

Marketing Your Practice in the Value-Based Healthcare World Toolkit

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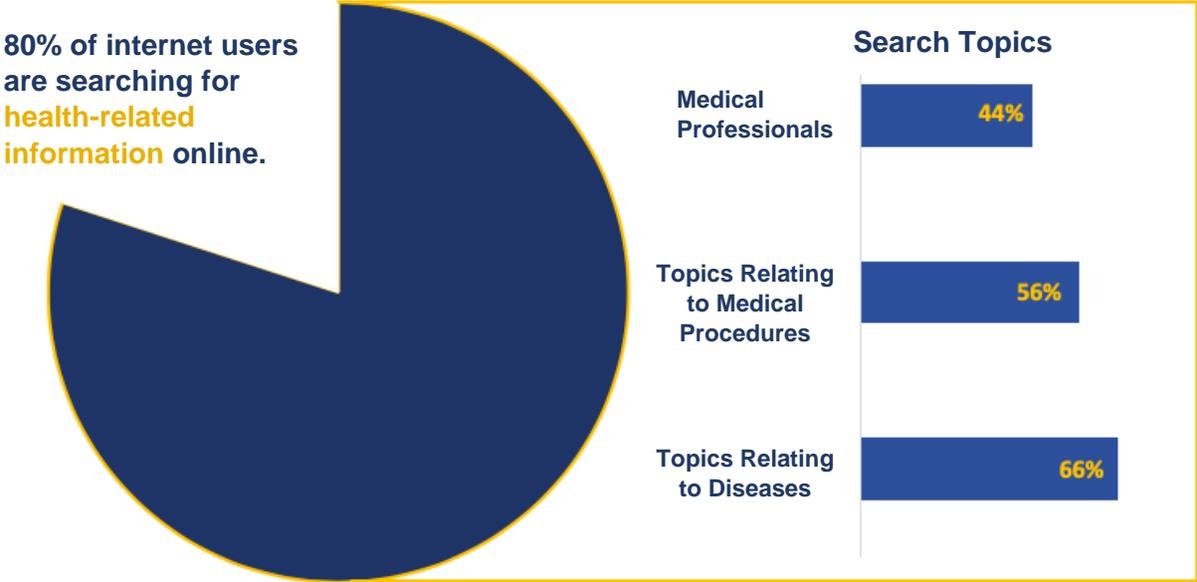
Welcome to the *Marketing Your Practice in the Value-Based Healthcare World Toolkit* developed by the COSEHC QualityImpact Practice Transformation Network (PTN). This document provides a number of resources and tools that providers and staff may leverage to improve brand messaging, increase online visibility, and effectively engage local communities, ultimately expanding reach and highlighting accomplishments across the community.

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Introduction

Whether a small, rural practice or a large integrated health system, practices can effectively communicate their commitment to delivering high-quality care to the community. To maximize the impact of the message, practices may consider identifying their target population and customizing the outreach approach by tailoring key messages and identifying the most appropriate marketing outlet.



Source: Pew Research Center. (2019). "10% of Americans don't use the internet. Who are they?" [Link](#).

Nearly one in four millennials have looked up quality ratings for hospitals online. As health consumers are increasingly using the internet to research medical professionals and services, having and maintaining an online presence for practices is becoming more important to meet the needs of a changing patient population.¹

With a list of seemingly endless competing priorities facing your clinic every day, it is easy to forget to take a step back and recognize all the great work you are doing on the behalf of the community. Achieving high quality results, demonstrating your impact or benefit, and offering new programs are all opportunities to spread the word about your practice. Good marketing can result in stronger brand recognition, increased patient acquisition and retention, improved staff satisfaction and pride, and potentially even promotion of the local community at the national level. Effective marketing requires a thoughtful plan and a dedicated leader. We recommend aligning on a strategy and identifying a marketing champion early on in the process to maximize your impact.

This toolkit is intended to provide practices with the resources and tools to communicate their value through a variety of mediums, including print, web, social media, and more.

Managing Your Brand Reputation

Building a brand reputation can help practices establish trust and loyalty with their patient population. Building a strong brand presence can highlight differentiators about your practice and increase awareness to potential patients looking for services in their area. Having a strong online presence with a consistent image and messaging builds legitimacy and can make potential patients feel confident in choosing your practice.

Branding is developing a recognizable company image that sets one’s goods or services apart from competitors.² Practices can establish meaningful brand connections with customers by conveying a message of trust, referent influence, and corporate social responsibility to consumers.³

Tips to Strengthen Your Brand:⁴

1. Develop or reaffirm the organization’s mission, vision, and values
2. Identify key characteristics that set your organization apart
3. Identify your customer touchpoints or the points at which your customers will encounter your brand
4. Ensure that your brand reflects your business strategy
5. Ensure all key messages and formatting are consistent with your brand across engagement efforts

Patients consume information differently based on their demographics, so it is important to consider multiple mediums to comprehensively promote your organization.

Tips for Effective Marketing:

- Set standard design elements across all forms of public communications (e.g. standard fonts, logos, color schemes, etc.)
- Keep key messages and tone consistent across platforms
- Customize content for each platform, as opposed to simply sharing the same content via different media outlets
- Engage the audience (i.e. encourage comments and content sharing)
- Make every post concise
- Post during peak traffic hours (See [Building a Social Media Presence](#))
- Promote your presence between platforms (e.g. when posting, share links to other social media accounts)
- Define a goal for frequency that you will post (e.g. weekly/monthly) and plan topics ahead of time to align with expected needs, such as flu season and well-child check ups
- Include a standard “boilerplate,” or brief paragraph describing your organization, at the end of all press releases (See [Writing A Boilerplate](#))

Key Takeaways:

- Develop or reaffirm your organization’s mission, vision, and values
- Standardize your recognizable image components (e.g. color scheme, font for communications, logo)
- Align on your organization’s branding strategy

Identifying Key Messages and Talking Points

Over the course of your involvement with the QualityImpact PTN, you have participated in a number of quality improvement activities. These initiatives present a great opportunity to leverage your recognition and quality improvement projects to demonstrate your value within your community.

Start by identifying the key messages, or the takeaways, you want to convey to your audience. While you want your organization to maintain consistent key messages and themes across all communications, your messages can be tailored to fit the audience and media outlet. For example, around the Transforming Clinical Practices Initiative (TCPI), key messages may include:

Target Audience	Key Message
Payers	<i>We are committed to improving quality, reducing unnecessary utilization and readmissions, reducing costs</i>
Patients and Families	<i>We are innovating health care delivery to meet the needs of our patients and their families</i>
Community Organizations	<i>We are improving access to high-quality care for our community</i>

The use of facts, figures, and quantitative results can be leveraged to support messaging and demonstrated achievements. For example, it is a more powerful to state, “our hypertension control improved by 35% over the past six months,” opposed to simply remarking, “our hypertension control improved.”

To maximize patient engagement after a marketing effort, always include a call to action, or a tangible next step for the patient to engage the practice. For example, if you publish a press release about a new service line, provide a link or phone number for the patient to schedule an appointment.

Talking Points to Demonstrate Your Organization’s Success Under TCPI:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recognition status (Exemplary, Early Exemplary, Improving) ▪ Exemplary practice story ▪ Quality improvement activities (e.g. CAP or SPRINT) ▪ Demonstrated improvements in quality, cost, or utilization measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Involvement in value-based payment arrangements ▪ Lessons learned or best practices implemented in practice to share peer-to-peer learnings ▪ Overarching anecdotes from experience

Additional Talking Points to Highlight May Include:

- New services offered at clinic
- New providers or staff joining clinical team
- Flu season awareness/immunization resources
- Awards/Recognition
- Availability of patient education materials
- Public health campaigns
- Upcoming events/news
- Collaborations with local stakeholders

Key Takeaways:

- Identify 3-5 key messages consistent across communications and marketing mediums
- Develop talking points conveying key messages appropriate for distribution event and medium

Sharing Your Message

When developing a marketing campaign, consider implementing a system to streamline the process and ensure that the entire clinic is on the same page regarding goals and expectations.

