

Ethical Issues in Public Health: Social Media

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Produced by the Alabama Department of Public Health
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Faculty

Jim Sacco, MSW, LCSW
Consultant

What is Social Media? 3

"A group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content."

Kaplan, Andreas M. and Michael Haenlein. "Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media," *Business Horizons*, 2010, 53 (1), 59 - 68

Electronic communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content.

Federation of State Medical Boards. Model policy guidelines for the appropriate use of social media and social networking in medical practice. April 2012.

Major Social Media Sites and Uses 4

- ▶ **Facebook:** "Going out for tacos..." (social networking)
- ▶ **Instagram:** "This is what my lunch looked like" (photo and video-sharing)
- ▶ **Twitter:** "I need lunch." (microblog)
- ▶ **LinkedIn:** "I am a taco expert." (business networking)
- ▶ **Snapchat:** "My girls and me having tacos." (photo and video-sharing)
- ▶ **Tumblr, Pinterest, etc.**

...Fluid and constantly changing based on new technology, websites, etc. Significant age preferences...all have mobile apps.

How often do you use social media? 5

1. Hourly
2. Daily
3. Weekly
4. Monthly
5. Seldom or never

Your friend/kid under 25 6

1. Hourly
2. Daily
3. Weekly
4. Monthly
5. Seldom or never

Ethics/Boundaries and Social and Digital Media

13

- ▶ Develop policies and procedures for use of social/digital media (including breach of confidential information).
- ▶ Discuss policies concerning use of technology—including information sharing—in the provision of professional services proactively with consumers.

Ethics/Boundaries and Social and Digital Media

14

- ▶ Clients should have a clear understanding of the ways in which PH workers use technology to deliver services, communicate with clients, search for information about clients online, and store sensitive information about clients.
- ▶ Develop a process to obtain client consent to the use of technology at the beginning of the professional-client relationship. Assess consumer's capacity to provide informed consent.

Ethics/Boundaries and Social and Digital Media

15

- ▶ Verify the identity and location of clients they serve remotely (especially in case there is an emergency and to enable social workers to comply with laws in the client's jurisdiction).
- ▶ Assess clients' ability to access and use technology, particularly for online and remote services. Help clients identify alternate methods of service delivery if the use of technology to deliver services is not appropriate.

Ethics/Boundaries and Social and Digital Media

16

- ▶ Obtain client consent before conducting an online search for information about clients, as a way to respect clients' privacy (unless there are emergency circumstances).
- ▶ Understand the special communication challenges associated with electronic and remote service delivery and how to address these challenges.

Ethics/Boundaries and Social Media Use

17

- ▶ Assess, and respond to cultural, environmental, economic, disability, linguistic, and other social diversity issues that may affect delivery or use of services.
- ▶ AVOID communicating with clients using technology for personal or non work-related purposes, in order to maintain appropriate boundaries.
- ▶ Take reasonable steps to prevent client access to social workers' personal social networking sites and personal technology, again to avoid boundary confusion and inappropriate dual relationships.

Ethics/Boundaries and Social Media Use

18

- ▶ Limit posting personal information on professional websites or other media could cause boundary confusion, inappropriate dual relationships, or harm to clients.
- ▶ Remain aware that clients may discover personal information about them based on their personal affiliations and use of social media.

Ethics/Boundaries and Social Media Use

19

- ▶ Avoid accepting requests from or engaging in personal relationships with clients on online social networks or other electronic media.
- ▶ JIM'S Suggestion: Also consider dual roles with peers/ AVOID dual roles if any direct line of report

Ethics/Boundaries and Social Media Use

20

- ▶ Inform clients of unauthorized access to the social worker's electronic communication or storage systems (e.g., cloud storage).
- ▶ Take reasonable steps (such as use of encryption, firewalls, and secure passwords) to protect the confidentiality of electronic communications, including information provided to clients or third parties.

Ethics/Boundaries and Social Media Use

21

- ▶ Comply with the laws of both the jurisdiction where the social worker is regulated and located and where the client is located (given that social workers and clients might be in different states or countries).
- ▶ AVOID posting any identifying or confidential information about clients on professional websites or other forms of social media.

