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(Newswire.net -- December 12, 2017) -- Successful doctors and medical practices are typically good at communicating certain sorts of information to their patients. Individual treatment information, helping patients keep appointments and complying with healthcare regulations are all par for the course.

But many care providers struggle to communicate in a way that markets their practice effectively. Attracting new patients in a competitive marketplace requires most practices to find their niche in the social media world.

Doctors don’t need to cover every platform out there. Instead, it’s important to choose one or two wide-reaching social media sites to focus on. From there it’s a matter of choosing one or two wide-reaching social media sites and selecting the best information, the most compelling graphics and a wide range of interactive content to share. Doing so helps medical practices establish themselves as centers of expertise with a commitment to the community, and not just to their specific clients.

Setting a Social Tone

Social media isn’t a formal setting. Audience members come from all walks of life. It’s important to cultivate a friendly, open tone and to avoid jargon in your posts. New research may be interesting to your patients, but you should rephrase it into an accessible and linkable blog post designed to drive traffic to your website. Quoting a dense paper to patients will only confuse and frustrate them.

Take care not to turn on the firehose. People have a short attention span. Keep your social content short and sweet.

Example: The Epilepsy Foundation designated November as Epilepsy Awareness Month. They began releasing short, Tweet-able statistics about the condition. These short factoids are perfect for patients, families and practices. They can also be retweeted or borrowed for other campaigns.

Be a Borrower

Most medical offices operate with a shoestring staff. Unless you work at a major hospital or corporate chain, you probably don’t have access to a communications team who can help with your social media marketing efforts.

Fortunately, you don’t have to write all your own content.

Curating information from multiple sources is normal and expected. Patients welcome useful information from all corners of the Internet.

Diverse sourcing has worked well for the team at Digestive & Disease Liver Consultants in Houston, TX. Their Facebook page pulls information from other medical center’s blogs, from popular health websites and from other relevant sources. This allows them to share a great deal of information with their patient community as well as potential clients.

This approach won’t drive traffic to your website, but it will help you establish your practice’s authority in the field. Just make sure you take the time to vet posts before allowing them to go live.
Get Visual

Images and video carry a lot of weight on social media, but sometimes healthcare isn’t the most photo-friendly field. Be careful! Sometimes a simple profile photo can really change the way people feel about your practice.

One way to avoid the “ick factor” that goes hand-in-hand with medical images is to focus on illustrations as well as patient photos (with permission). For example, did you take a photo with a patient who just successfully completed treatment? Ask them for permission to share it on social media with an uplifting message. This creates a personal image that remains business-oriented, and it helps you celebrate your relationship with patients. The warmth conveyed through such images can really draw new clients in.

If you work in a particularly photo-unfriendly field of medicine, you can use infographics instead. Infographics are data-rich, yet visually appealing. Many authoritative organizations, including the CDC, produce infographics specifically for reuse.

Pop over to the CDC’s website and you’ll find entire pages devoted to infographics, all produced by their in-house design and communication teams. This cancer infographic from the CDC may be posted on Facebook or featured in a blog post. It’s also easy to tweet out the featured stats. The CDC’s Facebook page remains a useful source for visuals as well. You’ll find short videos, single stat images and global health updates. It’s the perfect resource for practices in any specialty.

Know Your Audience

Be sure to acknowledge the unique local and demographic traits of your current patient audience. The Institute for Family Health in New York City is good at this.

When you visit the institute’s blog you’ll find a mix of information. Overdose prevention information that’s relevant to any reader. Updates on doctors as they get out and participate in community events. Essential information, like changes in work hours. They pair their blog with a simple, active Facebook presence, one which features wellness information and catchy graphics which primarily features patients.

Note: The Institute never uses stock photos; their images are primarily photos of real patients, mostly people of color. They’re an urban clinic serving low-income communities, so these images reflect the faces of the very people who use their services. Make sure your social media presence speaks to the people and places in your community. Avoid the generic at all costs.

Keep it Simple, Doctor.

Developing a social media presence isn’t complicated so long as you concentrate on offering valuable information and constant connection to your community. Use social media to extend a hand. The benefits will flow naturally from there.

Source: http://newswire.net/newsroom/blog-post/00099006-4-approaches-to-crafting-social-media-content.html