Policy Statement.
Social media has created unique opportunities for interaction, communication, and networking. Students are expected to abide by the Student Code of Conduct & Discipline and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) when using social media by not revealing patient/client/research subject information, private content, or proprietary information regarding patients/clients/research subjects of the institution.

The purpose of this policy is to provide students with guidelines and regulations for appropriate social media use in order to uphold confidentiality and privacy laws and agreements.

Application of Policy.
This policy applies to all UNTHSC students.

Definitions.
1. **Protected Health Information (PHI).** Any information that can be used to identify patients/clients/research subjects including, but not limited to, demographic information, medical history, laboratory results, insurance information, time of interaction, condition, or diagnosis. Includes information relating to the past, present or future physical or mental health or condition of an individual, the provision of health care to an individual, or the past, present or future payment for the provision of health care to an individual.

2. **Social Media.** Electronic forms of communication that utilize interactive web based and mobile technologies that facilitate information exchange among content users.
   a. Examples include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Blogs, YouTube, and other social networking mediums.

Procedures and Responsibilities.
1. When engaged in activity involving social media in either a professional or personal capacity, students are subject to the following expectations. Failure to comply with these expectations may result in referral to the Senior Student Affairs Officer and his/her designee to consider possible disciplinary sanctions in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and Discipline.
a. Students must maintain the privacy of protected health information as outlined by HIPAA. PHI should never be published and/or distributed using social media or any other non-secure/non-encrypted internet resource to which individuals not directly involved with the patient’s/client’s/research subject’s care may have access unless written permission has been obtained from the patient/client/research subject.

   Responsible Party:  UNTHSC Students

b. Proprietary, confidential, or financial information regarding the institution should never be published on the internet.

   Responsible Party:  UNTHSC Students

2. Students may be subject to disciplinary sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct & Discipline for posting content on social media sites in violation of state or federal law, including the posting of patient PHI

   Responsible Party:  UNTHSC Students

3. Students have an obligation to maintain a professional reputation in order not to undermine trust in their profession. Students should maintain professional boundaries with patients on-line by separating personal and professional content. Students should use privacy settings to safeguard personal and professional information and content in order to avoid on-line misrepresentation of credentials

   Responsible Party:  UNTHSC Students

4. Cyber stalking and inappropriate postings can be considered forms of harassment. Students should be respectful of other social media users. This includes being mindful and respectful of postings, comments, and pictures.

   Responsible Party:  UNTHSC Students

References and Cross-references.
Policy 07.126 Student Code of Conduct and Discipline
The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996
Forms and Tools.

All UNTHSC student related policies can be found online at http://www.hsc.unt.edu/policies/PoliciesList.cfm

UNTHSC Catalog: http://www.hsc.unt.edu/catalog/

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