

AHRQ Publishing and Communications Guidelines

Section 4: Social Media



Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
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AHRQ Publishing and Communications Guidelines

Section 4: Social Media

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Social Media Standards and Policies

Introduction

As the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) continues to expand its social media presence, the Agency's goal is to ensure that social media outreach efforts by Agency staff and contractors are well coordinated and that the Agency's Office of Communications and Knowledge Transfer (OCKT) maintains the highest standards for its brand and messages.

Those who wish to use social media as part of official AHRQ communications must follow these standards and policies.

For questions on social media, email socialmedia@ahrq.hhs.gov.

Visit the HHS New Media Standards and Policies Checklist for more information at: www.hhs.gov/web/socialmedia/getting_started/checklist_social_media_policies.pdf.

AHRQ's Social Media Presence

AHRQ has policies for the following social media tools:

- **Blogs.** AHRQ maintains the AHRQ Views blog (www.ahrq.gov/news/blog/ahrqviews/index.html). Please read the AHRQ Blog Policy for additional information.
- **Facebook.** The main AHRQ Facebook page is www.facebook.com/AHRQ.gov. Please read the AHRQ Facebook Policy for additional guidance.
- **Instagram.** Due to resource limitations, AHRQ currently does not maintain an Instagram account. Please read the AHRQ Instagram Policy for additional guidance.
- **LinkedIn.** AHRQ exists as a company on LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com/company/agency-for-healthcare-research-and-quality). Discussion groups associated with AHRQ programs also exist on the site. Please read the AHRQ LinkedIn Policy for additional guidance.
- **Pinterest.** Due to resource limitations, AHRQ does not currently maintain a Pinterest account. Please read the AHRQ Pinterest Policy for additional information.
- **Twitter.** AHRQ maintains two Twitter accounts: @AHRQNews, for general news about the agency, and @AHRQConf, for the AHRQ Research Conference. Please read the AHRQ Twitter Policy for additional guidance.
- **YouTube.** AHRQ maintains a YouTube channel, AHRQHealthTV (www.youtube.com/user/AHRQHealthTV) as well as several other topical channels. Please read the AHRQ YouTube Policy for additional guidance.

AHRQ Social Media Tools

AHRQ has approved the following social media tools for use:

| Tool | Function | AHRQ Status |
|----------------------|--|----------------|
| Blogs | Two-way communication | In use |
| Challenge.gov | Government contests/challenges platforms | Cleared to use |
| Facebook | Social network | In use |
| Flickr | Photo sharing | Not in use |
| Instagram | Photo sharing | Not in use |
| LinkedIn | Social network | In use |
| Pinterest | Photo sharing | Not in use |
| Twitter | Microblog | In use |
| YouTube | Video hosting/sharing | In use |

Refer to specific AHRQ policy guidance for blogs, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, and YouTube. Use of other social media tools listed on the HHS Terms of Service page is permissible, but AHRQ has not developed specific guidelines for those tools. If you are interested in a tool not listed above, contact your OCKT Team Lead for assistance.

- **Criteria and Approvals.** Please see AHRQ’s Social Media Checklist and the policy specific for each tool for complete details. Highlights of AHRQ policies for specific social media tools are as follows:
 - **Blogs.** AHRQ’s blog is called AHRQ Views. Submissions should be coordinated with OCKT. Send questions to socialmedia@ahrq.gov. Please read the AHRQ Blog Policy for additional guidance.
 - **Facebook.** Send content suggestions to socialmedia@ahrq.gov. Requests to set up a **new** Facebook page should be sent to socialmedia@ahrq.hhs.gov. The request should include a completed AHRQ Social Media Checklist. Please read the AHRQ Facebook Policy for additional guidance.
 - **Instagram.** AHRQ does not maintain an Instagram account. Send requests to create an Instagram account to socialmedia@ahrq.hhs.gov. The request should include a completed AHRQ Social Media Checklist. Please read the AHRQ Instagram Policy for additional guidance.
 - **LinkedIn.** Send requests for LinkedIn posts to socialmedia@ahrq.hhs.gov. Please read the AHRQ LinkedIn Policy for additional guidance.
 - **Pinterest.** AHRQ currently does not maintain a Pinterest account. Send requests to create a Pinterest account to socialmedia@ahrq.hhs.gov. The request should include a completed

AHRQ Social Media Checklist. Please read the AHRQ Pinterest Policy for additional guidance.

