



# Guidelines for Social Media Participation

Posting your ideas and opinions to websites and communities – whether they're internal or external – is a great way to express yourself, to build relationships, and to learn. But it comes with risks – both to you and to The Ottawa Hospital. That's because the ideas and opinions you share are immediately public and become written records. The Ottawa Hospital encourages you to use these tools to say what you think, but we ask you to keep in mind the following guidelines to help manage this risk:

## Understand the medium

Recognize that websites are not personal, individual, or corporate. They are public spaces and the content you contribute will be available to the public for a long time. It's wise to read and understand the rules of the site prior to posting content.

## Be responsible

Remember that you're responsible for all the content you publish. This means you're legally and professionally responsible for it. Before you post something, consider the impact that your comments might have on your personal and professional reputation.

## Be respectful

Treat the other participants on the site with courtesy and consideration. Don't insult or use slurs or obscenities – they violate our policies and they make both you and the Hospital look bad.

## Know our key policies

When you participate in a social media space as an employee of The Ottawa Hospital, our policies still apply. Be particularly aware of all policies relating to patient privacy and the release of patient information.

## Don't disclose information that isn't public

When speaking about the Hospital on an external site, be careful about what you share. There are many laws that restrict what we can and can't say. Information that is confidential or proprietary is off limits. Information about patients, suppliers or other employees is not to be shared without their approval.

## If you don't own it, be careful how you use it

Posting an image or an idea that is owned by someone else violates copyright law. As a general rule, if you're referring to materials that you've seen on another site, it's best to link to the material (not copy and paste it) and to state its source. The same holds true for published ideas or opinions.

## Social Media:

Interactive web-based tools that encourage users to collaborate, to create, generate and distribute content and to customize applications. A few prominent examples of social media websites include Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, Connections and blogs.

## Add value

Provide worthwhile information and be thoughtful in your views. If you stay focused on helping others learn and become more informed – rather than to draw attention to yourself or to simply vent – your views will be more appreciated and respected.

## Identify yourself

If you have identified yourself as an employee of The Ottawa Hospital, but are not an authorized representative, you will have to make it clear that you're NOT speaking on behalf of the organization. You could include something like, "These postings are my own and don't necessarily represent the views of The Ottawa Hospital", or "I'm speaking for myself and not on behalf of The Ottawa Hospital."

## Keep in mind

Social Media users are responsible for all messages sent using their personal social media accounts. Messages sent via social media websites are not always private or secure and may be read by someone other than the intended addressee.

## Join the conversation