Framework for Launching Your Marketing Campaign

After level setting on goals, aligning on brand identity and key messages, and identifying a champion, it's time to communicate your message to your target audience.

To effectively communicate your message to your target audience and maximize impact, you may consider segmenting your audience. In health care, we already segment our patient population to meet individual needs according to key demographics, especially age and sex. Choosing the most effective media outlet for the target population is a similar approach.

Think about how your audience should receive the message. Each platform varies in audience demographics, peak performance times, tools, etc., so you may use various platforms to effectively deliver your message to your target audience. For example, a platform like Instagram, which generally skews toward audiences ages 18 to 29 years, may not be the appropriate platform to deliver a message about Medicare Annual Wellness Visits (AWV), intended for patients over the age of 65. A more appropriate medium for the AWV campaign may be a mail or phone campaign. If you are launching a campaign to promote Pap screening in women ages 21 to 29, you may choose to communicate your message through social media outlets, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, which skew towards younger demographics.

Table 1: Overview of Common Marketing Mediums

Medium	Overview	Considerations
Direct Mail	A print document (e.g. flyer, postcard, etc.) that can be sent to current or potential patients detailing information about practice or services offered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest response rate of all mediums (~3.7%)⁵ • Audience believes print is more trustworthy and personal, leading to higher likelihood engagement • Likely more expensive than electronic communications
Email	An electronic message that can be sent to a listserv, or list of contacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively low response rate (<1%)⁶ • Little to no cost to organization • Highest return on investment form of marketing • Oftentimes patient-specific emails can be sent directly to patients through the EHR
Website/Search Engine	Online central page and “source of truth” for services offered, current news and events, links to patient portal, and/or contact information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varies in price, from free to low monthly price • Can link to actionable information (e.g. phone number, patient portal, online appointment schedule, etc.) • Recommended to optimize to be search visible (See Improving Web Search Visibility below)
Social Media	A variety of social networking websites allowing businesses to post content and engage consumers, often with “like,” comment, or share features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can easily segment audience and message to target audience • Can link to external resources (e.g. website) and actionable information • No cost to organization (unless boosting or sponsoring content) • Examples: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, etc.
Clinician Rating and Review Sites	Sites allowing individuals to publicly rate and review clinicians, often providing background information on clinician including services offered, awards and recognitions, medical education, and more	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most information dependent on reviewers • May impact clinician’s virtual reputation • Opportunity to engage patients and respond to reviews in HIPAA-compliant communications (See Managing Reviews below) • Examples: Yelp, Healthgrades, Vitals, Google My Business, WebMD, etc.
Local News Outlets	A press release and/or fact sheet may be picked up by to local media outlets for coverage on current events (e.g. seasonal health fairs, patient engagement opportunities, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually requires pitching press release to reporters and may be competing with other local news • High level of visibility and reach • May provide opportunity to capture consumer and continue relationship

Disclaimer: It is the responsibility of the practice to ensure HIPAA-compliance in all communications. As per HIPAA Privacy Rules, patients must provide explicit, written consent for

the use or disclosure of their protected health information for marketing purposes. Please review [HIPAA guidelines](#) to maintain compliance before including patients in marketing efforts.

Developing a Boilerplate

A boilerplate is a standardized “about you” paragraph that should effectively and concisely educate the general public about your:

- Organization’s background
- Services offered
- Mission and values
- Size and key locations
- Links to external resources

A boilerplate should be able to serve as a stand-alone overview paragraph for potential new patients who have never been exposed to the organization and what it has to offer. The boilerplate should be located at the bottom of all organization communications to ensure consistency in messaging and to improve searchability.

Steps to Writing an Effective Boilerplate:

1. Align on Your Goals and What You Hope to Communicate

What is it that you hope to communicate to potential new clients? What is it that makes your organization unique? You may wish to highlight your organization’s long history of serving the community, your company culture, awards, achievements, or a combination.

For example, for many small or rural health clinics, it may be your ability to provide patients access to high-quality, personalized medical care with care coordination that may be difficult to replicate in larger health systems. For larger health systems, it may be your access to state-of-the-art facilities with a wide variety of specialists and cutting-edge technology.

2. Describe Your Business

Concisely describe what your organization does in 1-3 sentences. This paragraph should effectively communicate what your organization has to offer to an audience who has never heard of the organization previously. This may include your services offered, your location(s), when you were founded, the size of your organization, and awards and recognitions.

3. Add Relevant Business Details

Include any relevant business details that may interest individuals, such as payers, regulators, journalists ,and patients, in engaging with your organization. This may include key community partnerships, your impact and reach into the community, or any value-based contracts you are currently involved in.

4. Reiterate Your Mission Statement

Within your boilerplate, you may choose to include your vision or mission statement. This communicates the overarching, big-picture messaging your company hopes to communicate to the community.

5. Use Keywords

To improve searchability and visibility of your organization, include keywords your intended audience is likely to use in search engines, for example, Google. You can identify keywords relevant to your organization by searching your name in Google, then scrolling to the bottom of the page, and reviewing the terms included in the “Searches Related to [insert practice name]” section.

6. End with a Call to Action

End your boilerplate with a specific call to action for your audience. This may include a link to your website, a phone number for patients to schedule an appointment, a link to your patient portal, or anything you see fit.

7. Refine Your Boilerplate

Refine and update your boilerplate to ensure that you continuing to communicate the most important details about your organization.

Tips for a Successful Boilerplate:

- Stick with the same verb tense and be consistent with the point-of-view (third person vs. first person)
- Ensure all claims are truthful
- Limit the boilerplate to no more than a short paragraph or few sentences

Example Boilerplate: Mount Sinai Health System

“The Mount Sinai Health System is New York City's largest integrated delivery system, encompassing eight hospitals, a leading medical school, and a vast network of ambulatory practices throughout the greater New York region. Mount Sinai's vision is to produce the safest care, the highest quality, the highest satisfaction, the best access and the best value of any health system in the nation. The Health System includes approximately 7,480 primary and specialty care physicians; 11 joint-venture ambulatory surgery centers; more than 410 ambulatory practices throughout the five boroughs of New York City, Westchester, Long Island, and Florida; and 31 affiliated community health centers. The Icahn School of Medicine is one of three medical schools that have earned distinction by multiple indicators: ranked in the top 20 by U.S. News & World Report's "Best Medical Schools", aligned with a U.S. News & World Report's "Honor Roll" Hospital, No. 12 in the nation for National Institutes of Health funding, and among the top 10 most innovative research institutions as ranked by the journal Nature in its Nature Innovation Index. This reflects a special level of excellence in education, clinical practice, and research. The Mount Sinai Hospital is ranked No. 14 on U.S. News & World Report's "Honor Roll" of top U.S. hospitals; it is one of the nation's top 20 hospitals in Cardiology/Heart Surgery, Diabetes/Endocrinology, Gastroenterology/GI Surgery, Geriatrics, Gynecology, Nephrology, Neurology/Neurosurgery, and Orthopedics in the 2019-2020 "Best Hospitals" issue. Mount Sinai's Kravis Children's Hospital also is ranked nationally in five out of ten pediatric

specialties by U.S. News & World Report. The New York Eye and Ear Infirmary of Mount Sinai is ranked 12th nationally for Ophthalmology and the South Nassau Communities Hospital is ranked 35th nationally for Urology. Mount Sinai Beth Israel, Mount Sinai St. Luke's, Mount Sinai West, and South Nassau Communities Hospital are ranked regionally.

For more information, visit <https://www.mountsinai.org> or find Mount Sinai on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#).”

Writing a Press Release

A press release is a valuable tool that can communicate an organization’s key messages to a variety of audiences, including patients, payers, regulators, and local press. Before writing a press release, consider the objective of the release and what you hope to convey about your organization. For example, topics may include:

- New Service Lines
- Practice Milestones
- New Technology or Patient Portal
- Specials and/or Promotions
- Awards and Recognition
- Charitable Work in the Community
- Services Related to New Studies/Evidence-Based Guidelines

In general, you will take a funnel approach to writing the press release, meaning you will start with big picture ideas and provide additional details and actionable data relating to the who/what/where/when/how as the reader progresses.

