

Block 1: Introduction

Introduction: *Social Media* Policy Consultation

The College of Physicians and Surgeons (CPSO) is currently reviewing its [*Social Media - Appropriate Use by Physicians* statement](#). We are seeking feedback on our new [draft *Social Media* policy](#), which sets out expectations for physicians when using social media, including around:

- Professional behaviour for physicians using social media;
- Maintaining appropriate boundaries; and
- Protecting patient privacy.

We are inviting feedback at this stage to help inform future revisions to the draft policy and to ensure it is helpful, up to date, comprehensive, and provides appropriate guidance for physician conduct in this space.

The following survey will ask you a few questions about issues related to physicians' social media use and the draft policy. It will take approximately **15 minutes** to complete. You will be able to pause during the survey and restart at a later time if you wish.

If you would like to review the survey in advance, you can download a copy [here](#).

All survey responses will be reviewed, and a summary of the results will be posted online following the close of the consultation. The identity of all individual respondents will be kept strictly confidential.

Do you live in:

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- Ontario
- Rest of Canada
- Outside of Canada
- Prefer not to say

Are you a:

- Physician (including retired)
- Medical student
- Member of the public
- Other health care professional (including retired)
- Organization
- Prefer not to say

Please tell us which organization you are responding on behalf of:

Block 3: Physician Respondents

What kind of physician are you?

- Family physician
- Specialist

If applicable, please specify your area of focus in your family practice or your area of specialty:

Block 2: Demographics

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What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Transgender
- Non-binary
- Not listed:
- Prefer not to answer

Which of the following best represents your race/ethnic background?

- Black (African, Afro-Caribbean, African-Canadian)
- East Asian (Chinese, Korean, etc.)
- Latin American/Hispanic
- Middle Eastern (Arab, Persian, etc.)
- South Asian (East Indian, Pakistani, etc.)
- Southeast Asian (Filipino, Thai, etc.)
- White (European descent)
- Mixed
- Not listed:
- Prefer not to answer

Indigenous Peoples are those who identify as members of First Nations (status, non-status, treaty or non-treaty), Inuit, or Métis communities in Canada.

Based on this description, do you self-identify as an Indigenous person?

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to answer

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LGBTQ2S+ is an abbreviation which represents a broad array of identities including, but not limited to, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and two-spirit.

Based on this description, do you consider yourself to be LGBTQ2S+?

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to answer

The term disability covers a broad range and degree of conditions, some of which are visible and some invisible. A disability may have been present at birth, caused by an accident or developed overtime. Disabilities may also be permanent, temporary or episodic.

Based on this description, do you identify as person with a disability?

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to answer

Block 4: Physicians and Students

Please indicate whether you use social media for the following purposes:

	Yes	No	Prefer not to say
Personal Use	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professional Use	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you are using social media in a professional capacity, could you tell us in what manner? If you are not using social media in either a personal or professional capacity, could you tell us why not? (Optional)

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Block 5: All Respondents

The draft *Social Media* policy differs from the *Social Media – Appropriate Use by Physicians* statement and presents a shift in CPSO’s approach to managing physician conduct on social media.

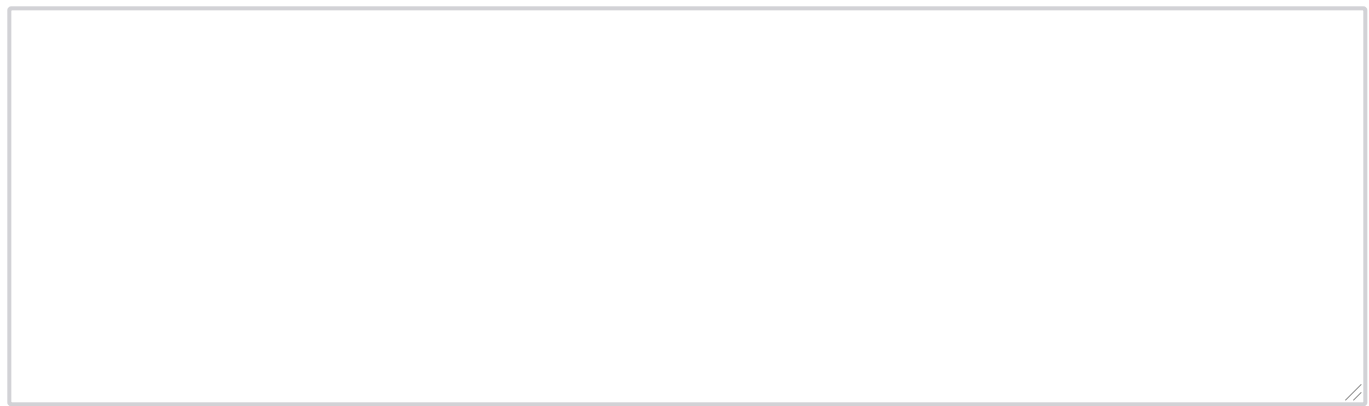
The draft policy sets out specific professional expectations for physicians using social media, while the statement refers to other existing expectations that may apply in the context of social media and provides general guidance and recommendations in this area.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following expectations:

