

The College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta (CPSA) provides advice to the profession to support regulated members in implementing the CPSA *Standards of Practice*. This advice does not define a standard of practice, nor should it be interpreted as legal advice.

Advice to the Profession documents are dynamic and may be edited or updated for clarity at any time. Please refer back to these articles regularly to ensure you are aware of the most recent advice. Major changes will be communicated to our members; however, minor edits may only be noted within the documents.

Contents

Purpose.....	1
Guiding principles	1
Professionalism and boundaries.....	1
Confidentiality	2
Social media risks.....	2
Responding to fraudulent activity	2
Resources.....	2

Purpose

Social media platforms enable the rapid sharing of information and opinions, often blurring personal and professional boundaries. While these tools can support advocacy and patient education, they also present risks related to privacy, professionalism and misinformation. CPSA regulated members must use social media thoughtfully to maintain public trust and uphold professional obligations.

This document provides guidance on professional use of social media, complementing CPSA's [Standards of Practice](#) and the Canadian Medical Association's [Code of Ethics and Professionalism](#).

Please refer to the [Professionalism in Public Forums](#) Advice to the Profession document for detailed guidance regarding freedom of expression, advocacy and professionalism.

Guiding principles

PROFESSIONALISM AND BOUNDARIES

- Clearly distinguish between personal and professional content.

- Maintain [appropriate boundaries](#) online with patients and [avoid dual relationships](#).
- Do not use social media to promote personal interests at the expense of professional integrity.
- Use caution when communicating with colleagues, even in a closed setting.

CONFIDENTIALITY

- Never post identifiable patient information or images.
- Do not use social media for clinical consultations or follow-up.
- Ensure all online interactions comply with confidentiality and privacy obligations.

SOCIAL MEDIA RISKS

- Exercise caution with language and tone: posts may be shared widely and can be taken out of context.
- Fraudulent accounts are common—use secure passwords, consider verifying your profiles and enable two-factor authentication.
- Monitor your online presence and respond appropriately to impersonation or misuse of your identity.

RESPONDING TO FRAUDULENT ACTIVITY

If you are targeted by a fraudulent account:

- Report it to the platform and your local authorities.
- Notify [CPSA](#) and the [Canadian Medical Protective Association](#) (CMPA) for guidance.
- Inform your audience with a professional disclaimer.

Conclusion

Physicians and physician assistants are encouraged to use social media responsibly, balancing advocacy and free expression with their duty to uphold professionalism and protect patient trust. Be vigilant, monitor your online presence and mitigate any issues arising in a timely manner.

Resources

CPSA team members are available to speak with physicians who have questions or concerns. Please contact support@cpsa.ca or 1-800-561-3899.

RELATED STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

- [Advertising](#)
- [Boundary Violations: Personal](#)
- [Boundary Violations: Sexual](#)

- [*Code of Ethics & Professionalism*](#)
- [*Conflict of Interest*](#)
- [*Continuity of Care*](#)
- [*Job Action*](#)
- [*Patient Record Content*](#)
- [*Responsibility for a Medical Practice*](#)
- [*Virtual Care*](#)

COMPANION RESOURCES

- Advice to the Profession:
 - [Advertising](#)
 - [Boundary Violations: Personal](#)
 - [Boundary Violations: Sexual](#)
 - [Conflict of Interest](#)
 - [Continuity of Care](#)
 - [Job Action](#)
 - [Professionalism in Public Forums](#)
 - [Responsibility for a Medical Practice](#)
 - [Virtual Care](#)
- CPSA's [Code of Conduct](#)
- CMPA:
 - [Good Practices Guide: Using social media](#)
 - [Social media: the opportunities, the realities](#)
 - [10 tips for using social media in professional practice](#)
- CanMEDS:
 - [Health Advocate Role of Physicians](#)

Review Date	Revision/Change
May 2025	Simplified to highlight key principles.
July 2024	Updating language; adding resources.
Aug. 2022	Added section on fraudulent accounts.
May 2020	New version: replaced original with updated guidance on developing issues.
Oct. 2019	Updated names of referenced resources.