



# VERA Z. DWYER COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

INDIANA UNIVERSITY SOUTH BEND

## **Social Networking Policy Policy 7.24**

### **About This Policy:**

Effective Date: 02-24-2017

**Approval Dates:** Previously recorded as Policy C-26

### **Scope**

This policy applies to all members of the university community on each campus of Indiana University.

### **Policy Statement**

The purpose of this policy is to outline the IUSB Vera Z. Dwyer College of Health Sciences (IUSB-CHS) guidelines for appropriate use of Internet social networking sites by students engaging in online discourse and identifying themselves with IUSB-CHS.

### **Procedure**

Use of electronic media, i.e. internet sites or social networking sites, blogs, etc. offer an opportunity for students to engage in professional and personal conversations and form networks. However, improper postings on these sites can have legal ramifications if state and federal laws established to protect patient privacy and confidentiality are violated. Violations may include, but are not limited to, improper postings about the care of a patient or comments/images that portray the individual or a colleague in an unprofessional manner or social networking sites that can be used in court or other disciplinary proceedings (e.g. State Nursing Licensing Boards).

Consequently, IUSB-CHS students must adhere to the IUSB Code of Student Ethics and Responsibilities, the American Nurses Association Social Policy Statement, the ethical code of conduct for the program of study, IUSB-CHS policies and procedures and HIPPA obligations related to patient privacy, confidentiality and code of conduct at all times when using the internet and social networking sites.

It is the individual's responsibility to: 1) closely monitor the privacy settings of their social network accounts to optimize their privacy and security and 2) ensure that posts or photos are appropriate and not embarrassing or professionally compromising. Avoid sharing identification numbers on your personal profile. This would include address, telephone numbers, social security numbers, passport numbers, driver's license numbers, birth date, and place of employment or any other data that could be used to obtain your personal records.

In reference to the National Council of State Boards of Nursing's "A Nurse's Guide to the Use of Social Media" the following guidelines are set forth to address instances of inappropriate use of the Internet and social media networking sites.

### **IUSB-CHS Guidelines for Online Social Networking:**

- Students have an ethical and legal obligation to maintain patient privacy and confidentiality at all times. Postings within social network sites are subject to the same professionalism standards as any other personal interactions. Statements made within online networks will be treated as if the statement was made verbally in a public place.
- Sharing of any patient-related data or images by electronic media is strictly prohibited. Students must not identify patients by name or post information that may lead to the identification of a patient. Limited access to postings through privacy policy setting is not sufficient to ensure privacy.
- When using electronic media, professional boundaries must be maintained at all times. Faculty, staff and students have an obligation to establish, communicate and enforce professional boundaries with patients in the online environment. One must use caution when having online social contact with patients or former patients. The fact that a patient may initiate contact does not permit the student to engage in a personal relationship.
- Do not violate copyrighted or trademarked materials. If you post content, photos or other media, you are acknowledging that you own or have the rights to use these items. IU and IU-CHS logos may not be used on any social media site without the approval of IU-CHS Director of Marketing and Recruitment.
- Disclosure of information regarding course assignments or exams on social networks is a form of academic misconduct and students will be

disciplined according to the procedures outlined in the Indiana University Code of Student Ethics.

- Students are encouraged to immediately contact an appropriate IUSB-CHS administrator or staff about unprofessional or potentially offensive comments or images on social networking sites. Students have a responsibility to promptly report any identified breach of confidentiality or privacy.
- Students must be aware of and comply with IU and clinical sites policies regarding the use of computers, cameras, and other electronic devices in the clinical setting.

In the event that a violation of the social networking policy has occurred, the student's case will be handled according to the IUSB-CHS process for dealing with academic misconduct as outlined in the IUSB Student Bulletin, IUSB-CHS Handbook and IU Code of Student, Ethics Rights Responsibilities. This includes reporting of the event to the Office of Student Conduct.

Students who violate the policy may be dismissed from the program.