



Complaints - Shifting the Focus

Title of Incident	#Professionalism and Social Media
Summary of Incident	<p>The New Brunswick College of Pharmacists (the College) received a complaint of a member posting inappropriate content on social media. The postings included references to the member's recreational drug use, in-pharmacy 'selfies' sensationalising drug therapy as well as language and references that linked dispensing to illegal drug dealing. The member in question had made their working location known and it was evident they had ties to the profession of pharmacy. This information was publically available through social media. The member was the manager of the pharmacy.</p>
Analysis of incident	<p>As established in <i>The New Brunswick Pharmacy Act, 2014</i>, the College has a duty to “hold forth the independence, integrity and honour of the profession” and to “uphold and protect the public interest in the practice of pharmacy”. Additional references from other key cornerstone documents (mentioned below) demonstrate the above incident constitutes professional misconduct on the part of the member.</p> <p>NAPRA Model Standards of Practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Pharmacists regardless of the role they are fulfilling demonstrate personal and professional integrity” and “accept responsibility for their actions and decisions.”• “Pharmacists regardless of the role they are fulfilling act as a positive role model” <p>Code of Ethics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• When utilizing the process of Value-Based Decision-Making “all values conflicts should be resolved in favour of promoting and protecting the public interest and hold forth the independence, integrity and honour of the profession.” <p>Regulations of the NBCP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Regulations state professional misconduct includes, but is not limited to, “failing to maintain the standards of practice of

	<p><i>the profession” and “engaging in conduct, or performing an act, relevant to the practice of pharmacy that, having regard to all the circumstances, would reasonably be regarded by members as disgraceful, dishonourable or unprofessional.”</i></p>
<p>Resolution</p>	<p>The member involved agreed that their behaviour was unprofessional and immediately removed the content. In addition, the member would cease to post pharmacy-related images that diminishing to the profession.</p> <p>The pharmacy owner (also a member) was informed of the manager’s professional misconduct and advised that some remediation would be necessary.</p> <p>Under direction from the College, the member in question reviewed the e-learning module on the Ontario College of Pharmacy’s (OCP) website entitled “Pause Before You Post” and authored a one-page reflection identifying how postings on social media are problematic for individuals, their practice site, as well as the profession. In the reflection the member highlighted some key findings from the e-learning module such as “In the view of the public, the health care professional only has one persona”. The member understood that their actions could have undermined the confidence that other professionals and the public had in them. Finally, the member demonstrated that they were engaged in using social media to improve the health of their patients through the provision of educational material, resources for healthy living, recall alerts, as well as identifying the various services provided at the pharmacy.</p> <p>The member in question received a letter of caution from the College that would be included in the content of any letter of standing written over the course of one year from the College</p>
<p>Messages and recommendations for pharmacy professionals</p>	<p>Social media presents risk to professionals and patients alike. Potential risks are known to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing poor quality or false information. • Posting unprofessional content. • Breaching patient confidentiality. • Violating the fiduciary relationship between patients and health care professionals (Code of Ethics: Concepts and Definitions) <p>The College recommends, as per the Value-Based Decision-Making model outlined in the Code of Ethics, that all pharmacy professionals (pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and students) ask themselves two questions before posting on social media:</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Will what I am about to do result in promoting and protecting the health, well-being, safety and interests of the public and/or patient? 2. Will what I am about to do hold forth the independence, integrity, and honour of the profession? <p>If the answer to either of these two questions is no, it is best to not post the content on social media.</p> <p>Pharmacy managers are also encouraged to engage their staff with regards to any social media posts made regarding the profession or their workplace. Pharmacy managers may ask, “Do you post pharmacy or health-related material to social media?” to initiate constructive conversations surrounding the appropriate use of social media in the context of professional practice</p>
Resources	<p>It is highly recommended that pharmacy professionals reference the following resources and be proactive in learning about appropriate social media use and the risks of engaging in professional misconduct.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Ontario College of Pharmacy (OCP) has prepared an e-learning module titled “Pause Before You Post”. The e-learning module can be completed at this link. 2. The Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board has implemented policy regarding registrant use of social media. The policy document can be found at this link. 3. NLPB Policy: Registrant Use of Social Media 4. Greyson, S.R., Chretien, K.C., Online Professionalism and the Mirror of Social Media. <i>J Gen Intern Med</i>, 2010; 1227-1229. 5. Ventola, C.L., Social Media and Health Care Professionals: Benefits, Risks, and Best Practices. <i>P&T</i>, 2014; 491-520
References	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NAPRA: Model Standards of Practice 2. NBCP Code of Ethics 3. New Brunswick Pharmacy Act, 2014 4. Regulations of the New Brunswick College of Pharmacists 5. OCP Social Media e-Learning Module “Pause Before You Post”