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Physicians using social media would benefit from a policy which sets out specific expectations around social media use	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Physicians using social media are sufficiently regulated by a statement which provides general guidance and recommendations regarding how existing policy or legal expectations apply	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please feel free to elaborate on your answers above. (Optional)

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Definition of Social Media

The draft policy defines social media as “Online platforms, technologies, and practices that people use to share content, opinions, insights, experiences, and perspectives. Examples of social media include Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn, blogging sites, and discussion forums, among many others.”

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
The definition of social media provided is clear	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The definition of social media provided is comprehensive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please feel free to elaborate on your answers above. For example, if you think that the definition is clear and/or comprehensive, why? If you think that the definition is not clear and/or comprehensive, what would make it clearer and/or more comprehensive? Are there examples that should not be included or others that should be included? (Optional)

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Professionalism

We heard feedback from the preliminary consultation on the *Social Media – Appropriate Use by Physicians* statement that the meaning of “unprofessional” was unclear. The draft *Social Media* policy aims to help clarify the meaning of professionalism and unprofessionalism online. We want to know whether the policy provides helpful guidance on this topic.

The draft policy requires that physicians not engage in disruptive behavior while using social media. Disruptive behavior is described as behavior that interferes with or is likely to interfere with the physician’s ability to collaborate with others, the delivery of quality health-care, or the safety or perceived safety of others.

Examples of disruptive behaviour in the context of using social media include, but are not limited to:

- profane, disrespectful, insulting, demeaning, intimidating, or abusive language;
- behaviour that others would describe as bullying, attacking, or harassing; and
- comments that may be perceived as discriminatory (e.g., related to race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, social class, economic status, disability, weight, or level of education).

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

		Neither		
Strongly	Somewhat	agree nor	Somewhat	Strongly
agree	agree	disagree	disagree	disagree

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	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
The explanation of disruptive behaviour provided is clear	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The explanation of disruptive behaviour provided is comprehensive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The examples of disruptive behaviour provided are helpful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Based on the explanations provided, physicians must not engage in disruptive behaviour on social media	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please feel free to elaborate on your answers above. For example, if you think that the description is not clear, what would make it clearer? Are there examples of disruptive behaviour that should not be included or other examples that should be included?

(Optional)

Professionalism

Advocacy is an important component of a physician’s role and CPSO recognizes that physicians may use social media for advocacy purposes.

The draft *Social Media* policy requires that physicians continue to demonstrate professional behaviour and act respectfully while using social media for advocacy.

The draft policy also specifies certain conduct that physicians must avoid, including when they are engaging in advocacy.

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Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Physicians must not communicate or behave in a manner that involves disparaging others and/or making personal attacks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Physicians must not communicate or behave in a manner that involves unsubstantiated and/or defamatory statements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Physicians must not communicate or behave in a manner that involves hate speech	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Physicians must not communicate or behave in a manner that involves discrimination (e.g., racism, transphobia, sexism)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please feel free to elaborate on your answers above. Are there types of conduct that you would not include, or additional types of conduct not listed that you would include?

(Optional)

For review only. Surveys must be completed and submitted online.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Physicians using social media to engage in advocacy must act professionally and respectfully	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Expectations of professional behaviour should not differ based on whether the physician is engaging in advocacy or not	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Expectations on physicians to remain professional and act respectfully would unreasonably limit physicians' ability to advocate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please feel free to elaborate on your answers above. (Optional)

Professionalism: Sharing General Health Information

The draft *Social Media* policy sets out new requirements for physicians who intend to share general health information (content related to clinical, medical, or scientific claims) on social media.

