



News Release

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ANA and NCSBN Unite to Provide Guidelines on Social Media and Networking for Nurses

Chicago – The American Nurses Association (ANA) and the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN[®]) have mutually endorsed each organization’s guidelines for upholding professional boundaries in a social networking environment.

The use of social media and other electronic communication is expanding exponentially; the latest statistics indicate that there are 150 million U.S. Facebook accounts and Twitter processes more than 250 million tweets worldwide on a daily basis. Social networking can be a positive tool that fosters professional connections, enriches a nurse’s knowledge base, and promotes timely communication with patients and family members. ANA and NCSBN caution nurses that they need to be aware of the potential consequences of disclosing patient-related information via social media and mindful of employer policies, relevant state and federal laws, and professional standards regarding patient privacy and confidentiality.

“Nurses must recognize that it is paramount that they maintain patient privacy and confidentiality at all times, regardless of the mechanism that is being used to transmit the message, be it social networking or a simple conversation. As licensed professionals they are legally bound to maintain the appropriate boundaries and treat patients with dignity and respect,” comments NCSBN Board of Directors President Myra A. Broadway, JD, MS, RN, executive director, Maine State Board of Nursing.

ANA is conducting a social media webinar, [“Nursing Guidelines for Using Social Media,”](#) on Oct. 25 featuring Nancy Spector, PhD, RN, director, Regulatory Innovations, NCSBN and Jennifer Mensik, PhD, RN, NEA-BC, ANA board member and administrator for Nursing and Patient Care Services at St. Luke’s Health System in Boise, Idaho.

“Social Media can be a powerful tool, one with the potential to enhance or undermine not only the individual nurse’s career, but also the nursing profession,” said ANA President Karen A. Daley, PhD, MPH, RN, FAAN. “ANA hopes these principles provide a framework for all nurses to maintain professional standards in a world where communication is ever changing.”

ANA's e-publication, "ANA's Principles for Social Networking and the Nurse," provides guidance to registered nurses on using social networking media in a way that protects patients' privacy, confidentiality and inherent dignity. This publication is available as a downloadable, searchable PDF, which is compatible with most e-readers. It is free to ANA members on the Members-Only Section of www.nursingworld.org; non-members may order the publication at www.nursesbooks.org. ANA also provides additional resources at its [Social Networking Principles Toolkit page](#).

NCSBN's white paper "A Nurse's Guide to the Use of Social Media" can be downloaded free of charge at https://www.ncsbn.org/Social_Media.pdf. NCSBN is also developing electronic and hard copy versions of a brochure for nurses and nursing students that details professional standards regarding patient privacy and confidentiality in social networking. A YouTube video on social media is also being produced. Both products will be available in late November 2011 and will be accessible via www.ncsbn.org free of charge.

The ANA is the only full-service professional organization representing the interests of the nation's 3.1 million registered nurses through its constituent and state nurses associations and its organizational affiliates. The ANA advances the nursing profession by fostering high standards of nursing practice, promoting the rights of nurses in the workplace, projecting a positive and realistic view of nursing, and by lobbying the Congress and regulatory agencies on health care issues affecting nurses and the public.

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The National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) is a not-for-profit organization whose members include the boards of nursing in the 50 states, the District of Columbia and four U.S. territories — American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands and the Virgin Islands. There are also nine associate members. Mission: NCSBN provides education, service and research through collaborative leadership to promote evidence-based regulatory excellence for patient safety and public protection.

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