Steps to Writing a Press Release:

Step 1: Fill out your release date and timing (whether for immediate release or timed).

Step 2: Develop your headline (6 words or less). Make the headline about 20-point font and if a subheader is included, put it in italics size 16-point font.

Step 3: Write your introduction paragraph. Start with the City, State where your organization is located. For example: “New Orleans, Louisiana – [insert key message].” This paragraph should include the most important information and key message you hope to convey in your press release.

This includes two to three short sentences focused on the “news” and the key message.

Step 4: Answer the 5 W’s: Who, What, Where, Why, When. Keep your sentences simple. Try not to include too much industry jargon and focus on facts, data, and information.

Step 5: Include the boilerplate section with key background information about organization.

Step 6: Include contact details for media inquiries such as email address and/or phone number.

Tips for a Successful Press Release:

- Limit the press release to five paragraphs
- Always include a boilerplate
- Limit your headline to approximately six high impact words
- Edit your press release for grammar, spelling, and accuracy of information presented

To access a sample press release template, see the toolkit supplemental resources.

Press releases tend not to vary in format, providing a streamlined approach to communicating information. See three examples below relating to topics, including:

1. Recognition for an Award
2. New Staff Hire
3. PCMH Recognition and PTN Participation

Recognition for an Award



PRESS RELEASE

January 24, 2018

CONTACT

Rudy Arispe: 210.438.2088

Tricia Lopez: 210.290.6762

Bexar County Medical Society Honors Dr. Manuel Quiñones with Golden Aesculapias Award for Lifetime of Distinguished Service

Dr. Manuel Quiñones, a family practice physician with HealthTexas Medical Group, has been honored by the Bexar County Medical Society with its Golden Aesculapias Award for a lifetime of distinguished service.

“I am humbled and honored to receive this award and to have my name among the giants of our medical community,” Dr. Quiñones said. “The award acknowledges ‘lifetime achievement,’ but I’m not even finished yet.”

In 1980, the Bexar County Medical Society (BCMS) established the Golden Aesculapius Award as its highest honor recognizing a lifetime of distinguished service by a BCMS member to its patients and the profession. This award is not given annually but only upon the occasion of nomination and confirmation of distinguished service. It is given to only one physician per year.

Eligible physicians are BCMS members who have provided a lifetime of distinguished service to the medical profession in Bexar County. In the past, the award has been given at the BCMS installation of officers’ events, but it can be given at any event agreed upon by the BCMS Board of Directors.

A San Antonio native, Dr. Quiñones has been practicing medicine for 35 years and is a past president of the Bexar County Medical Society. He was also recently named to the Texas Medical Board by Gov. Greg Abbott.

About HealthTexas

HealthTexas Medical Group, which employs 350 employees and 60 providers, was established in 1994 by local physicians who recognized the need for primary care doctors to play a more significant role in a patient's overall health and wellness. Since then, HealthTexas has grown to include more than 50 primary healthcare providers in 17 primary care clinics.

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New Staff Hire



For more information: Marlene Roberti
Associate Vice President, Development and
Communications
401-767-4100, ext. 3014
marlenero@thundermisthealth.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thundermist Health Center of Woonsocket Welcomes Dr. Niel Gandhi

Thundermist Health Center of Woonsocket recently welcomed Niel Gandhi, MD to its practice as a Family Medicine Physician. Dr. Gandhi attended the Saba University, School of Medicine, and upon graduating, completed his residency in Family Medicine and Hospice and Palliative Care Medicine at Eastern Maine Medical Center in Bangor, Maine.

Prior to joining the Thundermist medical staff, Dr. Gandhi was on the Patient Advisory Council at Eastern Maine Medical Center where he met with patients to address lapses in care.

As a Family Medicine Physician at Thundermist Health Center of Woonsocket, Dr. Gandhi will provide primary and preventative care to patients from newborns to seniors.

Thundermist is a level three Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) providing care to patients and accepts most insurances. Discounted rates are available based on family size and income.

Dr. Gandhi is accepting new patients with a minimal wait time. To make an appointment with Dr. Gandhi, call 401-767-4100.

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Thundermist Health Center is a non-profit community health center whose mission is to improve the lives of patients and surrounding communities by delivering exceptional health care that breaks down barriers and promotes healthy lifestyles. Services include primary medical care, dental care, behavioral health services, school-based health care, QuickCare, pharmacy, Trans* Health Access, and nutritional services, in particular, a Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program. Thundermist has locations in West Warwick, Woonsocket, and South County. It serves clients regardless of insurance and ability to pay. Thundermist Health Center is a Level 3 Patient-Centered Medical Home, the highest level of recognition from the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA). In 2016, Thundermist served more than 42,200 patients.

PCMH Recognition and PTN Participation



NEWS RELEASE

Date: June 6, 2017
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Innova Primary Care
247 Chateau Drive
Huntsville, AL 35801
Telephone: (256) 763-7858
Fax: (256) 217-5838
www.InnovaPrimaryCare.com

Medical Practice of the Year Relocates to New Clinic

Innova Primary Care formerly known as BrookeMD Primary Care has relocated to a new clinic near Crestwood Medical Center.

Huntsville, AL- Innova Primary Care has relocated to a newly renovated clinic located at 247 Chateau Drive near Crestwood Medical Center. The 2016 Medical Practice of the Year Award winner, formerly known as BrookeMD Primary Care, has embraced their vision for what they want primary care to be in the community of Madison County and has received national recognition for becoming a Level 3 Patient Centered Medical Home.

The National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) has created a Patient Centered Medical Home Recognition Program that was adopted by Innova Primary Care early in 2016. Over the course of several months the team at Innova Primary Care completed the recognition process and received the highest recognition at Level 3. The goal of a Patient Centered Medical Home is to improve patient care coordination, outcomes and efficiency.

The concepts and principles of a Patient Centered Medical Home played a significant role in the design and layout of the new building at Innova Primary Care. The facility incorporates LEAN principles from studies conducted by the University of Alabama in Huntsville to create a highly efficient and technology driven clinic. Director of Operations, David Uptagrafft commented, "Our work with UAH and COSEHC aided the transformation of our clinic to a more highly efficient and patient-centered space. We look forward to utilizing our new facility to push the envelope and innovate healthcare delivery for our region."

The design of Innova Primary Care includes a large backstage area for the clinical team to collaborate on care and have a direct line of sight to critical patient areas at all times. The increased number of patient rooms and the consistent layout within each room allows for a much more personalized approach to patient care and decreased wait times. Dr. Brooke Uptagrafft said, "Our new space allows us to take the model of the Patient Centered Medical Home to the next level. I believe our patients will be thrilled to see the additional services we will be adding in the future now that we have the capacity."

Innova Primary Care looks forward to sharing extended service offerings and more information regarding technology partnerships at their new clinic in the coming months. Public Relations Coordinator Morgan Boone commented, "This is an exciting time for Innova Primary Care and we are looking forward to continuing to share more updates with our patients and community as we continue to grow."

For more information about Innova Primary care please visit:
www.InnovaPrimaryCare.com or visit our Facebook page Innova Primary Care

Images available upon request.

###

Engaging Your Local News Media

After writing your press release, you may choose to distribute it to a variety of local news outlets (e.g. newspaper, television channel, or radio station) with the aim to reach a larger target audience. Since there will be other events happening around the same time, include information that would interest the news outlet, such as upcoming events, commentary on current events, or tips for the public.

When submitting a press release to your local news outlet, you will need to develop a “pitch” and submit it to the designated media communications department. Submission guidelines for news providers are often found online or at the end of a published article.

The pitch will vary depending upon the message, media outlet, and format (i.e. verbal or written pitch). Pictured below, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) provides a media outreach guide for their Protect the Ones You Love campaign. See the campaign’s example pitch letter to be distributed via mail, fax, or email below.

