

# TWITTER 101

## Twitter by the numbers:

- 330 million global monthly active users.
- 126 million active daily users.
- 10 percent of adult Twitter users in the U.S. create 80 percent of the tweets.
- Users send 500 hundred million tweets daily.

SOURCE: PEW RESEARCH CENTER INTERNET & TECHNOLOGY: [WWW.PEWINTERNET.ORG/2019/04/24/SIZING-UP-TWITTER-USERS/](http://WWW.PEWINTERNET.ORG/2019/04/24/SIZING-UP-TWITTER-USERS/)

Information on the social platform moves at a rapid pace, and the it has become the place to find breaking news and memes. Twitter users can send and read tweets, "like" others' tweets, and also retweet (share) other users' Tweets. Links, photos, GIFs, and video are all allowed on Twitter. Users can "follow" other users in the fields they are interested in and can gain followers in return.

Each user has a unique identifying name or handle characterized by the @ symbol, for example, @NACHC. Twitter also allows users to search for areas 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 more accessible for users tracking tweets with a specific focus.

## HEALTH CENTER COMMUNITY HASHTAGS

**#FQHC-** Federally Qualified Health Center

**#CHC-** Community Health Center

**#ValueCHCs-** Advocacy and showing the value of health centers

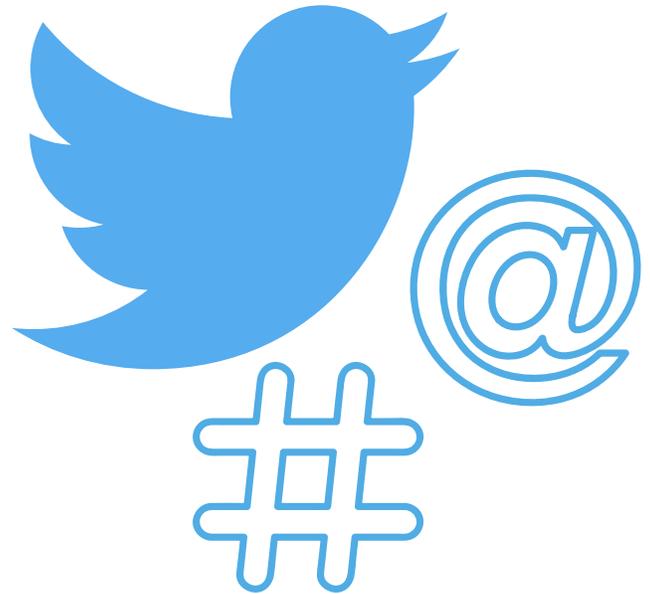
***Other hashtags sometimes used by health centers include:***

**#PRAPARE-** NACHC's PRAPARE social determinants of health toolkit

**#CHCsInnovate-** Innovative practices in health centers

**#SDoH-** Social determinants of health

**#HealthCenterInfo-** Health Center Resource Clearinghouse



## TIPS FOR USING TWITTER

- Twitter's character limit only allows you to broadcast snippets (280 characters), so choose your tweets carefully. Share news and events relevant to your organization's culture and industry.
- Use hashtags to help people searching for specific content to find your tweets. When planning a new campaign, program, or hosting a function, consider creating a unique hashtag that supporters and 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 interesting people, 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 280 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 attractive 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.

**Resource:** How to Use Twitter: Critical Tips for New Users from WIRED Magazine: [bit.ly/Twitter\\_Wired](http://bit.ly/Twitter_Wired)

## A WORD OF CAUTION

While HIPAA and HITECH do not directly address the use of social media by health care providers, a health center or its employees could still breach these laws, as well as state privacy laws, by posting information about patients (e.g., comments, photos, video) on social networking websites without the patients' permission. Health centers must avoid any unauthorized disclosure of individually identifiable health information in any form on social media.

Health centers can and should explain to patients how to communicate with providers safely and securely, providing examples of when it is appropriate, or not, to use specific channels. Also, the health center's social media presence should include disclaimers that comments do not constitute medical advice and that patients should call with questions or to make appointments (or for emergencies, call 911).

If patients routinely post questions more appropriate for an exam room, the health center may want to increase moderation of social media accounts. Consider setting up a standard message directing patients to a more appropriate venue for health concerns. See the example below. Find more information on social media and electronic communication challenges in a four-part series by Feldesman Tucker Leifer Fidell LLP at [bit.ly/FQHC\\_Social](http://bit.ly/FQHC_Social).

### SAMPLE LANGUAGE FOR RESPONDING TO SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS/COMMENTS FROM PATIENTS

In accordance with laws about patient confidentiality, it is XYZ Health Center's policy to refrain from responding to any comments made on this platform. We invite patients, their families, and members of our community to direct any concerns or requests for information about XYZ Health Center with us directly by contacting us at XXX-XXX-XXXX or [concerns@xyzhealthcenter.org](mailto:concerns@xyzhealthcenter.org).

## BEFORE YOU POST, THINK!

T= IS IT TRUE?

H= IS IT HELPFUL?

I= IS IT INSPIRING?

N= IS IT NECESSARY?

K= IS IT KIND?

**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)**