

Twitter Will Change Healthcare! 140 Ways to Use Twitter in Healthcare



If you remember, [MMP recently had a post about Twitter](#), and some ideas I had about the use of Twitter in a medical practice. Since then, Twitter has exploded onto the healthcare scene. Last Sunday I participated in an online Twitter online meetup discussing social media in healthcare. The Twitterati (those who twitter) included medical students, physicians, payer representatives, consultants, patient advocates, patients and me. The long and the short of the discussion was that the world of healthcare, full of traditionally slow technology adopters, has amazing potential for using social media to reduce waste, improve efficiency, allow staff and caretakers to give more time to patients, and possibly reduce healthcare costs.

Phil Bauman, “a Registered Nurse with a background in critical care, drug safety, accountancy, finance, treasury operations, and recruiting” wrote the following in his blog post of January 18, 2009:

HEALTH CARE SHOULD BE THE LEADER IN MICRO-SHARING

With 26 letters in the alphabet arranged within 140 characters, there are over 1.2×10^{198} possible character combinations. Of course, the number of meaningful sentences is far less than that but a point stands out: there's a virtually infinite number of short pulses of (meaningful) information that Twitter can facilitate.

With that kind of power, health care should be a leader in

micro-sharing, not a lagger.

Phil put together a very impressive list of 140 Healthcare Uses for Twitter. Here are a few of my favorites:

1. Disaster alerting and response
2. Maintaining a personal health diary
3. Emitting critical laboratory values to nurses and physicians
4. Issuing [Amber alerts](#)
5. Environmental alerts: pollen counts, pollution levels, heat waves, severe weather alerts
6. Updating patient family members during procedures

[Click here to see the entire list, which is also available in an eBook, and in SlideShare.](#)

Just in case you missed the first article, here is a recap on using Twitter:

- Go to www.twitter.com and sign up for FREE (choose a name and a password)
- You can use Twitter on the web or on your phone – you can look at it once a day (you don't have to look at it and respond to it instantly.)
- Once you're signed up, you can start "following" people and they can "follow" you. I am following people who have interesting things to say about healthcare, and also people who are writing blogs like me.
- Start by following me (@mpwhaley) and I'll be glad to follow you.

If you'd like to use Twitter and need some help, email me at marypatwhaley@gmail.com and I'll be glad to talk you through it.