SUBJECT: USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

POLICY: Employees of Nationwide Children’s Hospital and its affiliated entities (collectively, “NCH”) and other members of the NCH workforce including but not limited to trainees and volunteers (collectively, “Workforce Members”) may not use social media for official NCH institutional purposes unless otherwise approved in accordance with this policy. Personal use and approved institutional use of social media and the use of a hospital device to run social media channels must comply with this policy, the NCH Confidentiality and Technology Use Agreement, as well as all other applicable NCH policies and guidelines.

PURPOSE: To ensure that Workforce Members’ use of social media websites does not jeopardize NCH compliance with applicable laws and regulations or compromise NCH confidential and proprietary information.

DEFINITIONS:

Social Media: All means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including, but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Google+, Pinterest, blogs, message boards, wikis, podcasts, product review sites, online forums, gaming sites, or any other site where information like text, images, video, sound, or other files that can be uploaded or posted.

Institutional Use: Any use of Social Media for the purpose of (1) representing, or having the appearance of representing, the views, positions, or statements of NCH; (2) establishing web pages, social media identities, blogs, or other mechanisms which provide public access to information about NCH; (3) performing NCH job responsibilities through social media; and/or (4) engaging in any other Social Media activity on behalf of NCH.

Personal Use: Use of Social Media for non-professional purposes or for purposes that are unrelated to a Workforce Member’s association with NCH.
SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

A. NCH Workforce Members’ use of Social Media during working hours, whether using NCH equipment/technology or personal devices, must not interfere with the Workforce Members’ job responsibilities and performance and must not deny other Workforce Members access to NCH system resources. A Workforce Member’s manager may prohibit a Workforce Member’s use of Social Media while on NCH property or while using NCH equipment.

B. All NCH policies, including the Standards of Conduct, apply to an NCH Workforce Member’s use of Social Media, whether for approved Institutional use or Personal use. NCH Workforce Members are solely responsible for what they choose to post online. Any conduct that adversely affects an NCH Workforce Member’s job performance, the performance of other NCH Workforce members, or otherwise adversely affects NCH’s interests may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

C. NCH Workforce Members may use Social Media only for their personal capacity for Personal Uses and not on behalf of NCH.

D. An application process is required for all Institutional Uses of Social Media. The application must be approved in writing by the Marketing and/or Legal Services Department.

E. When using Social Media either for personal use or for the institution, NCH Workforce Members must not:

1. Disclose NCH confidential or proprietary information, which includes, but is not limited to, any patient information or medical records and Nationwide Children’s Hospital business and financial information, in any form (verbal, paper, electronic);

2. Disclose NCH intellectual property or trade secrets, such as ideas, inventions, or discoveries;

3. Disclose any photos, videos, or other images of patients or their families, unless an appropriate written authorization has been obtained;
4. Threaten any NCH Workforce Member, make maliciously false statements about NCH or any of its Workforce Members, or otherwise violate NCH’s policies prohibiting discrimination, harassment, and retaliation;

5. Do any of the following in a manner that would reflect negatively upon NCH: (a) make explicit sexual references or references to illegal drug use; (b) use obscene or profane language that would be unacceptable in the workplace; (c) disparage any race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or national origin; or (d) link or refer to sites that contain maliciously false, harassing, pornographic, or indecent content;

6. Harass, defame, humiliate, threaten, or make disparaging comments about NCH patients, families, or visitors;

7. Use (a) their NCH job title; (b) the NCH name, logo, or brand; or (c) any NCH Social Media site to endorse or promote any product, opinion, cause, or political issue or candidate;

8. Pressure, coerce, or intimidate a co-worker to “friend” or otherwise connect via Social Media, although a Workforce Member may, from time-to-time, make non-coercive requests to other Workforce Members to connect via Social Media.

9. If for Personal Use or unless otherwise approved, Workforce Members should never provide medical advice via Social Media if that advice could be construed as being on behalf of NCH;

10. Unless approved, NCH Workforce Members may not use any NCH logo or trademark or any other copyrighted NCH information;

11. Unless approved, an NCH Workforce Member should never conduct official NCH business or perform job responsibilities through Social Media;

12. NCH Workforce Member may not use Social Media to reach out to members of the media.

F. When using Social Media, NCH Workforce Members must:

1. Comply with the Standards of Conduct and all other NCH policies;
2. Speak on the Workforce Member’s own behalf and not on behalf of NCH (unless communication is an approved Institutional Use of social media);

3. Refrain from conduct or communication that may damage the goodwill, brand, or business reputation of Nationwide Children’s Hospital;

4. Maintain appropriate professional boundaries. Workforce Members should never interact with an existing patient or the patient’s family via Social Media, unless the Social Media relationship existed prior to the provider-patient relationship; and

5. Report violations of this policy to Human Resources.

G. Social Media conduct that violates this policy may be the subject of disciplinary action up to and including termination, even if the conduct occurs off the premises or during Nonworking Hours.

H. This policy shall not be interpreted or applied by NCH or its supervisors to in any way prohibit the exercise of any employee rights under state or federal law.

Approved by: ________________________________

Richard J. Miller, President and Chief Operating Officer