Online Marketing

You've probably noticed that consumers are increasingly using the internet to research hospitals, medical practices and individual physicians — as well as medical conditions and treatments.

Establishing and maintaining an online presence is important for practices that want to grow patient volumes and for individual physicians who want to build their own reputations. Physicians and practices are often surprised to learn that they are already listed in various places online – use a search engine (Google, Yahoo, Bing, etc.) to check, and take the time to update the information you find (including location links).

Web Site

Creating a simple web site with basic practice information can go a long way toward satisfying your current patients and attracting new ones. After all, even loyal patients may need to look up your phone number or even your list of services. Even practices that rely on physician referrals can benefit from accurate online information – physicians and their staffs are using the internet too.

Your web site provides the first impression of your practice to online visitors. Make sure it looks professional, is up-to-date and works properly. Just as patients would feel uncomfortable going to a doctor's office that was falling apart, people may not want to visit a doctor with a poorly constructed web site.

When putting together your web site, consider including the following basic information:

- Practice name/logo clearly identified
- Location(s) and contact information
- Office hours, policies and fees
- Listing of services provided
- Bios/pictures of physician(s) and office staff
- How to make an appointment and related forms for download
- Special events/screenings
- Frequently asked questions

If you'd like to enhance your web site, consider the following options to engage current and potential patients:

- Update site visuals and photos – don't forget a picture of your office so that people can recognize it in passing
- Add more in-depth content regarding your services, specialty or conditions treated
- Add any forms patients need to fill out prior to treatment
- Help patients get to know you with an introductory video
- Maintain an office news section to keep your content fresh (include press releases, published medical articles, links to news coverage, etc.)
- Include patient stories and endorsements (getting written permission is advised)
- Consider interactive content, such as health quizzes or risk assessments
- Explore the feasibility of a blog or chat board (take care with HIPAA risks)

© Atrium Medical Center 2011

Online Marketing

Tips

- Web sites can be created using online tools, purchased software or a professional web designer. While you do not need to spend a fortune to create a web site, it pays to create something that reflects your level of professional expertise.
- A web designer can do more than create a professional-looking site. He or she can also advise you on information (content) appropriate for your site.
- Be sure that someone in your office is trained on how to edit the web site so your information stays current. This also allows you to save money by not making updates through a web designer.
- Creating and maintaining your own web site gives you the most control over your site's look and content. Taking advantage of a site available through a third party (professional association or other group) can save money, but often at the expense of your creative freedom. Regardless of which option you choose, it's easier to update and maintain only one web site.
- Many people find web sites through search engines. Search engine optimization (SEO) can help you rank higher in search results and get more visits to your site. SEO has many moving parts (including your site content, photo tags and meta tags) and often changes as search engines adjust how they rank sites. The best way to optimize your search engine rankings is to use a professional web firm.
- The most important thing you can do online is to keep your practice information up to date. Assign someone to regularly review your web site and other web listings for accuracy.

See a sample practice web site on page 28.

Online Advertising

Online advertising is gaining popularity both due to the relatively low expense of placing an ad and the prevalence of web users. If you plan to advertise online, consider your patient base. Younger patients are more likely to use the internet, but older adults are a fast-growing segment of the web.

Online advertising is available on many web sites. Consider advertising on sites with strong visitor numbers. Local media sites (i.e. television, newspaper, radio) can be a good option to capture the attention of people in your service area. Many sites, including national sites, offer geographic targeting to ensure you do not spend money needlessly marketing to people outside your service area.

Online advertising can take many forms, with new options being developed every day.

- Pay-per-click advertising allows you to pay an agreed upon price each time someone clicks your ad.

© Atrium Medical Center 2011

Online Marketing

- Banner ads come in a variety of shapes and sizes and are often sold by number of "impressions" (times people see your ad on the site) as opposed to the number of times people click on the ad.
- Search engine ads can be purchased on search sites (like Google, Yahoo, Bing, etc.). These allow your listing to be placed ahead of those in the search results for that topic.
- Social media ads can be placed on sites like Facebook.

Regardless of the type of online ad you purchase, be sure to have a strong call to action that inspires people to "click through" to your web site for more information.

Online Physician Listings and Ranking Services

There are many web sites that offer physician listing, review and ranking services. While a healthy skepticism of these sites is understandable, it is helpful to remain aware of them, as they can appear high in search pages – even above your practice web site. We don't recommend spending money with most of these sites, but it can be helpful to "claim" your free listing by providing basic practice information. Before you lend such credibility to a web site, be certain to thoroughly review the content to determine whether you want to be associated with such a site.

CareFinders

CareFinders is the physician referral service for Atrium Medical Center and all of Premier Health Partners. It is critical that we have all your information in order for CareFinders to keep your profile current. Please fill out the Physician Referral Questionnaire on pages 29-31 if you haven't done so already.

By participating:

- You are in rotation for referrals.
- You are listed on the Atrium web site Find-a-Doctor list.
- You are eligible to have patients make appointments with your practice.
- You receive a monthly update outlining who has been referred to you.

To enroll in CareFinders or to learn more about it or update your profile, call Celestine Taylor-Davis at (937) 499-5258.

