

In 2011, National Council of State Boards of Nursing published guidelines intended to minimize the risks of using social media. While intended for nurses, the guidelines offer good advice for all in healthcare. Here is a summary:

- Nurses must recognize their ethical and legal obligation to maintain patient privacy and confidentiality at all times.
- Nurses are strictly prohibited from transmitting via any electronic media any patient-related image.
- Do not share, post or otherwise disseminate any information, including images, about a patient.
- Do not identify patients by name, or post or publish information that may lead to the identification of a patient. Limiting access to postings through privacy settings is not sufficient to ensure privacy.
- Do not take photos or videos of patients on personal devices, including cell phones. Follow employer policies for taking photographs or video of patients for treatment or other legitimate purposes using employer-provided devices.
- Use caution when having online social contact with patients or former patients. The fact that a patient may initiate contact with the nurse does not permit the nurse to engage in a personal relationship with the patient.
- Consult employer policies or an appropriate leader for guidance on work-related postings.
- Promptly report any identified breach of confidentiality or privacy.
- Understand and comply with employer policies regarding use of employer-owned computers, cameras and other electronic devices and use of personal devices in the workplace.
- Do not post content or otherwise speak on behalf of the employer unless authorized to do so and follow all applicable policies of the employer.

*MyHIPAA Guide subscribers may download the Nursing Board Guidelines (<https://myhipaaguide.com/myhipaaguide-content/item/153-board-of-nursing-survey>)*