



## **2.0 Communications, Client and Community Relations**

### **2.3 Website Development**

#### **2.3.2 Social Media Use by VIHA Employees**

### **1.0 Purpose**

This document is intended to guide the use of social media tools by VIHA employees in their professional capacity.

VIHA trusts staff and volunteers to use social media tools responsibly, in the same way they use the other business tools available to them. Social media provides another avenue for VIHA to build relationships and share information that will promote health and wellness in VIHA communities and encourage open exchange of information and ideas.

### **2.0 Definitions and Background**

Social media refers to online tools that allow users to communicate and interact instantly, actively sharing and commenting on content. Examples include Twitter, Facebook, Linked In, YouTube, and a growing number of others. VIHA uses social media tools to share information about programs, services and activities. For example:

**2.1 *Twitter*** allows users to send brief (140 characters) text updates (called “tweets”) for viewing by friends or the public. VIHA uses Twitter to find and share health news as well as news releases and announcements. To share VIHA information via Twitter (<http://twitter.com/VanIslandHealth>), contact Communications,

**2.2 *Facebook*** allows people to connect online and show preferences by ‘Liking’ posts and pages. VIHA has an organizational Facebook page used for information sharing, public engagement and recruitment. To share VIHA information via Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Vancouver-Island-Health-Authority/135150073228437>), contact Communications.

### **3.0 Planning a Social Media Approach for a VIHA Initiative**

All use of social media for VIHA business must be approved and managed by VIHA Communications. If you are considering using social media for a VIHA initiative, contact VIHA Communications for assistance in developing a plan that identifies the target

audience and objectives in order to determine the most appropriate tools and the resources required. Social media tools work best when used on a specific, targeted communications campaign in conjunction with traditional web, print, television and/or radio communications as well as community outreach, public meetings and other methods that are used to convey, seek and exchange information.

### **4.0 Guidelines for Employees Participating in Social Media**

#### **4.1 Personal Use of Social Media Sites**

VIHA does not use social media to distribute messages that employees are required to read. Therefore, unless you are accessing social media in a professional capacity, employee participation is voluntary and to be done outside of work hours and not on VIHA equipment.

Be aware that people will likely be able to determine where you work and may assume you are speaking on behalf of VIHA. If you make personal comments on public issues, you may wish to make it clear you are speaking as an individual.

The following tip sheet provides information about protecting your privacy:  
[https://intranet.viha.ca/departments/information\\_privacy/Documents/key\\_message\\_may\\_7.pdf](https://intranet.viha.ca/departments/information_privacy/Documents/key_message_may_7.pdf)

#### **4.2 Maintain Privacy and Confidentiality**

Whether using social media in a personal or professional capacity, never disclose confidential patient or business-related information or reference individual patients, clients, staff or suppliers. Social media is governed by the Confidentiality Agreement signed by all VIHA employees as outlined in the VIHA policies under Privacy and Confidentiality (section 1.5):  
<https://apps.viha.ca/png/>. Contact the Information Access and Privacy Office if you have questions: [http://www.viha.ca/info\\_privacy/contact\\_us.htm](http://www.viha.ca/info_privacy/contact_us.htm).

#### **4.3 Using Social Media in a Professional Capacity**

Only provide content or comments on topics about which you have direct professional knowledge. Otherwise, refer the issue to the most appropriate staff member or to the VIHA Communications Department.

If you come across customer complaints or online content that questions VIHA's credibility, please alert the Communications Department. Do not feel that you need to respond to comments that are posted on line. When alerted, Communications will notify the program area involved to ensure the concerns or issues are addressed.

Do not use the VIHA logo, unless specifically authorized to do so.

#### **4.3.1 Practice Respectful Communications**

Refrain from posting items that could reflect negatively on VIHA's or your own professional integrity, or that of others. Consider whether you would make the same comment in a public face to face meeting.

Respect the laws governing defamation, discrimination, harassment, and copyright. Comments may not include profanity, off-colour or sexual humour or references to inappropriate conduct such as drug or alcohol abuse. Any comments you make online that may compromise an individual's privacy or reputation will be subject to the VIHA policies referenced below.

#### **4.3.2 Use a Personable Tone**

Social media generally uses a less formal tone. Sharing stories and anecdotes will help connect your audience to the topic, but ensure stories do not cross privacy and confidentiality boundaries.

#### **4.3.3 Be Responsive and Relevant**

Ensure you have the resources to share well thought-out and relevant information, update content regularly and respond to input in a timely manner.

## **5.0 References**

### **VIHA Policies**

- a. Privacy and Confidentiality (section 1.5):  
[http://apps.viha.ca/pnp/user\\_index.aspx?header1=1](http://apps.viha.ca/pnp/user_index.aspx?header1=1).
- b. Acceptable Use of Assets and Resources (policy 16.4.3.P):  
[http://apps.viha.ca/pnp/user\\_index.aspx?header1=16](http://apps.viha.ca/pnp/user_index.aspx?header1=16)
- c. Staff Conflict of Interest (policy 5.5.1):  
[http://apps.viha.ca/pnp/user\\_index.aspx?header1=5](http://apps.viha.ca/pnp/user_index.aspx?header1=5).
- d. Respectful Workplace (policy 5.5.2P):  
[http://apps.viha.ca/pnp/user\\_index.aspx?header1=5](http://apps.viha.ca/pnp/user_index.aspx?header1=5).