HealthGrades® Patient Direct Connect

HealthGrades Patient Direct Connect is an online physician referral service that helps patients research a physician. Atrium Medical Center has a contract with HealthGrades that is designed to drive highly qualified patients directly to your practice through premium placement on the HealthGrades web site, at no charge to you.

The Patient Direct Connect program is open only to members of the Atrium medical staff in the active staff category who participate in our CareFinders physician referral program and accept referrals through that program.

© Atrium Medical Center 2011

Online Marketing

By partnering with HealthGrades, Atrium is ensuring that more of the people who search the HealthGrades site for physician information will be able to find and access your profile – even if they are researching competing physicians in the hospital's service area. This has been shown to increase call volume to participating physician offices, as tracked through the CareFinders physician referral service.

Your Patient Direct Connect profile was created by HealthGrades using information pulled from various public sources. While your profile does include information contained in your CareFinders profile, it is entirely maintained by HealthGrades. Your free profile includes information, such as office location(s), specialty, board certification and more.

The phone number listed for your practice on HealthGrades.com is the toll-free number for CareFinders. We list this, rather than your practice phone number, so that we can track usage of the Patient Direct Connect product and ensure that we are getting value for our investment. Calls to CareFinders through the Patient Direct Connect product are transferred to your office phone number. The added value for you is that the CareFinders number is answered 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Therefore, patients can always talk to a live operator and get basic information about your practice, even when your office is closed.

Your practice phone number is also listed on the HealthGrades.com web site. It simply takes a few extra clicks to find it under "secondary contact information."

In order to ensure accuracy of your profile information, we encourage you to visit HealthGrades.com and view your profile (see sample on page 28). See page 32 for information on how to update or enhance your profile. If you have questions about this process, please feel free to contact Amy Newland, Atrium physician advocate at (513) 420-5067 or contact your HealthGrades Account Manager, See Cushman at (720) 963-3806 or via email at scushman@healthgrades.com.

Social Media

Many hospitals, including Atrium Medical Center, and some physicians are setting up accounts on social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and more. Social media provides a near-instant mechanism for feedback and interaction with the public and can be a tool for learning, networking and communicating.

What is Social Media?

Social media is a form of participatory online communication. There are many online tools to facilitate user participation and user-generated content creation, which include social networking sites, social book-marking sites, multimedia sharing sites, location-based sites, physician reviews and more. The following are popular, free application examples.

© Atrium Medical Center 2011

Online Marketing

LinkedIn is the largest business-oriented social site, primarily used for professional networking. Users can create a profile and connect to other colleagues or friends. Using LinkedIn, you can build your professional network organically by linking first to people you know directly and later to people you know indirectly through others or people who have common interests or experience. LinkedIn can be used to explore the job market or look for new business opportunities. It can also be a place to share or receive expertise on business-related topics.

Facebook is a social networking service used to connect with friends, family and co-workers. Users may create a personal profile, add other users as friends and exchange messages. Facebook users must register before using the site. Additionally, users may join common interest groups, organized by workplace, school or college, and business/brand pages.

Twitter is a social networking site that allows users to send and receive public messages, called "tweets." Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters (including spaces), which are displayed on the user's profile page and are delivered to other users who have subscribed to them (known as "followers"). Private messages can also be sent to designated followers.

YouTube is a video-sharing web site, on which users can upload, share and view videos from user-generated channels.

Flickr is an image-hosting web site and online community for users to share and embed personal photographs. The service is widely used by bloggers to host images that they embed in blogs and social networking sites.

Social bookmarking sites, like Delicious, allow users to organize, store, manage and search for bookmarks of resources online—saving links to web pages that they want to remember or share. These can be accessed from any computer through the user's account, rather than just using a desktop "Favorites" feature. Users add short descriptions and tags (keywords) so articles are easily found when conducting a search. These bookmarks are usually public, but can be saved privately and shared only with specified people or groups.

Social news web sites, such as Digg and Reddit, feature user-submitted stories that are ranked based on popularity.

© Atrium Medical Center 2011

Online Marketing

Blogs are web sites maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Most blogs are interactive, allowing visitors to leave comments and even message each other. Many blogs provide commentary or news on a particular subject; others function as more personal online diaries. Popular blogging platforms are WordPress and Blogger. A directory of blogs by topic can be found at Alltop.com.

Preparing for Social Media

While social media can offer "free" publicity, it requires a significant investment of time. Users take posts seriously and expect timely responses. Before diving into social media, we recommend the following:

- Use social media personally to get a sense of the functionality and etiquette of the sites.
- Set a meeting with a communications professional to outline an editorial plan for social media. This will help you determine your time commitment and will give you a plan to follow once you embark on your social media journey.

Physicians and practices considering the leap into social media must give careful consideration to their purpose for using social media and how to protect all patient information while on social media sites. Physicians who are part of Premier Health Specialists or Premier HealthNet follow the Premier Health Partners employee social media policy that will help guide appropriate use of these sites. The Marketing Department is willing to share this policy with other practices as an example of helpful guidelines to follow.

© Atrium Medical Center 2011