Pitch Letter Template

[Place on your letterhead]

Date:

Newspaper name:
Newspaper address:
Newspaper fax number:
E-mail address:

Dear **[Insert media contact's name here]:**

First Paragraph: Begin your letter with compelling information that will persuade the targeted media representative to cover the story you are pitching. The first paragraph should briefly explain why the media outlet’s audience would want to know about the importance of preventing injury among children. To quickly capture the journalist’s attention, it is a good idea to begin with hard-hitting statistics or a thought-provoking question.

Second Paragraph: The body of your letter should reference central messages or the importance of preventing child injury. Also, you can describe your activities and how they will affect the local community.

Third Paragraph: Provide background material for your story, such as ways to prevent injury. You also can offer resources, such as published reports and additional support materials, and arrange an interview with your spokesperson. In closing, confirm that you (or a representative) are available for an interview and re-emphasize the importance of covering the story.

Sincerely,

[Your signature here]

Name (typed)
Title(s)
Name of Organization (if author is a partner or supporter of the initiative)
Telephone Number
E-mail Address

About the *Protect the Ones You Love: Child Injuries Are Preventable* initiative:

Protect the Ones You Love: Child Injuries Are Preventable is a CDC initiative to raise parents’ awareness about the leading causes of child injury in the United States and how they can be prevented. Working together, we can keep our children safe and help them live to their full potential. For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/safekid, and for more about CDC’s work in injury prevention, visit www.cdc.gov/injury.

Click here to [access](#) the CDC's full outreach and pitch considerations guide.

To access a sample pitch letter template, see the toolkit supplemental resources.

Writing a Fact Sheet

A fact sheet is a brief document providing readers with an overview of a specific topic in an easily readable format. Fact sheets can include terms that the average person without any clinical background could understand. You can leverage fact sheets to create a “call to action” for the readers to help motivate them to seek care at your practice. For example, a poster about flu prevalence may end with a call to action to receive a flu shot at your clinic.

There are a number of fact sheet example templates that can be accessed and used as a starting point to build your clinic's fact sheet:

- Centers for Disease Control (CDC) provides templates allowing practices to customize with their logo and text. Click [here](#) to access the full library.
 - To access an example fact sheet on flu vaccines, click [here](#).
 - To access an example fact sheet on diabetes in youth, click [here](#).
- The Center for Rural Health also provides sample fact sheets on topics including rural access and impact, emergency department use for mental health, opioid use and treatment availability, and more. Click [here](#) to access the sample fact sheets.

Tips for a Successful Fact Sheet:

- Keep it simple, short, and to the point
- Start with the most important information
- Present mostly statistics and data, whether presented in bulleted text or graphics
- Write in the present tense and use active verbs
- Be consistent in terms and tone
- Do not refer to outside documents (unless referencing a source)

To access sample fact sheet templates, see the supplemental toolkit resources.

Creating a Website

Creating a mobile-friendly website is crucial to be competitive in the digital era. Over 80% of internet users are looking for health-related information online, and practices can attract potential new patients by generating new content and improving their searchability.

The table below outlines several low-cost or free website platforms, that provide user-friendly templates for creating a professional website quickly and easily. Additional research will be needed to choose the website most appropriate for your business needs.

Steps for Installation	
 WORDPRESS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create an account. 2. Choose a website domain and host. 3. Pick a design and add your information. 4. Finish all the prompts and publish.
 SQUARESPACE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Go to the website and click "Get Started". 2. Choose a template and preview. 3. Start a free trial and watch the intro video. 4. Get a free domain. 5. Publish by clicking "Upgrade Now" and select Standard (\$8 per month), Unlimited (\$16 per month), or Business (\$24 per month).
 Google My Business	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Follow the prompts to add and verify your business profile. 2. Create a free website and preview. 3. Select a URL and/or buy a custom domain. 4. Choose a theme.
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a free account. 2. Select your template. 3. Enter your website name. 4. Set up your website and choose a template. 5. Save and publish your site. 6. Upgrade if needed.

See [Improving Web Search Visibility](#) for tips on how to optimize your search engine visibility and maximize your web traffic.

Launching Print Campaigns

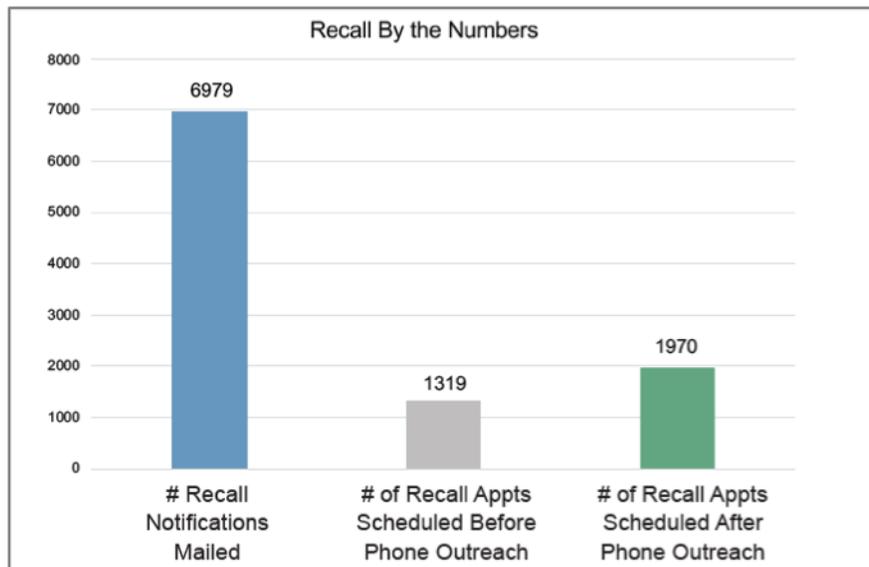
While the majority of this toolkit covers how to expand social media and online presence, approximately 10% of Americans are not using the Internet, largely adults over the age of 65 in rural areas.⁷ These patients may be best reached through print campaigns.

Case Example:

A clinic located in northern Louisiana is a specialty practice providing care to upwards of 140,000 patients in the Arkansas-Louisiana-Texas area. In an effort to maximize outreach, this clinic launched a print recall campaign, in which:

1. Patients were identified in EHR as in need of recall follow-up appointment by pre-established criteria for outreach
2. Clinic sent out 5x7 postcards informing patients of product/device recall, any additional outstanding procedures, and contact information for the practice
3. Patients who called into practice scheduled a recall follow-up appointment
4. Patients who did not call into clinic were flagged, and every time patient contacted clinic, staff would be prompted to remind them about recall
5. Any remaining patients not contacted within a month of cards being mailed out were then contacted by a full-time, dedicated employee, who would reach out to each patient to schedule a follow-up appointment

As a result of the print campaign, the clinic experienced a 47% success rate of scheduling follow-up appointments for recalls.



Key Takeaways:

- Identify your key message and target audience
- Choose the appropriate communication medium for your message and audience
- Develop your story in the appropriate template

Improving Web Search Visibility

One way to drive potential patients to your website is by having it appear higher on recommended websites on search engines like Google. You can do this through search engine optimization (SEO), the process of maximizing web traffic by ensuring the site appears high on the list of results within a given search engine. See below for steps to implementing best practices for SEO for healthcare providers.⁸

1. Choose a Service Line to Optimize

Identify service lines that may serve as “low-hanging fruit” for local searches by potential patients to maximize visibility. For example, a patient experiencing flu-like symptoms is more likely to search for a provider online than a patient in need of surgery for a serious medical condition. Identify a couple of options for service line optimization and consider: 1) how quickly care could be provided, and 2) likelihood patient would make self-informed care decision as opposed to a referral. Patients searching online for services often want to access those health services either immediately or soon. As a result, some service lines are better suited for SEO than others.

2. Identify Primary and Secondary Keywords

Identify keywords that are relevant to the service line and pepper in key language throughout any online messaging. Google Search Console or Google My Business Insights provide tools to identify keywords your patients are using.

3. Analyze Competitive Strategies

Analyze your local competition by looking for common trends among top competitors that may be leveraged to improve the site.

4. Identify the Target Audience

Determine if your audience is proactively or reactively searching for services (i.e. are they looking for preventative health services or are they already sick and seeking care).

