sororities, foundations).

Section 2. OBJECTIVE
This guideline aims to encourage a productive, responsible, and safe use of social media by UPCM constituents, without prejudice to their freedom of expression.

Section 3. DEFINITIONS
1. *Social media* refers to computer-mediated technologies that facilitate the creation and sharing of information, ideas and other forms of expressions, and content via social media platforms and virtual networks.
2. *Social media account* is an agency's or individual's account or page on any given social media platform.
3. *Social media platform* refers to internet-based applications or sites such as, but not limited to, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, that allow users to share information and interact with each other.

Section 4. SETTING UP SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS
1. Use your personal email address, instead of the University of the Philippines email address (e.g. name@up.edu.ph or name@upm.edu.ph) to set up a personal social media account or profile, so as not to associate UPCM with your personal social media account/profile.
2. In order to uphold the right to self expression, it is highly recommended to include a disclaimer in any personal or institutional social media account. Ensure that the disclaimer is prominently displayed. As word limits allow, the following are sample disclaimers:
    a. Tweets my own. RT not endorsements.
    b. Views and opinions my own.
3. All institutional social media accounts shall be registered with the office of the Associate Dean for Faculty and Students for UPCM or any other body authorized by the University to process registration. Only registered social media accounts are allowed to use official logos connected with the UPCM.

Section 5. POSTING ON PERSONAL OR INSTITUTIONAL ACCOUNTS

1. Whenever possible, try to maintain a separation between your personal and professional online profiles.
2. Be mindful of the standpoint from which you are expressing your opinion. If you can be reasonably identified with UPCM, always clarify if you are commenting on an issue from a personal or organizational standpoint. Use good judgment and strive for accuracy. Errors and omissions could result in personal liability. Commenting personally does not however excuse you from your professional obligations.
3. If the posted material may reasonably be construed as implying the support, endorsement, or opposition of the UPCM with regard to any personal statements, including opinions or views on any issue, or if the poster's affiliation with the UPCM is evident in the posting, the material shall be accompanied by a disclaimer that the individual is speaking for himself or herself and not as a representative of the UPCM or any of its offices or units.
4. Post responsibly. Act in accordance with the 2012 UP Code of Student Conduct, R.A. 6713 Code of Conduct an Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees, the Revised Administrative Code of 1987 on the Civil Service Commission, Data Privacy Act of 2012 and existing laws, which specifies acts of misconduct. Such acts can be committed on social media.
5. The UPCM does not endorse or take responsibility for content posted by third parties. All comments made on institutional websites or social media accounts are the responsibility of the commenter, and not the website/social media account owner, administrator, contributor, editor or author. The UPCM is held harmless from any repercussions, damages or liability from such comments.
6. Refrain from posting on social media during work hours or while performing official duties. Use of personal devices to access social media for personal use may be used during non-work time outside public view.
7. Secure permission from faculty when documenting class encounters on social media. A similar permission should be secured from the presiding officer when in meetings.
8. Uphold privacy and confidentiality by refraining from discussing clinical activities on social media. Remember that comments on social media may be deemed public and may be quoted in other media even if the original post was made in a private, secret or closed group or in a non-professional context.
9. Raise and escalate concerns in accordance with UPCM policy and procedure, and other official channels. Refrain from using social media to escalate concerns unless it involves legitimate public interest.

Section 6. PROTECTING PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

1. Use privacy settings to safeguard personal information on non-work related activities as appropriate. Even with the strictest privacy settings, presume that everything posted is public and can be shared. Any content posted online is assumed permanent as deleted content may still exist in an archive database.
2. Practice due diligence in keeping social media accounts safe such as through regular password change and logging out after social media use.
3. Be mindful of the privacy of colleagues, co-workers, students/trainee and faculty when posting content that includes them.
4. Avoid commenting online on legal matters or litigation involving UPCM. It is best to let the official spokespersons(s) of UPCM comment publicly on such matters.

5. Proprietary business information, internal affairs, regulatory issues, human resource issues or research, UPCM/PGH documents (including but not limited to handouts, course guides, logbooks, minutes of meetings) can be posted online with permission from the faculty/unit/ department/office from which it emanates.

6. Use of social media requires a personal commitment to uphold the ethical standards required of those providing health services, upon which patient trust is built. Refrain from discussing patients, their illness or conditions, their family or any personal information, even if you think the information is 'de-identified' or visible only to a restricted audience. Patients or their family may still be identified even if some details are changed, especially with rare disease or unusual presentations.