NASW Code of Ethics: Standards for the Digital Age (2018)

Privacy Settings Issues

22

- ▶ **Facebook** – set privacy levels, if you know how
- ▶ **YouTube** – set some privacy, usually open, allow or block comments
- ▶ **Twitter** – set privacy, lock tweets for friends only, block people
- ▶ **Google+** -- put people in circles, set privacy within circles

The Anatomy of a Tweet

23

- ▶ **"#"** Hashtag. Group posts by topic or type – words or phrases prefixed with a "#" sign. *#obesity #Medicine #healthcare #HCSM #Health20 #meded #mHealth*
- ▶ **"@"** sign followed by a username is used for mentioning or replying to other users. *@MD_chat @HarvardHealth*
- ▶ **"Retweet"** To repost a message from another Twitter user, and share it with one's own followers, the retweet function is symbolized by "RT" in the message.
- ▶ **URL shortener** – bit.ly tinyurl.com bit.ly/JQK19L
- ▶ **Tweet Chats:** scheduled chats about a subject.

Does your health department participate in social media?

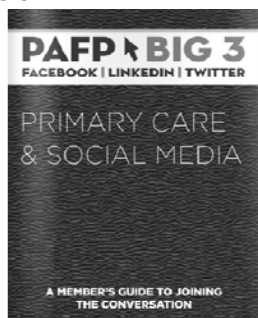
24

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Physician's Guide to Using FB, Twitter, LinkedIn

25

- ▶ Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians
- ▶ Guide to Social Media
- ▶ Advanced Guide now available. Includes setting up a Blog at Wordpress.com
<http://bit.ly/1yDwkIv>



Patient Medical Use of SM

26

- ▶ SM is the new word-of-mouth for picking a doctor
- ▶ Find a local doctor, read and write reviews of doctors
- ▶ Find health information
- ▶ Find support groups for chronic disease and other health issues

Are your patients using social media?

27

- A. Many
- B. Few
- C. None
- D. Don't know

PATIENT PREFERENCES

28

- ▶ Which social media?
- ▶ Researching health topics?
- ▶ Receiving reminders?
- ▶ Health department success stories?

Social Media and Informal Support Groups

29

- ▶ Chronic Disease support groups
 - ▶ Awareness, support, education
 - ▶ Community of bloggers
- ▶ Lifestyle and health maintenance support
 - ▶ Diet plans, track exercise ...
- ▶ Caregiver social support groups
 - ▶ Caregivers for elderly, family members with chronic disease

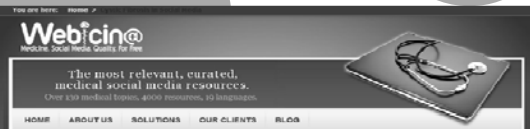
Peer-to-Peer Healthcare

- ▶ One in four internet users living with high blood pressure, diabetes, heart conditions, lung conditions, cancer, or some other chronic ailment (23%) say they have gone online to find others with similar health concerns.
- ▶ By contrast, 15% of internet users who report no chronic conditions have sought such help online.

Fox, Suzannah. Peer-to-peer Healthcare. Pew Internet Survey Results.
<http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2011/P2PHealthcare.aspx>

How to Find Communities 31

- ▶ Google a condition and “community”, “Blog” etc.
- ▶ Go to a major social media site and search on a disease/condition
- ▶ Use a site that curates healthcare social networking sites like www.webicina.com by specialty and condition



Health Information Online 32

- ▶ 80% of internet users gather health information online (Pew)
- ▶ Educate patients to find good information online
- ▶ List reliable sites on your clinic web site
- ▶ Social media provides physicians opportunities to contribute to good information online
 - ▶ In your Twitter posts, FB page, or Blog
 - ▶ Recommend sites, good articles, good blogs on topics you see often or questions you answer often

As a patient, have you used social media to address a health question? 33

- A. Yes
- B. No

Your Online Reputation 34

- ▶ Multiple sites contain physician demographics, certifications, credentials, actions...
 - Healthgrades.com
 - AngiesList.com
 - Google Plus Local (maps)
 - Vitals.com
 - Zocdoc.com
 - ...and many more
- ▶ Allow patient reviews
 - ▶ Physician Experience
 - ▶ Ease of scheduling appt.
 - ▶ Wait times
 - ▶ Staff friendliness
 - ▶ Would they recommend to friend

Establishing, Managing, and Protecting Your Online Reputation: A Social Media Guide for Physicians and Medical Practices
by Kevin Pho M.D., Susan Gay