5. Map the Patient Journey

Test the patient journey by entering keywords in Google, click on links (keeping in mind how many clicks it takes to get to desired information), and compare the patient journey on your site to your competitors’.

Tips for Successful SEO:

- Verify your address and profile on online directories including [Google My Business](#) (Google Maps), Yelp, Vitals, WebMD, Healthgrades, U.S. News & World Report, doctor.com and more
- Post content using keywords/likely search terms, such as a geographical area or relevant dates
- Update your website's copyright notice to the current year, so the search engine does not deem your website out of date
- Ensure your website is mobile friendly
- Create and verify social media accounts
- Encourage your users to share your social media posts
- Create a sitemap for your website and submit it to Google Tools to ensure your pages are indexed by search engines
- Test your website to ensure links are operational

Key Takeaways:

- Update or develop a mobile friendly website
- Verify your business on Google Business
- Map your patient's journey through the website and refine as needed

Leveraging Social Media

Social media is an online communication tool that can be effectively used to communicate key messages to a large patient population at little to no cost. It can also be used to customize your message to a segmented market. Depending on the platform, you may use a variety of tools to deliver patient education, disseminate safety information, facilitate information sharing, market your services to a large audience, engage patients and your community, and more. Social media provides a variety of tools that may be leveraged to deliver patient education, provide practice updates, provide general outreach to patients about clinic happenings and services, and more.

While there are a number of social media tools that may be used to disseminate information, this toolkit focuses on the most popular platforms for information exchange, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube.

Note: You don't need to do it all. Start with a couple platforms, determine what best engages your intended audience, and focus your efforts on optimizing the platform(s) best suited for you.

Social media viewing algorithms are designed to prioritize those posting new content frequently and consistency. Posting once every now and then or posting content inconsistent with your branding message will not be effective.

In designing your social media campaign, you will achieve the best results by creating a thoughtful 4-6 month plan (with reminders) to post significant milestones and/or events. For example, you may design your social media plan taking into account the upcoming flu season, Medicaid open enrollment window, or other relevant events. Creating and planning multiple posts at one time also can help maintain consistency in brand messaging.

See the [CDC's social media toolkit](#) for additional tools and information on how to leverage social media for your practice.

I. Facebook

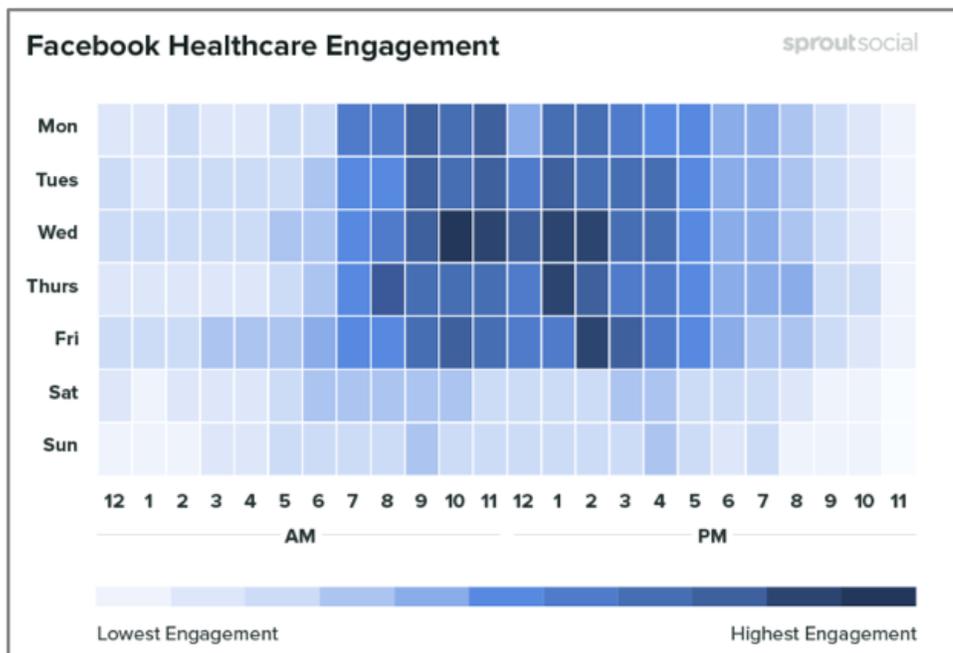
With over 1.5 billion daily active users, Facebook is one of the most popular social networking websites and allows users to create profiles, upload photos/videos, send messages, and comment on content.

Professional organizations may create a [Facebook Business Page](#), which is a free patient engagement tool that may be used to increase brand awareness online.

Facebook users are 53% female and 47% male. Percent of online users with on Facebook by age are demonstrated below:⁹

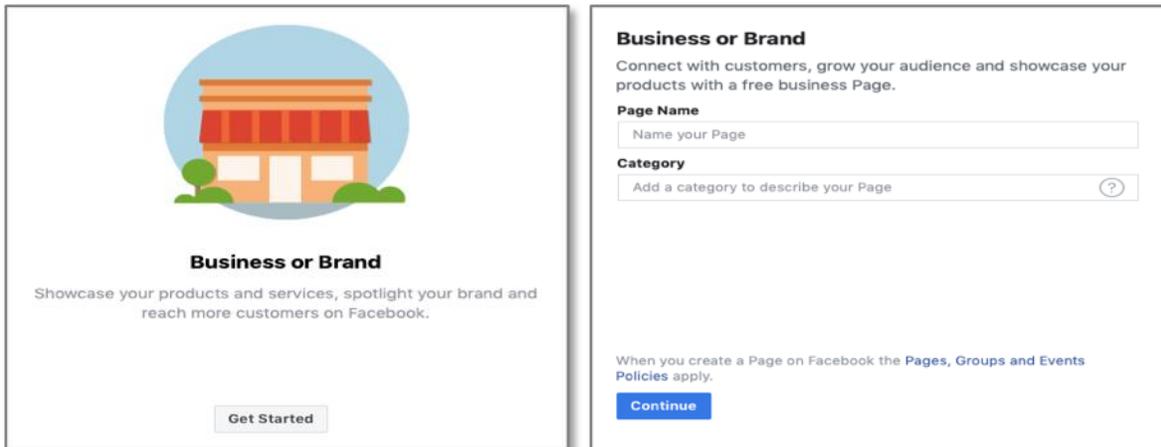
- 88% of online users age 18-29 have a Facebook
- 84% of online users age 30-49 have a Facebook
- 72% of online users age 50-64 have a Facebook
- 62% of online users age 65+ have a Facebook

To maximize your reach and patient engagement, it is best to post at times of high web traffic (as demonstrated in the figure below). Practices posting on Facebook will be most successful on Wednesdays between 10am and 3pm.¹⁰



Creating a Facebook Business Account

1. To set up a page, go to <https://www.facebook.com/pages/creation/>.
2. Click the “Get Started” button under the Business or Brand Section.



Business or Brand

Connect with customers, grow your audience and showcase your products with a free business Page.