- **Twitter.** Suggested tweets for the @AHRQNews Twitter account should be sent to Twitter@ahrq.hhs.gov. Tweets must be 140 characters or fewer and should include a Web link to the AHRQ information being promoted. Send requests to create a new Twitter account to twitter@ahrq.hhs.gov. Please read the AHRQ Twitter Policy for additional guidance.
- **YouTube.** Videos for YouTube must be captioned before they can be posted to AHRQHealthTV, AHRQ's YouTube Channel. Comments are enabled on AHRQ's YouTube channel but are disabled on individual videos. Send requests to post video or for a new YouTube channel to socialmedia@ahrq.hhs.gov. Requests for a YouTube channel should include a completed AHRQ Social Media Checklist. Please read the AHRQ YouTube Policy for additional guidance. Also, please review Appendix 4-B YouTube Video Submission Questionnaire.

Note: AHRQ programs that maintain blogs, Facebook pages, Instagram accounts, LinkedIn Discussion Groups, Pinterest accounts Twitter accounts, or YouTube channels must assign staff members to monitor the account in accordance with AHRQ's Comment Policy.

- In addition to reviewing AHRQ's policies on social media tools, prior to initiating social media outreach, Agency staff should also:
 - Consult their Office or Center Director for approval.
 - Review HHS New Media Social Media Considerations (www.hhs.gov/web/socialmedia/getting_started/social_media_considerations.pdf) to determine the ability of social media to meet their needs.
 - Complete the AHRQ Social Media Checklist and email it to socialmedia@ahrq.hhs.gov.

Content Guidelines

AHRQ follows HHS guidelines for social media content. Two valuable resources on social media content are—

- Guidance on When and How To Engage Over New Media Platforms (www.hhs.gov/web/socialmedia/getting_started/engaging_new_media_platforms.pdf).

- Social Media Considerations: Questions To Ask Before Jumping In (www.hhs.gov/web/socialmedia/getting_started/social_media_considerations.pdf).

Please also see AHRQ's policies on specific social media tools for specific guidance on content.

Usage Guidelines

Copyrighted Content

- Ensure you gain permission to use any trademarked images, logos, or other copyrighted content. See AHRQ's copyright permission policy (www.ahrq.gov/research/publications/pubcomguide/index.html) for more information.

Official Agency Sources of Information and Branding

- Link to an AHRQ Web site from the social media tool.
- Use branding on the social media tool that clearly identifies your program's ownership or sponsorship as a Federal Government entity.

Accessibility

- Ensure that content posted or produced through social media tools is accessible to people with disabilities and is in compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/communications-and-it/about-the-section-508-standards/section-508-standards).

Information Collection

- Read the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidance on Information Collection under the Paperwork Reduction Act (www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/inforeg/PRAPrimer_04072010.pdf) to determine if you need to seek approval from the Office of Information Collection.

Official Public Comment

- Do not solicit consensus advice (i.e., conduct polls) using social media technologies.

Public Privacy Protection

- Work with OCKT to complete a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA), if appropriate. An AHRQ representative will notify the HHS Privacy Team that you are starting an account with a third-party Web site and that you may need to complete a PIA.
- Link or post the AHRQ Privacy Policy (www.ahrq.gov/policy/electronic/privacy/index.html) prominently on the third-

party Web site. Additional guidance on how AHRQ regards privacy issues can be found on the Privacy Policy page.

Cookies and Third-Party Sites and Applications

- Email Biff LeVee at biff.leeve@ahrq.hhs.gov in OCKT for assistance in determining if the social media tool uses persistent cookies that collect Personally Identifiable Information (PII). OMB requires sites that use persistent cookies but don't collect PII to meet a number of conditions, mainly in the site's Privacy Policy.