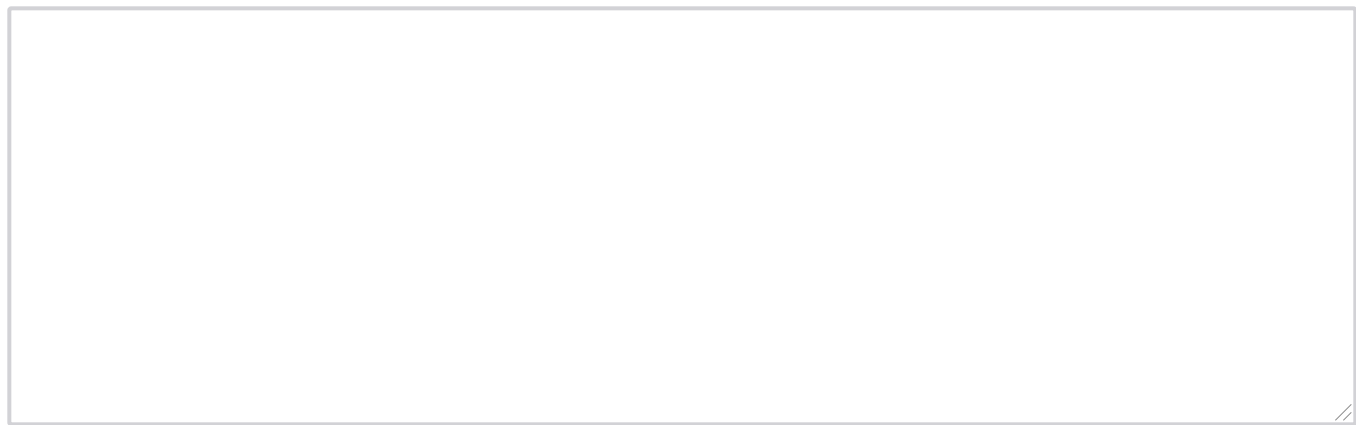
For review only. Surveys must be completed and submitted online.

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following expectations for physicians who share general health information on social media:

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Physicians must share health information that is verifiable and supported by available evidence and science	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Physicians must not share general health information on social media in a way that is misleading or deceptive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Physicians must be aware of and transparent about the limits of their knowledge and expertise when sharing general health information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Physicians must not misrepresent their qualifications when sharing general health information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please feel free to elaborate on your answers above. Please also feel free to touch on any other issues related to physicians posting general health information on social media. For example, are there requirements that should not be included in the list above? Are there other requirements that should be included? (Optional)

For review only. Surveys must be completed and submitted online.



Privacy and Confidentiality

The current statement recommends that physicians refrain from seeking out patient information online without consent, recognizing that there is a risk of harm to the physician-patient relationship when a physician does this.

The draft *Social Media* policy requires that physicians refrain from seeking out a patient's health information online without their consent unless certain criteria are met.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
It is never appropriate for physicians to seek out health information about a patient online	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There may be situations when it would be appropriate for physicians to seek out health information about a patient online	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Patients have a reasonable expectation of privacy that physicians will not search for information about them online	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

For review only. Surveys must be completed and submitted online.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following criteria for when a physician seeks out a patient's health information online without their consent:

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
There must be an appropriate clinical rationale related to safety concerns	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The information cannot be obtained in another manner	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The physician must consider whether it is appropriate to ask the patient for consent to seek out the information online	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The physicians must consider how the search may impact the physician-patient relationship (for example, whether it would lead to a breakdown in trust)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please feel free to elaborate on your answers above. For example, if you think it is inappropriate for physicians to seek out health information about a patient online, why? If you think it is appropriate in some circumstances, are they appropriately captured by the above criteria? Do you think there are criteria that should not be included or are there other criteria that should be included? (Optional)

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Please feel free to touch on any other issues related to physicians and privacy and confidentiality on social media. (Optional)

Block 6: Draft Policy

The following questions will ask you about the [draft Social Media policy](#).

In order to answer the next few questions, it is necessary for you to have read the draft policy. If you have not read the draft policy, you will be skipped to the end of the survey; however, the answers you have provided to all previous questions will still be submitted.

If you would like, you may take a moment to read the draft policy by clicking [here](#).

Have you read the draft *Social Media* policy?

- Yes
- No

We are interested to hear your thoughts about the policy and whether it is clear, comprehensive, and reasonable. The answers and comments you provide will help us determine where changes or improvements may be necessary.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements regarding the draft policy:

For review only. Surveys must be completed and submitted online.

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
The policy is clearly written.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The policy is easy to understand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The policy is comprehensive and addresses all of the relevant or important issues related to physicians' use of social media.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The policy includes definitions of all essential terms.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The policy sets reasonable expectations for physicians.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please feel free to elaborate on your answers above. For example, how can we improve the policy's clarity? How can we make the policy more comprehensive? What expectations, if any, did you find unreasonable? (Optional)

Does the draft policy contain content or expectations that you feel are unnecessary and should be removed? (Optional)

For review only. Surveys must be completed and submitted online.

Block 6: Draft Advice

The draft *Social Media* policy has a companion document called [Advice to the Profession: Social Media](#). The purpose of this companion document is to provide additional information, rationale for policy expectations, and guidance for interpreting the policy expectations.

