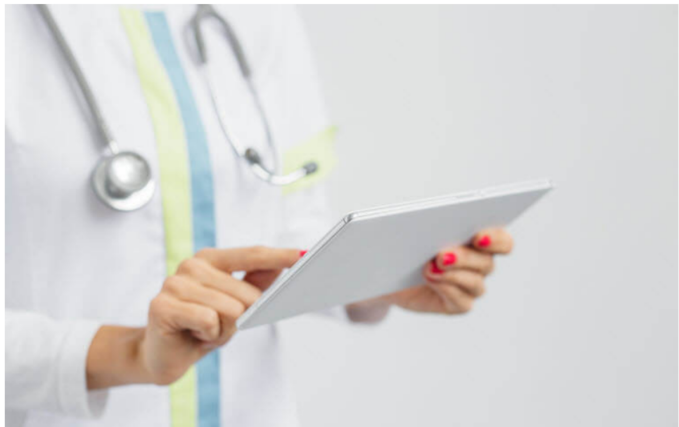




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“The Doctor Will Tweet You Now”

By [Stefanie McLeod](#) in [Healthcare Marketing](#) [Social Media](#)



The rise and availability of social media has affected almost every aspect of our daily lives. Is your kid’s school delayed because of snow? Better check the school’s Facebook page. Considering buying your first home? Your lender just tweeted a 2016 Homebuyers’ Report. Curious about how the president spends his days? Just look at his Instagram feed. Therefore, it shouldn’t come as a surprise the way people approach healthcare has changed, too. This blog has discussed [digital strategy for healthcare practices](#), so here are a few social media-specific guidelines.

- **It’s all about the apps.** About 20% of smartphone users utilize at least one health app on their phone. The most popular types relate to exercise, diet and weight. Though every healthcare facility doesn’t necessarily need an app, it’s important to have a strong mobile marketing focus. Many health providers have mobile patient access portals to keep pace with the growing digital world.
- **Putting the “me” in treatment.** Social media has allowed patients to take a more active role in their healthcare. Whether it’s researching ailments, posting on forum, or joining support groups, more patients are becoming their own advocates when it comes to their health. Rather than relying solely on doctors to diagnose and determine the best course of treatment, patients are actively joining the discussion with diagnoses and treatment plans compiled from research and the advice or experience of others.
- **There’s no such thing as bad publicity... unless you’re in healthcare.** Roughly [41% of people said](#) social media affects their choice of a doctor, hospital or medical facility. Not only are patients able to post their positive—or negative—experiences on their own social media platforms, but sites like HealthGrades.com, RateMDs.com and Vitals.com allow them to score providers on everything from ease of appointment setting to bedside demeanor and professionalism of office staff. It’s imperative that healthcare organizations pay close attention to the way they are represented to current and potential patients.
- **Seeing is believing.** According to a think with Google [research study](#), YouTube traffic to hospital sites has increased 119% year-over-year, and 30% of patients who watched an online video booked an appointment. Videos more effectively highlight the value of facilities and the human elements of the providers.
- **On call 24/7.** Along with this streamlined form of patient and physician communication comes heightened expectations. According to those polled during a study by the Health Research Institute at PwC, 49% of people expect to hear from their physician within a few hours of requesting an appointment or engaging in a follow-up discussion via social media.

Social media outlets have become so omnipresent in our culture that they’ve changed the way healthcare professionals and facilities operate and approach patient relationships. With each new development in technology comes another way a healthcare practitioner must upgrade to engage—or risk losing a patient to one who does.



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