Recordkeeping

- Contact Pat Bosco, AHRQ's Records Management Officer, at patricia.bosco@ahrq.hhs.gov or (301) 427-1207 to determine the appropriate records schedule and records management practices.

Comment Policy

- Link to AHRQ's Comment Policy if you allow comments.

Linking, Liking, and Following

- Include an exit disclaimer when linking to non-government links.
- Review the individual social media tool policies for guidance on which entities are appropriate to like and follow using social media tools.

Helpful References

- HHS Center for New Media Standards Page at www.hhs.gov/web/socialmedia/policies/index.html.
- HHS Center for New Media Resources Page at www.hhs.gov/web/socialmedia/additional_resources/index.html.
- HHS Terms of Service Agreements at www.hhs.gov/web/socialmedia/policies/tos.html.
- HHS-OCIO Policy for Social Media Technologies at www.hhs.gov/ocio/policy/policy_2010-0003.1_-_ocio.html.
- Information Collection under the Paperwork Reduction Act at www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/inforeg/PRAPrimer_04072010.pdf.
- HHS Social Media Considerations at www.hhs.gov/web/socialmedia/getting_started/social_media_considerations.pdf.

AHRQ Blog Policy

About Blogging

A blog is a Web site that features regular postings of commentary; descriptions of events; or other material, such as graphics, video, or podcasts. Individuals, organizations, or small groups of individuals maintain blogs, which are typically written in a conversational tone.

The Federal Government uses blogs as communications tools because they put a human face on the Government, provide a more personal way to convey a message, get people involved in a conversation, and foster discussion around a common interest.

Blog Content

The purpose of each blog and blog post is to strategically disseminate the most up-to-date and relevant information. All blog posts will be subject to review by OCKT or the appropriate program staff. Send suggestions for new content to socialmedia@ahrq.hhs.gov.

How AHRQ Uses Blogs

OCKT maintains the blog AHRQ Views (www.ahrq.gov/news/blog/ahrqviews/index.html). Our goal is to create posts that provide insight on research and evidence to inform sound health policy and clinical care decisions.

AHRQ uses the AHRQ Views blog to achieve three goals:

- To speak with one voice on behalf of the Agency and distribute content to policymakers, clinicians, researchers, and the public.
- To communicate with policymakers, clinicians, researchers, and the public directly.
- To raise the Agency's profile by highlighting work that is central to AHRQ's mission.

Recordkeeping

AHRQ bloggers must keep records of blog comments. Email Pat Bosco, AHRQ's Records Management Officer, at patricia.bosco@ahrq.hhs.gov to determine the appropriate records schedule and records management practices.

Approval and Set Up of New AHRQ Blog

To create a new blog, meet with the appropriate OCKT Team Lead to discuss managing and supporting the blog. Consider the following: target audience, objectives, activities, technical requirements (e.g., 508 compliance, video formats), and resources needed to coordinate the blog. Keep in mind that AHRQ views the blog audiences as consumers, not health professionals, researchers, or service providers. After meeting with the Team Lead, complete the AHRQ Social Media Checklist and send it to socialmedia@ahrq.hhs.gov.

Additional Guidelines

OCKT asks that staff follow these guidelines:

- Posts should be concise and written in plain language. See www.ahrq.gov/policy/electronic/plain-writing/index.html for additional guidance on plain language.
- A best practice in blogging is for posts to come from the person authoring the post, not a ghostwriter.
- Posts should highlight AHRQ data, tools, research findings, campaigns, events, publications, etc.
- More information on HHS blog best practices (www.hhs.gov/web/socialmedia/getting_started/blog_guidance.html) is available from the HHS Center for New Media.
- Send all additional questions to socialmedia@ahrq.hhs.gov.

AHRQ Facebook Policy

About Facebook

Facebook is a free Web-based network that helps people connect with other individuals, organizations, and ideas. The Facebook ecosystem is made up of hundreds of separate networks based around schools, businesses, regions, and other shared interests.

Individual users have accounts called “profiles” that they update by posting pictures, comments, and videos for others to view. Users can also read a “news feed” of updates from other people in their network. Users grow their networks by requesting other users to become “friends,” or by “liking” accounts held by organizations or public figures.

