# AMA *Code of Medical Ethics*

## *2.3.2 Physicians' Use of Social Media for Product Promotion and Compensation*

Social media—internet-enabled communication platforms—enable individual medical students and physicians to have both a personal and a professional presence online. Social media can foster collegiality and camaraderie within the profession as well as provide opportunities to widely disseminate public health messages and other health communications. However, use of social media by medical professionals can also undermine trust and damage the integrity of patient-physician relationships and the profession as a whole, especially when medical students and physicians use their social media presence to promote personal interests.

Physicians and medical students should be aware that they cannot realistically separate their personal and professional personas entirely online and should curate their social media presence accordingly. Physicians and medical students therefore should:

(a) When publishing any content, consider that even personal social media posts have the potential to damage their professional reputation or even impugn the integrity of the profession.

(b) Respect professional standards of patient privacy and confidentiality and refrain from publishing patient information online without appropriate consent.

(c) Maintain appropriate boundaries of the patient-physician relationship in accordance with ethics guidance if they interact with their patients through social media, just as they would in any other context.

(d) Use privacy settings to safeguard personal information and content, but be aware that once on the Internet, content is likely there permanently. They should routinely monitor their social media presence to ensure that their personal and professional information and content published about them by others is accurate and appropriate.

(e) Publicly disclose any financial interests related to their social media content, including, but not limited to, paid partnerships and corporate sponsorships.

(f) When using social media platforms to disseminate medical health care information, ensure that such information is useful and accurate based on professional medical judgment.

*AMA Principles of Medical Ethics: I,II,IV*