Patients Share Experiences 35

- ▶ Patient reviews mostly positive.....
- ▶ Encourage your good patients to post review
- ▶ “You have no control over what other people say about you, but you have total control of the content you create about yourself and your practice.” Kevin Pho

Physician Use of SM 36

- ▶ Market practice and recruit patients
- ▶ Identifying services patients desire
- ▶ Connect with other doctors
- ▶ Connect with patients
- ▶ Keep up to date with health news, technology’s impact on health and the delivery of healthcare
- ▶ Recruit research subjects

Connecting with Patients

37

- ▶ Consider a high quality, professional Website [think SEO]
- ▶ Use Facebook account for clinic linked to Website
 - ▶ Remind patients of Great American Smokeout, flu shots
 - ▶ Cosmetics post success stories from patients
- ▶ TwitterDoctors.net – doctors who Tweet
 - ▶ Share articles, sites, news
 - ▶ Tweet while attending conferences
 - ▶ Tweet when running late

Incentives

38

- ▶ Patient satisfaction increases
- ▶ Support meaningful use efforts: Stage 2
 - ▶ Communicating health information to patients, electronic copy of health information upon request
 - ▶ View and download relevant information via web-based portal within 36 hrs – use mobile apps?
- ▶ Integral aspect of the Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) model
- ▶ Standards will need to be developed to do this securely

Strategies for Putting SM into Practice

39

- ▶ Set up **Google Alerts** for your name
 - ▶ <http://www.google.com/alerts>
- ▶ Define your goals
 - ▶ Manage online reputation, increase patient load, improve office efficiency, engage patients...
- ▶ Establish guidelines
- ▶ Determine time commitment
- ▶ Define your role, role of staff members
- ▶ Determine your message
- ▶ Pick a core site for presence
- ▶ Hire a communications professional (reputation.com)

Does your practice/clinic have a social media policy?

40

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. Don't know

Medical Student's Use of SM

41

Class of 2018 incoming survey:

- ▶ 86% have a active account at Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn
- ▶ 95% have active Snapchat/Instagram; usually both
- ▶ 96% upload images to Flickr or Facebook
- ▶ 78% upload videos to YouTube
- ▶ 65% contribute to a wiki or blog
- ▶ 97% Uses Skype or FaceTime to do video/voice communications

Guidelines on Social Media Use

42

- ▶ Federation of State Medical Boards – *Guidelines for Appropriate Use of Social Media...* (April 2012)
 - ▶ Connecting with patients - Do Not...interact with current or past patients on **personal** social media. **Professional** only.
 - ▶ Connecting with other physicians – secure, HIPAA compliant sites like Doximity.com
 - ▶ Privacy/confidentiality – HIPAA – written authorization from patients
 - ▶ Disclosure – reveal any conflicts of interest
 - ▶ Content
 - ▶ Professionalism...

www.fsmb.org/Media/Default/PDF/FSMB/Advocacy/pub-social-media-guidelines.pdf

Resources

43

- ▶ Mayo Clinic Center for Social Media
 - ▶ <http://socialmedia.mayoclinic.org/>
 - ▶ Curriculum on Social Media - SMUG
<http://social-media-university-global.org/>
- ▶ AMA Policy: Professionalism in use of Social Media
 - ▶ <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/physician-resources/medical-ethics/code-medical-ethics/opinion9124.page>
- ▶ CDC Health Communicator's Toolkit
 - ▶ <http://1.usa.gov/amOmMI>
- ▶ Establishing, Managing, and Protecting Your Online Reputation: A Social Media Guide for Physicians and Medical Practices. By Kevin Pho M.D., Susan Gay. Greenbranch Publishing. 2012. <http://www.kevinmd.com/blog/reputation>

In Summary

44

- ▶ Critical message: Rules of offline behavior apply to online behavior where there is much wider audience
- ▶ Errors will occur: Develop a social media policy -provide orientation and training. View mistakes as learning opportunities.
- ▶ There is great power in *the conversation*. Know the risks and behave accordingly. Do not be so risk averse that you do not participate.

Dr. Farris Timimi, Medical Director of the Mayo Clinic Center for Social Media
<http://socialmedia.mayoclinic.org/2012/04/05/a-twelve-word-social-media-policy/>

THANKS

45

- ▶ Wise Woman
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