Page Name

Name your Page

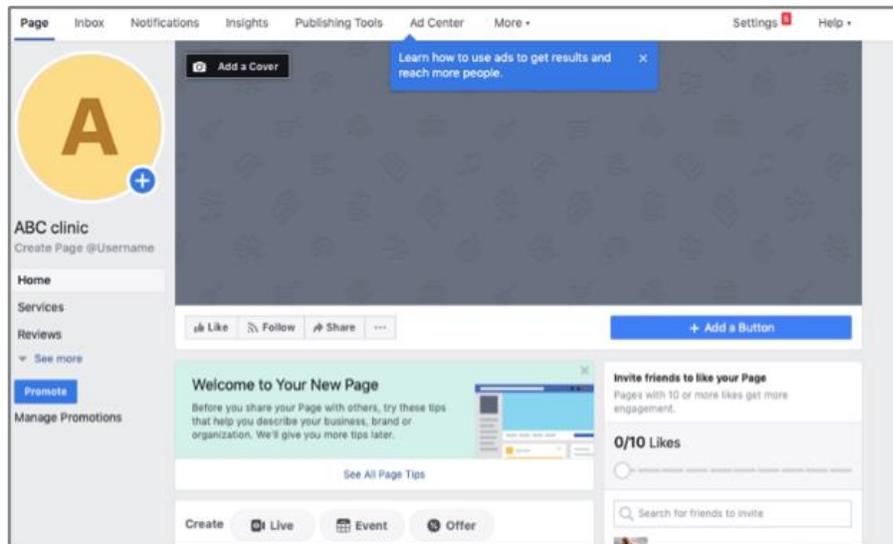
Category

Add a category to describe your Page

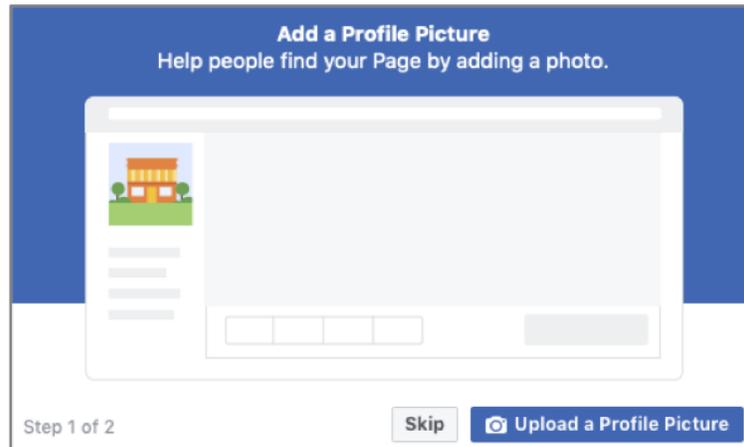
When you create a Page on Facebook the **Pages, Groups and Events Policies** apply.

Continue

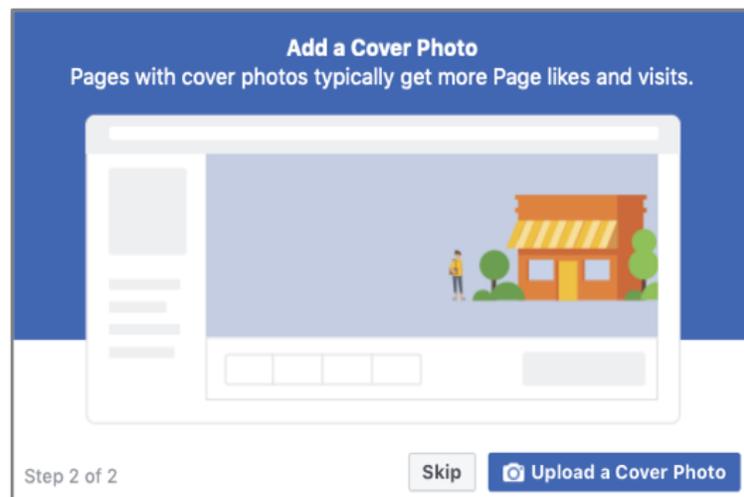
3. For best results, fill out all of the appropriate information: Page Name, Category (e.g. Medical & Health, Doctor, Local Business, Hospital, etc.), Address, Phone Number.
4. Once complete, click continue.



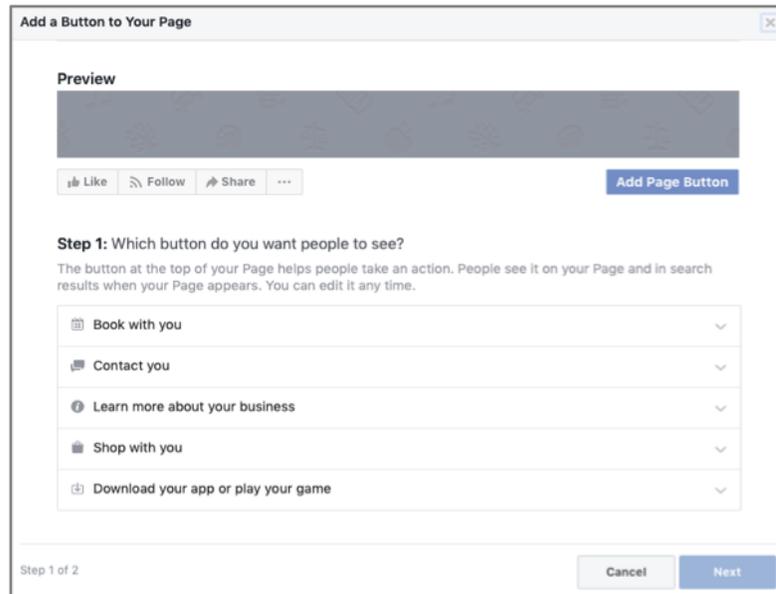
5. Upload a Profile Picture, or a public photo which remains pinned to your name when patients are searching or viewing your page (e.g. practice logo).



6. Upload a Cover Photo, or a larger public photo featured at the top of your page (e.g. photo of practice facility).



7. Add a page button for patients to easily contact your organization or schedule an appointment.

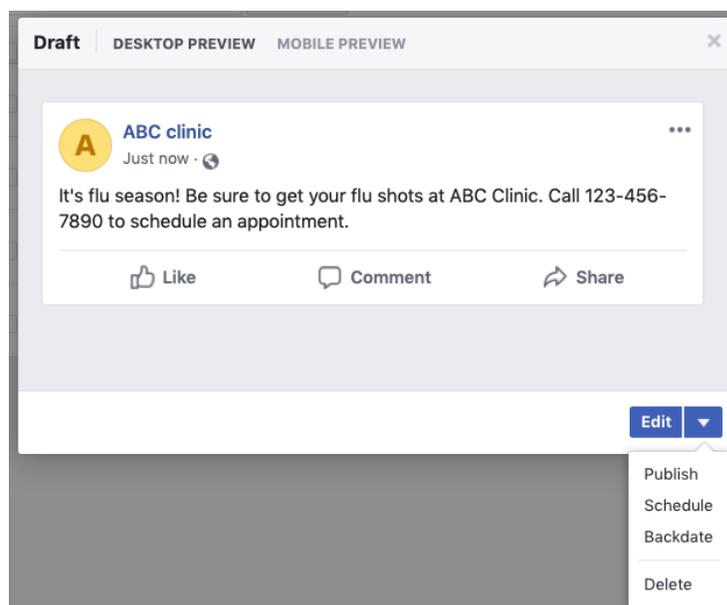


Scheduling a Post

While some social media sites require third-party tools to schedule posts, Facebook allows businesses to easily schedule posts within the web browser or app. Using a Facebook Business Account, you may choose to create a post and publish it on your page in the future by scheduling a post.

Steps to Schedule a Post:

1. Create a post (but do not publish) on your timeline.
2. Click on the small arrow next to the publish button at the bottom and select “schedule” from the dropdown menu.



- a. Troubleshoot: If you are not seeing “schedule” in the dropdown menu, save your post as a draft, open the draft, and click on the small blue arrow next to the edit post button.
3. Select the date and time you wish to schedule your post.

Schedule Post ✕

Select a date and time in the future for when you want your post to publish.

CDT

4. Review and click schedule button.

Best Practice Example

An example of a successful physician Facebook page includes Dr. Wendy Sue Swanson, a physician at Seattle Children’s Hospital, operating on Facebook by the handle “Seattle Mama Doc.”¹¹ Click [here](#) to access her page.



Her profile presents new content featuring relevant health information for her patients in a professional and engaging format. Of note, all information fields (e.g. about, link to website, contact information) are complete, and Dr. Swanson often provides links to her website or other social media accounts in each post.