7. Under no circumstances should photos of patients or photos depicting the body parts of patients be displayed online, even when the patient cannot be identified unless the patient's written consent (in the case of minors, the consent of parents or legal guardians) is obtained. This includes CT scans, X-rays etc. This is in compliance to the Data Privact Act of 2012.

8. When possible, tweak social media settings so that approval for tagging is required, in case a patient or another person not covered by this guideline takes a picture of you in a clinical setting and tags you on social media.

9. Do not disclose any other information acquired in attending to a patient in a professional capacity, which information was necessary to enable you to act in capacity, and which would blacken the reputation of the patient. Never post, share or otherwise use any information relating to identity and status of persons especially conditions with attached stigma, including but not limited to HIV, hepatitis, those who have undergone drug rehabilitation, and or are victims of domestic violence, rape and child abuse. The duty of maintaining patient confidentiality remains even after patient's death.

10. Remember that social media sites are considered open systems. In order to avoid breach of privacy and confidentiality, refrain from using social media to receive, discuss or transmit patient health information.

11. Never post, share or otherwise use recorded conversations between doctors, individuals or patients, when such recording, whether audio or video, was obtained without written consent of all the parties to the conversation.

12. If you discover that a student/trainee, faculty or employee has posted patient information online, please take a screenshot, copy the link and email to the UPCM Office of the Associate Dean for Faculty and Students for confidential reporting.

13. Use of social media platforms for clinical trial recruitment must be reviewed by the UPM REB. Proposals for use of social media platforms for this purpose should be submitted to the UPM REB by the principal investigator during the normal protocol submission process.

Section 7. MAINTAINING PROFESSIONALISM ONLINE

1. Conduct yourself in a manner worthy of your affiliation with UPCM and/or PGH. Conduct yourself as you would in the public, mindful of acting in a manner befitting the profession, or that would inspire trust in the service you provide, especially if you have not separated professional and personal accounts in social media. Recognize that actions online and content posted may negatively affect your reputation and that of UPCM/PGH, and undermine the public trust. Always be mindful of your duties to the patient and community, your profession and colleagues. The faculty can refer to Code of Ethics (approved At 63rd UC meeting, Dec. 8, 1998; noted at 1128th

BOR meeting, Jan. 28, 1999) in the UP Faculty Manual. Students and employees can refer to the UP Student Guide (2010) and to the University of the Philippines System Code (2006).

2. Refrain from making demeaning or insulting comments about colleagues or co-workers, student or faculty online, in violation of existing policies of UPCM. Treat colleagues with respect. Don't publicize your frustrations. If you feel as though you have been mistreated or are frustrated with any aspect of an encounter within UPCM, follow the formal process for addressing such matters.

3. An individual may "like" a defamatory post but he or she must use caution when sharing, retweeting or contributing anything that might be construed as a new defamatory statement. A post, comment or other social media activity is considered defamatory if:

   a. The activity imputes a discreditable act or condition to another;

   b. The activity is viewed or seen by any other person;

   c. The person or institution defamed is identified or readily identifiable; d. There is malice or intent to damage the reputation of another.

4. Ensure that whatever you post or share about other people or organizations is accurate. Exercise caution when sharing posts or other content that are unverified, particularly if it discredits another person or institution, or imputes the commission of a crime or violation of law even before trial and judgment, and violates the privacy of another. Fair and true reporting on matters of public concern shall be allowed provided that the content was obtained lawfully and with due respect for the right of privacy.

5. Avoid making comments that could be perceived as prejudiced against sex, race, religion or belief, even if you mean them in jest or as satire, to avoid misunderstanding.

6. If you see a colleague behaving inappropriately online, bring this to their attention discreetly and sensitively so that they have an opportunity to reflect and take action. If the colleague doesn't make amends and you believe the breach is serious, report it to the authorities.

7. Direct policing of individual activities of faculty, students/trainees and employees online (aside from institutional social media accounts or websites) is discouraged as this represents intrusion to privacy. However, should an issue involving a personal social media account be brought to the attention of the UPCM, the UPCM will take appropriate action to protect privacy and professionalism standards.

8. Avoid accepting friend requests from patients. If a patient makes inappropriate social media contact, politely re-establish professional boundaries and explain your reasons. Do not use social networks to build or pursue relationships with patients and their families, even if they are no longer in your immediate contact. Social media shall not be used to establish inappropriate relationships with patients or colleagues, and shall not be used to obtain information that would negatively impact on the provision of services and professional management of the patient.

