

# TWITTER 101



Twitter is a micro blogging social platform that limits each tweet (post) to 140 characters. The platform has 328 million active users and 7,000 tweets happen every second. Information on Twitter moves at a rapid pace and the platform has become the place to find breaking news. Twitter users can send and read tweets, “like” others’ tweets, and also retweet (share) other users’ tweets. Users can “follow” tweeters in the fields they are interested in and can gain followers in return.

Each tweeter has a unique identifying name or handle characterized by the @ symbol, for example @NACHC. Twitter also allows users to search for topics of interest using hashtags. The # symbol, called a hashtag, is used to mark keywords, topics, or conversations in a Tweet. Twitter users create hashtags as a way to categorize and follow messages and make them easier for users to track similar tweets. The health center community often uses #FQHC.

## Tips for Using Twitter

- Twitter’s character limit only allows you to broadcast snippets, so choose your tweets carefully. Share news and events that expose your organization’s culture.
- Use hashtags to help people searching for specific content find your tweets. When planning a new campaign, program, or hosting an event consider creating a unique hashtag that supporters and event attendees can use when tweeting about that specific topic.
- Encourage people to live tweet at health center events to get the online conversation going.
- Follow people who are interesting, in your field/health journalists/ other health related organizations.
- People follow you because they like what you have to say so make sure to link to where you want people to go. Use a link shortener—like bitly.com—to fit within the 140 character limit.
- Connect with followers. Respond directly to followers that have legitimate questions, concerns, or comments.
- Keep your twitter feed relevant and current to keep your audience interested.
- Use Twitter analytics—located in the settings menu—to identify what tweets work and what tweets are not as interesting to your followers.

## The Art of Crafting a Tweet

- **Think message first.** Write the tweet with the most relevant part of your message first.
- **Offer value within the tweet.** Offer your audience some information/knowledge in your tweet.
- **Ask a question.** Don’t be afraid to ask your audience a question or begin a tweet with a question.
- **Invite audience participation.** Give your followers a call to action, such as sign a petition or give us your feedback.
- **Mix it up.** Don’t tweet the same thing every time. Use different approaches.

Follow @NACHC and @HCAAdvocacy on Twitter to keep up-to-date on the latest health center news.

Questions? Email us at [communications@nachc.org](mailto:communications@nachc.org)