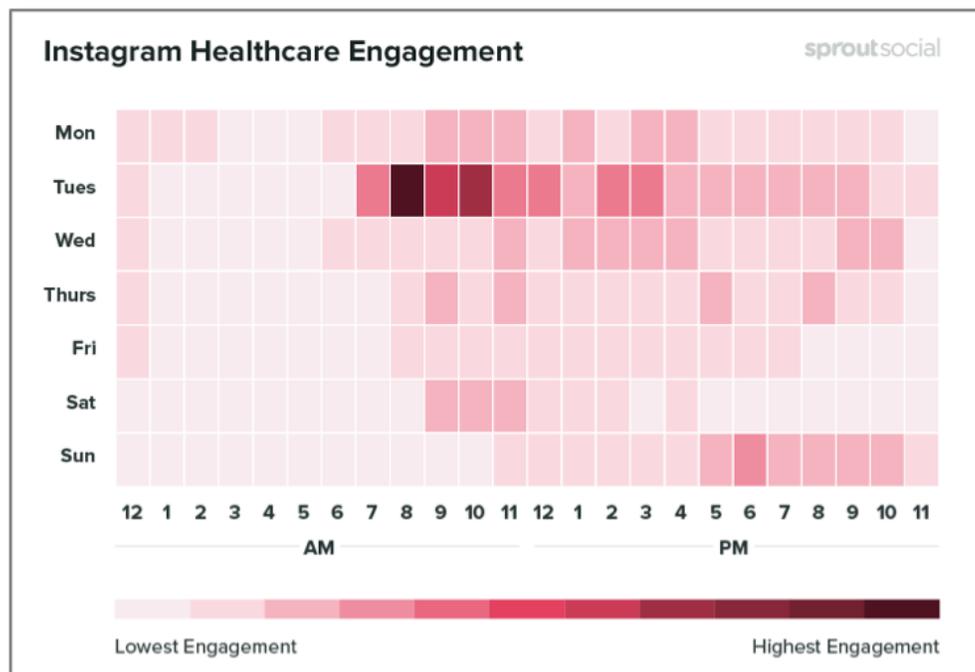
II. Instagram

Launched in 2010, Instagram is a photo and video sharing platform used for social networking. Instagram has over 500 million daily active users, and generally skews toward audiences ages 18 to 34 years.

Instagram users are 52% female and 42% male. Users on Instagram by age are demonstrated below:¹²

- 31% of online users age 18-29 have Instagram
- 32% of online users age 30-29 have Instagram

To maximize engagement, it is recommended that providers post on Instagram on Tuesdays from 8am to 10am.¹³

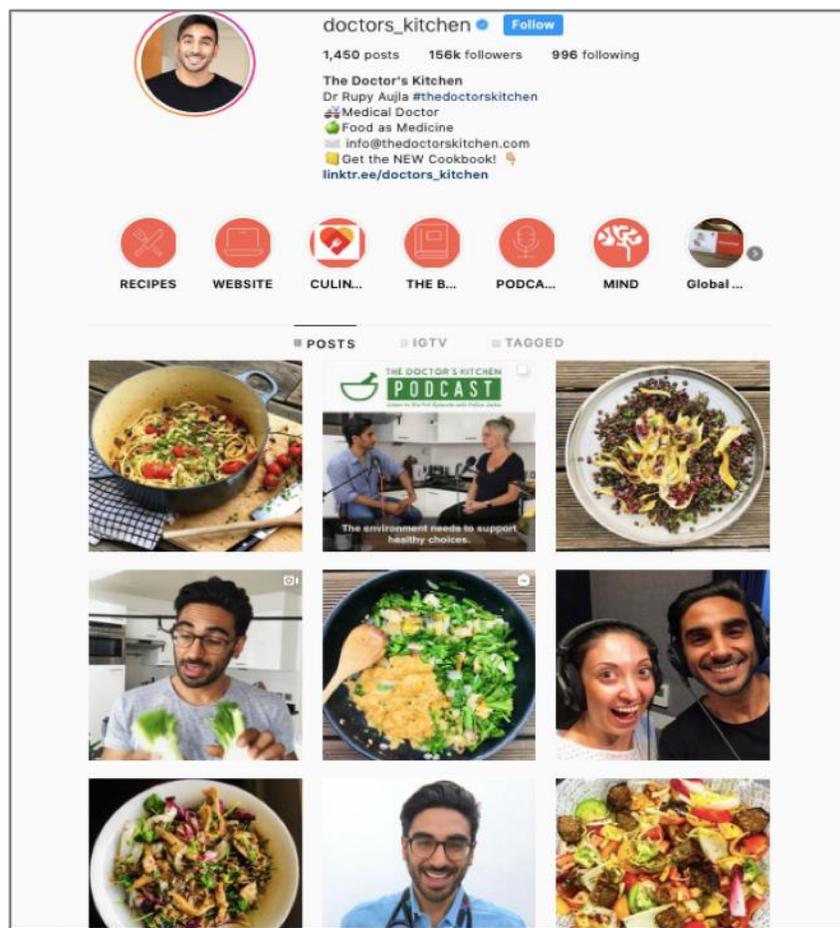


Creating an Instagram Business Account

1. Download and launch the app.
 - a. Apple IOS users download from the [App Store](#).
 - b. Android users download from the [Google Play](#) store.
 - c. Windows Phone users download from the [Windows Phone Store](#).
2. Once you're in the app, press either:
 - a. Sign Up (to enter your email address) then Next, or
 - b. Log in with Facebook to sign up through your Facebook account
3. After you have created a login, find settings, scroll down to "Switch to Business Account." At this time, you may add information including hours, address, or phone number and complete your business profile.
4. Finally, start posting content and follow other users.

Best Practice Example

Dr. Rupy Aujla is a primary care provider with over 156,000 followers using the handle "@doctors_kitchen." Dr. Aujla targets his message toward a younger audience, promoting lifestyle and nutrition education, patient advocacy, and more. Dr. Aujla also uses his platform to promote his patient-centered podcasts, cookbook, patient education newsletter, and other social media platforms. Click [here](#) to access his page.



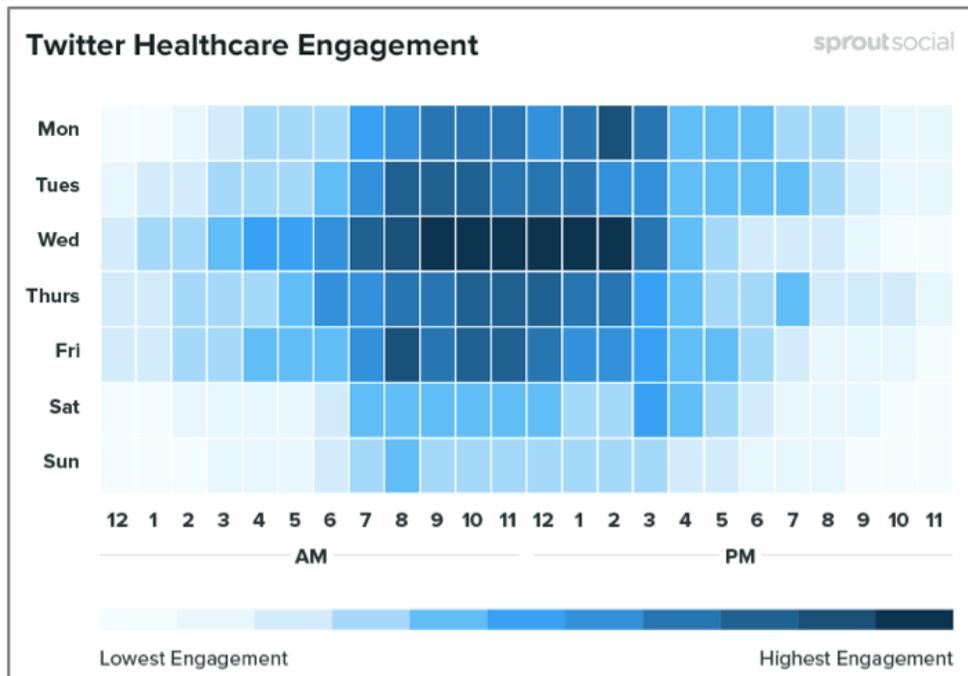
III. Twitter

Twitter is a social networking website allowing users to post pictures and messages (i.e. “tweets”) with fewer than 140 characters. Twitter is generally used for quick and brief news distribution to mass populations with tags, or “hashtags,” which link the post to a larger thread of related posts.

