“To Post or Not To Post, That is the Question”

**Take Responsibility and Use Good Judgment.** You are responsible for the material you post on personal blogs or other social media. Be courteous, respectful, and thoughtful about how other personnel and patients may perceive or be affected by postings. Incomplete, inaccurate, inappropriate, threatening, harassing or poorly worded postings may be harmful to others.

**Example of Bad Judgment:**

1. At a birthday party for one of the nurses on the floor, an employee snaps a photograph of nurse A, B, and C who have worked together for years. In the background, unbeknownst to the photographer, a white board lists the name of Patient X, who is identified as a locally well-known television personality, is in room 123 awaiting a procedure and is in isolation. Nurse A posts the photo on her Facebook page, Nurse B tweets it to her friends, and Nurse C uploads to Instagram and links it to her blog on nursing care. The hospital is informed when the photo appears on a local celebrity news site. While unintentional, a clear breach has occurred.

**Problem:**

**Nurse C = Photo Share + Blog**
- The photo is probably publicly available and may be viewed and copied by an unlimited number of people.
- While Nurse C can control the photo by removing it or limiting who may view it on Instagram, she has rendered that protection meaningless if she directly links it in her blog.
- The nurse can remove the photo and the link herself to halt the continued display, but even after the photo and link are removed, copies may exist.

**Nurse B = Twitter**
- When Nurse B tweeted the photo, she granted another company the right to use and/or sell the image.
- Nurse B may be able to delete the picture from her own Twitter feed, but she cannot “get it back” from the company servers, or those who “re-tweeted” it or copied it.

**Nurse A = Facebook**
- Nurse A may delete the photo from her account, but friends may have copied it or stored it in the interim.
- The photo may have only been available to Nurse A’s friends that also work in the hospital or a similar sub-group, but
- If no controls are used, the photo may have been publicly available – all friends, or even public.

**Risk Takeaways**
- The use of social media is multi-channel – and more developed every day.
- All it takes is a phone and a moment to create a breach – one tweet can reach thousands instantly.
- The use of Social Media in the wrong setting may damage relationships, undermine Vanderbilt University Medical Center’s (VUMC) brand or reputation, discourage teamwork, and negatively impact the institution’s commitment to patient care, education, research, and community service.
- Employees can mitigate and avoid risks by following the VUMC Social Media policy.

**Failure to abide by VUMC’s policies may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination**

**OP 10-10.30** Social Media
**IM 10-30.12** Sanctions for Privacy and Information Security