In order for you to answer the next few questions, it is important that you have read the draft *Advice to the Profession* document. If you have not read the document, you will be skipped to the next section; however, the answers you have provided to all previous questions will still be submitted.

If you would like, you may take a moment to read the draft *Advice to the Profession* document by clicking [here](#).

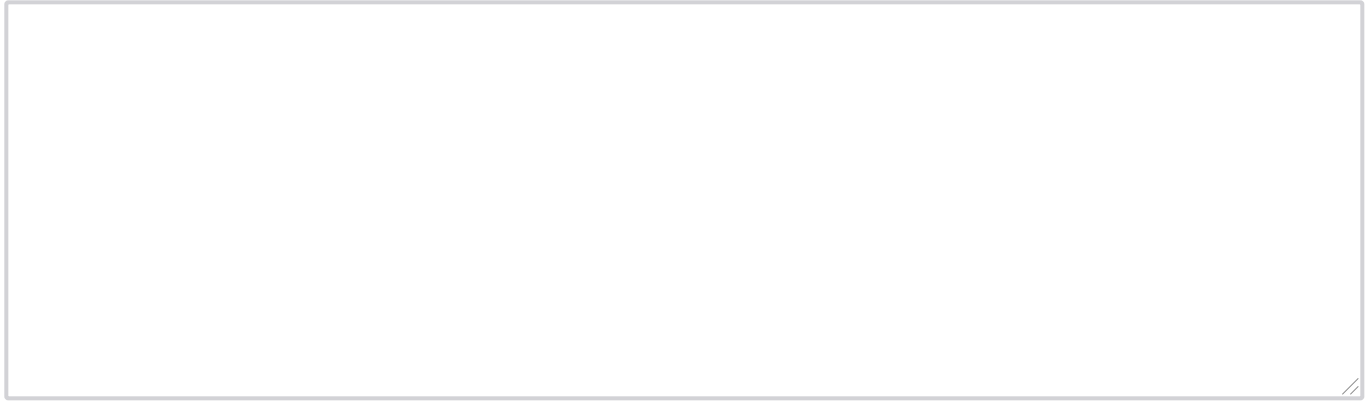
Have you read the draft *Advice to the Profession* document?

- Yes
- No

Are there topics or issues that you think could benefit from additional detail, explanation, or examples that should be addressed in the *Advice to the Profession* document? (Optional)

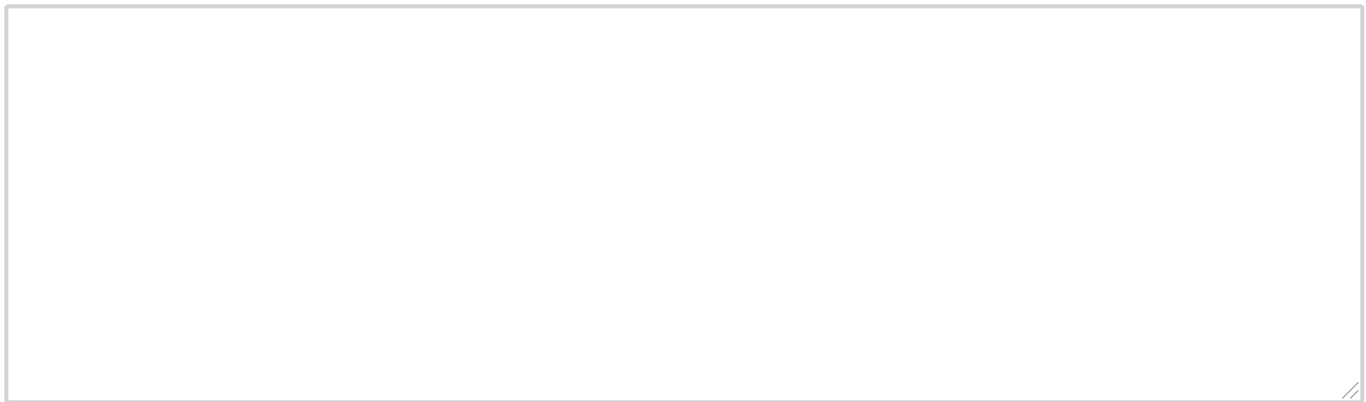
Is there any information in the *Advice to the Profession* document that you think is unhelpful or unnecessary? (Optional)

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Block 7: End

If you have any additional comments that you have not yet provided, please provide them below, by [email](#), or through our [online discussion forum](#). (optional)



Thank You!

Those are all the questions we have for you today.

Once a final policy has been approved by CPSO Council, the policy will be posted on the CPSO website.

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