Of all internet users, 24% of male users are on Twitter, and 21% of female users are on Twitter.¹⁴ Of Twitter’s 100 million daily active users:¹⁵

- 37% of Twitter users are 18-29 years
- 25% of Twitter users are 30-49 years

To maximize your engagement on Twitter, providers should post Wednesday from 7am to 3pm. Keep an eye out for interactions on other days, however, as Twitter users are relatively likely to engage other weekdays between 7am and 4pm.¹⁶



Best Practice Example

Dr. Kevin Pho is an example of a physician successfully utilizing the platform, with over 160K followers. Dr. Pho provides external links to his website and other social media platforms and provides patient education, medical news, and more in his feed.¹⁷ Click [here](#) to access his live feed.



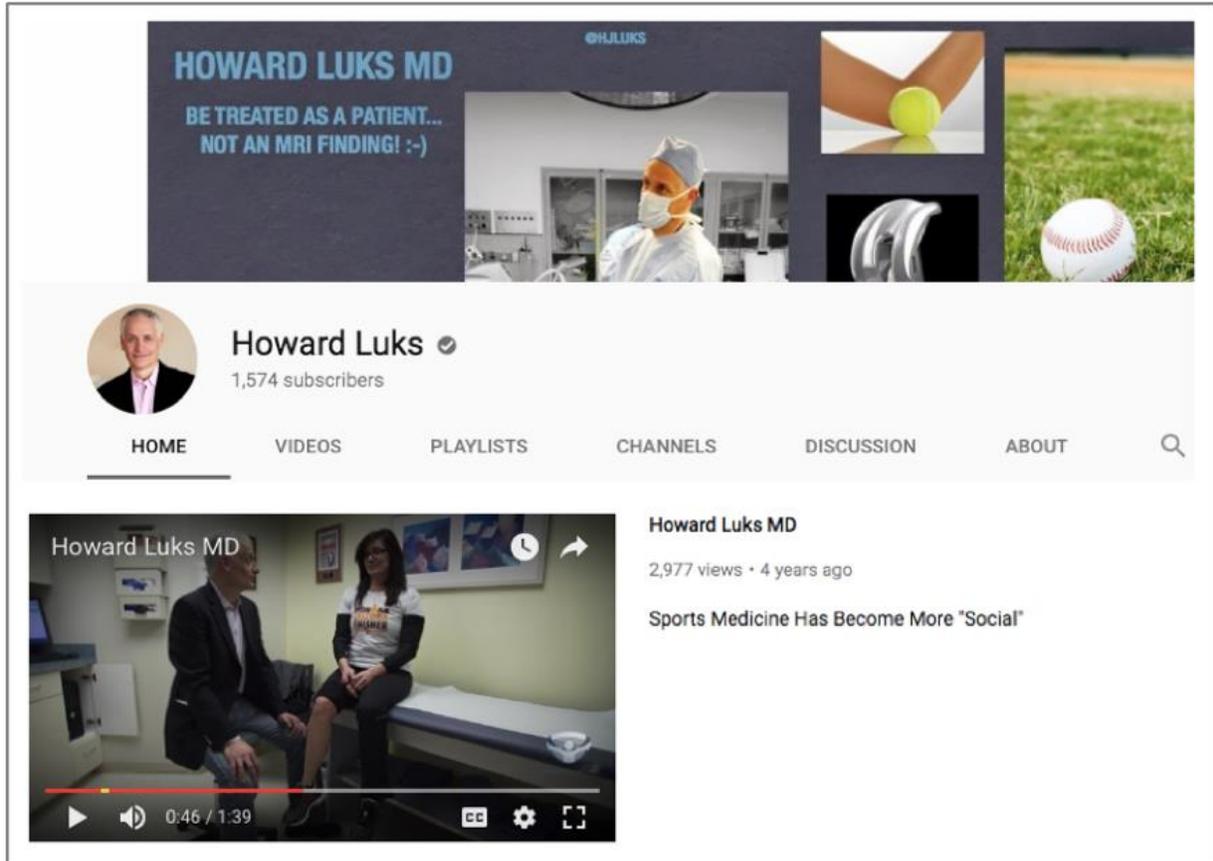
IV. YouTube

With over 1.9 billion monthly active users, YouTube is a video streaming platform that provides individuals the opportunity to “like,” comment, or view relevant videos.

Of YouTube’s 30+ million daily users, 62% are male, and 35+ and 55+ age groups are the fastest growing demographic. In addition, 9% of small businesses are on YouTube.¹⁸

Best Practice Example

Dr. Howard Luks is a New York-based orthopedic surgeon, who uses his channel to provide patient education and promote services offered to his 3,519 subscribers and the general public. Dr. Howard Luks posts primarily sports medicine educational videos on topics including: “Do I Need A Knee Replacement,” “Why Does My Shoulder Snap and Pop,” “Pain After Knee Replacement Surgery,” and more. Click [here](#) to access his channel.



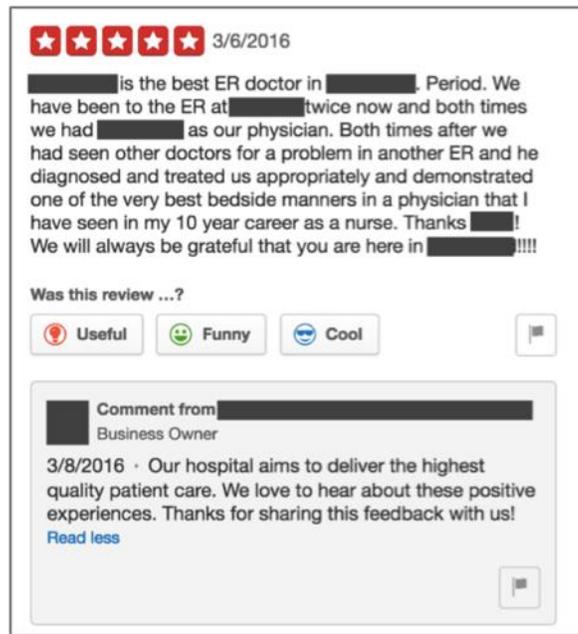
Key Takeaways:

- Identify your key message and target audience
- Choose the social media platform most appropriate for your target audience
- Review peak engagement times, and post your HIPAA-compliant content

Managing Reviews

As health financing becomes increasingly tied to patient experience, practices must ensure care processes are patient-centered. 39% of patients are searching for their providers online, and often comparing providers by reviews.¹⁹ Whether a positive or negative review, practices can engage their patients and community online through HIPAA-compliant communications.

To avoid any HIPAA concerns, it is best to draft a generic response for every communication. Practices can thank patients for leaving reviews online and encourage patients to continue reviewing without ever confirming or denying if the individual was truly a patient. The following is an example of a HIPAA compliant response from a Children’s Hospital physician.²⁰



Keep in mind, a bad review here and there is unavoidable even for the highest performing practices. Highlighted below are best practices for managing bad reviews:

1. **Verify your business** on the reviewing platform. This will allow you to respond to reviews (good and bad) and build credibility.
2. **Acknowledge the review** respectfully, politely, and professionally (while maintaining HIPAA compliance). For example:

“Thank you for the review. At xyx clinic we take our commitment to delivering high-quality, patient-centered care seriously. We are currently investigating the situation, and encourage you to reach out to our customer service department at customerservice@xyzclinic.com.”

Encourage the reviewer to continue the conversation offline to avoid any HIPAA compliance issues.

3. **Encourage your patients to review you** if they had a good experience. Reviews are often filtered from newest to oldest. By accumulating new, positive reviews, you can bury older negative reviews and increase your rating. Remember – one negative review won't overshadow other glowing reviews and users will recognize that people overreact at times.
4. **Talk with your staff.** Discuss the experience and align on any strategies to mitigate situations in the future by alleviating the problem or collecting feedback more proactively

Key Takeaways:

- Identify your key message and target audience
- Choose the social media platform most appropriate for your target audience
- Review peak engagement times, and post your HIPAA-compliant content

Supplemental Resources

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¹¹ Patient Pop. (2018). 5 doctors who are killing it on social media right now. Retrieved from <https://www.patientpop.com/blog/marketing/content-social-media-marketing/5-doctors-killing-social-media-right-now/>.

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