9. People in a position of power/authority should not initiate a personal online relationship with an individual in a subordinate position. Exceptions may be made for educational experiences. Be mindful of the potential for misinterpretation of relationships such as faculty-student, supervisor-subordinate and employee-student in social interactions.

Section 8: EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

1. If someone from the media or press contacts you about posts you have made in online forums that relate to UPCM in any way, you must alert your superior before responding. UPCM will provide assistance, including preparation of official information that can be appended to the social media site, and work with you to resolve the situation.
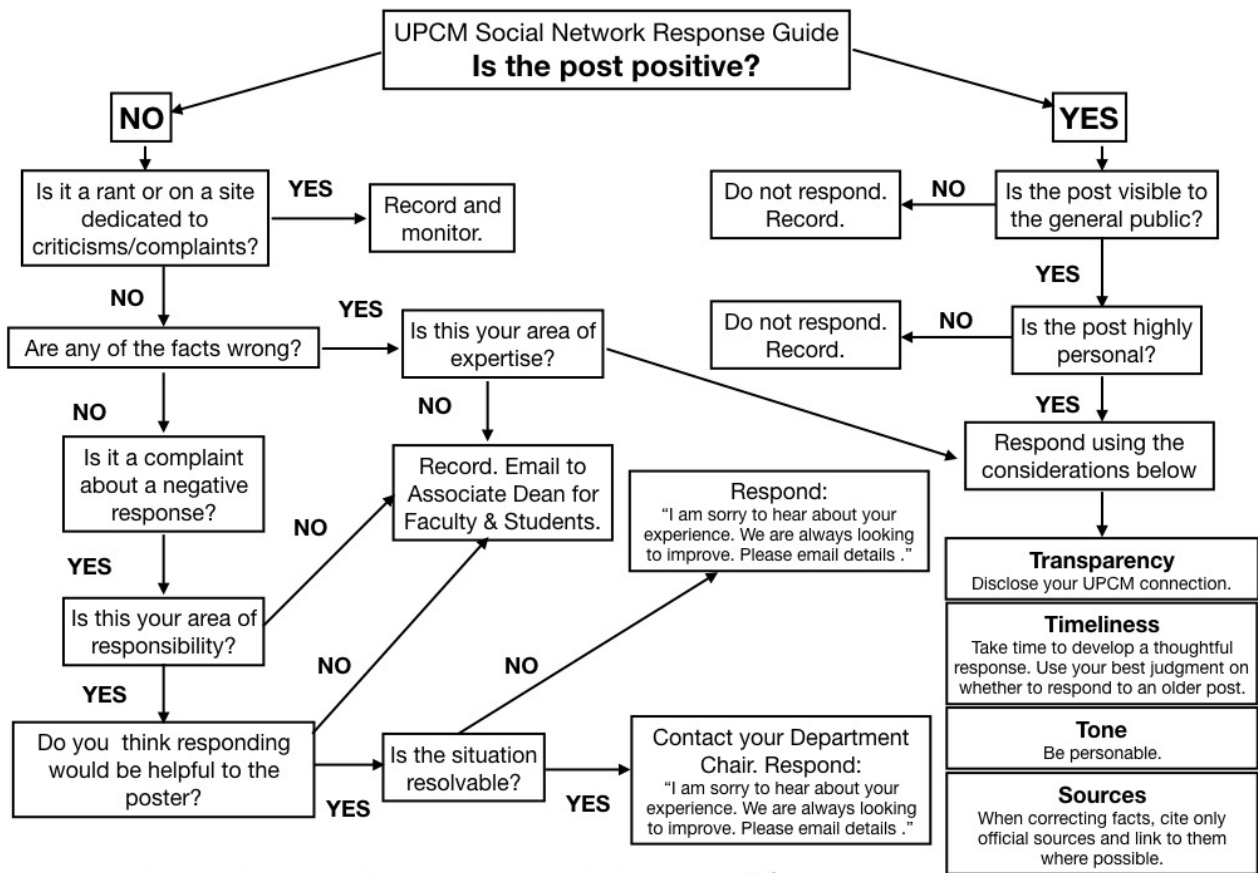
2. If someone or some group offers to pay you for participating in an online forum in your UPCM role, this could constitute conflict of interest and UPCM policies and guidelines apply.

