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## Mayo Clinic Creates Centre for Social Media



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The Mayo Clinic has announced the creation of a [Centre for Social Media](#) to accelerate effective application of social media tools throughout Mayo Clinic and to spur broader and deeper engagement in social media by hospitals, medical professionals and patients to improve health globally.

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"Mayo Clinic believes individuals have the right and responsibility to advocate for their own health, and that it is our responsibility to help them use social media tools to get the best information, connect with providers and with each other, and inspire healthy choices," explains Mayo Clinic president and CEO John Noseworthy, M.D. "Through this center we intend to lead the healthcare community in applying these revolutionary tools to spread knowledge and encourage collaboration among providers, improving health care quality everywhere."

Some of the services provided by the Mayo Clinic Centre for Social Media will be:

- \* Training for healthcare employees through webinars, in-person and on-site workshops and boot camps, and an online curriculum for self-paced learning and review;
- \* Consulting and coaching to help organisations align social media strategies with business goals, as well as advising on planning and conducting outcomes research;
- \* Conferences and other events that bring people together to learn from Mayo's experience and from each other. The second [Mayo Clinic/Ragan Communications Social Media Summit](#), to be held Sept. 27-29, 2010 on the Mayo Clinic campus in Jacksonville, Fla., is an example of this kind of event; and
- \* Resources, including toolkits, manuals, books, white papers, policies and guidelines.

The Mayo Clinic Centre for Social Media, a first-of-its-kind social media centre focused on healthcare, builds on Mayo Clinic's leadership among healthcare providers in adopting social media tools. Mayo Clinic has the most popular medical provider channel on [YouTube](#) and more than 60,000 "followers" on [Twitter](#), as well as an active [Facebook](#) page with well over 20,000 connections. With its [News Blog](#), [podcast blog](#) and [Sharing Mayo Clinic](#), a blog that enables patients and employees to tell their Mayo Clinic stories, Mayo has been a pioneer in hospital blogging. MayoClinic.com, Mayo's consumer health information site, also hosts a [dozen blogs](#) on topics ranging from Alzheimer's to The Mayo Clinic Diet.

"Healthcare has lagged behind other industries in applying social media tools," says Lee Aase, one of the leaders of the new centre. "Social media interest and activity among hospitals and healthcare professionals has grown remarkably, though, with the number of hospital Twitter accounts, for example, doubling in the last year. Still, according to [Ed Bennett's Hospital Social Networking List](#), only 762 of the more than 5,000 hospitals in the U.S. have some social networking presence. Mayo Clinic, which has been on [FORTUNE Magazine's 100 Best Places to Work For List](#) for seven consecutive years, has been actively using social media tools to engage employees in its business strategies, manage change and share company news. Employees can comment on strategic efforts, ask leaders questions and share their ideas.

"Staff at many hospitals wanting to get involved in social media have pointed to Mayo Clinic's activity and experience to help make the case for engagement with their senior leaders," says [Victor Montori, M.D.](#), a Mayo Clinic endocrinologist and the center's interim medical director. "Some have even consulted with us informally and asked for advice on implementation. One of our goals for the centre is to provide a mechanism for this consultation and sharing, so we can help colleagues in healthcare everywhere break down the barriers to involvement."

In addition to reaching out, the centre staff will work with Mayo Clinic colleagues to find new and innovative ways to apply social media tools throughout the Mayo system. "We see immense opportunities to use internal social networking tools for collaboration among our employees to improve patient care, education, research and administration," Aase explains. "As we find new applications, we plan to conduct research into their effects so we can measure any cost savings, efficiency gains and improved effectiveness. And when we do, we'll be sharing those findings externally to help the whole health system improve."

"While hospitals and healthcare workers will likely be our main focus for these services externally, we also expect to help health-related nonprofits, professional organisations and patient associations," says Dr. Montori. "We want Mayo Clinic to be the authentic voice for patients and medical providers, and also to provide platforms where their voices can be heard."

An advisory team with representatives from throughout Mayo Clinic and an external board of thought leaders will help center leadership identify and provide resources for the most relevant projects. A related international network organised by the center will gather broader input from the healthcare community and disseminate resources and research findings.

"The [social media revolution](#) is vastly expanding the reach of word-of-mouth," Aase says. The center will accelerate adoption of social media in health care, first at Mayo and then within health care. Through this work, Mayo Clinic looks to help improve health care literacy, health care delivery and population health worldwide."

Further details will be announced at the Mayo Clinic/Ragan Communications Social Media Summit in September. For more information about the center, visit its Web site at <http://socialmedia.mayoclinic.org>.

Published on : Fri, 30 Jul 2010