3. If you wish to write about other Universities or healthcare providers, information should be respectful and factually accurate.

4. If a person not connected to UPCM or PGH posts online about UPCM, please refer to the response guide in Appendix A (adapted from the Vanderbilt University Medical Center Social Network Response Guide).

5. If you are using social media for health education or promotion, do so within your area of expertise. Refrain from any activity which spreads or tends to spread misinformation.

6. When writing an article for posting on social media, ensure that it is evidence-based. Disclose connections with pharmaceutical or health product companies or other sources of possible conflict of interest.

7. Never use social media to dispense specific medical diagnosis, advice, or treatment. Give general opinions only and not personalized recommendations. Include a disclaimer, such as follows: This site is not designed to and does not provide medical advice, professional diagnosis, opinion, treatment or services to you or to any other individual. Through this site and linkages to other sites, general information is provided for educational purposes only. The information provided in this site, or through linkages to other sites, is not a substitute for medical or professional care, and you should not use the information in place of a visit, call consultation or the advice of your physician or other healthcare provider. We are not liable or responsible for any advice, course of treatment, diagnosis or any other information, services or product you obtain through this site.

REFERENCES:
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2. Wright State University Boonshoft School of Medicine Social Media Policy. https://medicine.wright.edu/student-life/policies/social-media-policy
3. University of Maryland School of Medicine Social Media Policy. http://www.medschool.umaryland.edu/public-affairs/Digital--Web-Communications/Social-Media-Policy/
4. McGill Faculty of Medicine Social and Other Media Guidelines. https://mcgill.ca/ugme/files/ugme/social_media_guideline_v1.0.pdf
5. Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis Social Media Guide. https://publicaffairs.med.wustl.edu/items/social-media-guide/
6. University of Nottingham School of Medicine: Social Media Guidance for Medical Students. https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/medicine/documents/medicine-policies/social-media-guidance.pdf
7. How to Create Social Media Guidelines for your School. https://www.edutopia.org/how-to-create-social-media-guidelines-school
8. Duke Medicine's Social Media Policy: Frequently Asked Questions. https://medschool.duke.edu/sites/default/files/field/attachments/ Social%20Media%20Policy%20FAQs_3.15.12.pdf
9. Royal College of General Practitioners Social Media Highway Code. https://www.rcgp.org.uk/policy/rcgp-policy-areas/social-media-highway-code.aspx

10. Vanderbilt University Medical Center Social Media Policy. https://ww2.mc.vanderbilt.edu/socialmediatoolkit/26923

11. British Medical Association Using Social Media: Practical and Ethical Guidance for Doctors and Medical Students. https://www.bma.org.uk/-/media/files/pdfs/practical%20advice%20at%20work/ethics/socialmediaguidance%202011.pdf.

12. Patdu, Ivy D. Recommendations for Social Media Use in Hospitals and Healthcare Facilities. https://ejournals.ph/article.php?id=10297

13. DICT Draft AO: Social Media Use for Government. http://www.dict.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/DRAFT-AO-Social-Media-Use-for-Government.pdf.

APPENDIX A. Social Network Response Guide
(adapted from the Vanderbilt University Medical Center).

UPCM Social Network Response Guide
Is the post positive?

NO

Is it a rant or on a site dedicated to criticisms/complaints? → **YES** → Record and monitor.

NO

Are any of the facts wrong? → **YES** → Is this your area of expertise?

NO

Is it a complaint about a negative response?

NO → Record. Email to Associate Dean for Faculty & Students.

YES

Is this your area of responsibility?

YES

Do you think responding would be helpful to the poster? → **YES** → Is the situation resolvable?

Respond: "I am sorry to hear about your experience. We are always looking to improve. Please email details ."

NO → Record. Email to Associate Dean for Faculty & Students.

YES → Contact your Department Chair. Respond: "I am sorry to hear about your experience. We are always looking to improve. Please email details ."

YES

Is the post visible to the general public? → **NO** → Do not respond. Record.

YES

Is the post highly personal? → **NO** → Do not respond. Record.

YES

Respond using the considerations below

Transparency
Disclose your UPCM connection.

Timeliness
Take time to develop a thoughtful response. Use your best judgment on whether to respond to an older post.

Tone
Be personable.

Sources
When correcting facts, cite only official sources and link to them where possible.

Include the following when emailing the Associate Dean for Faculty & Students:
Name, Department/Section, role, phone, post with links and any action taken