Organizations and public figures, including government offices, don’t have profiles but instead have pages. Pages are similar to profiles, but pages represent an official professional presence.

Facebook, like other social media platforms, can be used to gauge interest in a topic, gain feedback on a product, announce a campaign, and see the impact of research.

How AHRQ Uses Facebook

OCKT maintains the main Facebook account for AHRQ—www.facebook.com/ahrq.gov. AHRQ’s goal is to expand its presence on Facebook and strategically create additional pages that further the Agency’s reach and mission.

AHRQ uses Facebook to achieve four goals:

- To speak with one voice on behalf of the Agency and distribute content to clinicians, researchers, and the public.
- To communicate with clinicians, researchers, and the public directly and in an engaging way.

- To increase the number of friends to spread AHRQ’s messages to various audiences.
- To raise the Agency’s profile by highlighting work that is central to AHRQ’s mission.

Facebook Content

OCKT will work collaboratively with each AHRQ Office and Center to identify and post Facebook content. The purpose of each post is to disseminate the most up-to-date and relevant information. Both OCKT and program staff can develop posts; all AHRQ Facebook page posts are subject to review by OCKT staff and program staff.

To submit content to be posted on the AHRQ Facebook page, send an email to socialmedia@ahrq.hhs.gov that includes: The text for the post, date it should be posted, and any related links, and any related photos. See Guidelines below for additional details.

Interactivity Guidelines

Facebook places a high value on communication between the sender and receiver. On Facebook, this interactivity occurs in three ways: “liking” other Facebook users’ statuses, sharing or posting links, and responding to comments or questions. The following policy governs AHRQ’s Facebook interactivity.

- **Liking.** AHRQ will like other Federal, State, and local health care-related agencies as well as partners, stakeholders, and influencers. AHRQ will not like political pages.
- **Sharing posts.** AHRQ will share information upon request, provided that the post aligns with AHRQ’s mission, from Federal and State health care-related agencies and organizations that have a relationship with AHRQ. Requests to share other organizations’ information will be handled on a case-by-case basis.
- **Responding to inquiries or comments.**
 - Comments posted to AHRQ Facebook pages must adhere to the AHRQ Comment Policy: www.ahrq.gov/policy/social-media/comments/index.html
 - Inquiries will be addressed on an individual basis and handled by staff in OCKT who will work with AHRQ Offices and Centers, if necessary, to respond.
 - For comments that may not be addressed by the AHRQ Comment Policy (www.ahrq.gov/policy/social-media/comments/index.html), OCKT or appropriate program staff will review the post and craft a response.
 - AHRQ will not respond to media inquiries through Facebook. Media inquiries will be sent to newsroom@ahrq.hhs.gov.

Approval and Set Up of New AHRQ Facebook Page

To create your own AHRQ Facebook page, fill out the AHRQ Social Media Checklist and submit it to socialmedia@ahrq.hhs.gov. Also, work with an OCKT managing editor to ensure appropriate external link disclaimers are put in place.

Additional Guidelines

OCKT welcomes suggestions for AHRQ Facebook posts from AHRQ's Offices and Centers and asks that staff follow these guidelines:

- Suggestions for Facebook posts must include a Web link to the item, to additional information, or to a phone number.
- Posts should be concise and written in plain language. Go to www.ahrq.gov/policy/electronic/plain-writing/index.html for additional guidance on plain language.
- Posts can highlight any AHRQ product: data, tools, research findings, campaigns, events, publications, etc.
- Examples of Facebook posts:
 - In a recent AHRQ statistical brief, data suggest that Medicaid “super-utilizers” (Medicaid patients admitted to hospitals four or more times annually) were six times as likely as other Medicaid patients to be readmitted within 30 days of discharge. A new tool from AHRQ is available to help hospitals address readmissions for Medicaid patients. Read the statistical brief: www.hcup-us.ahrq.gov/reports/statbriefs/sb184-Hospital-Stays-Medicaid-Super-Utilizers-2012.jsp. Check out the readmissions guide here: www.ahrq.gov/professionals/systems/hospital/medicaidreadmitguide/index.html#Medicaid.
 - The number of children age 10 to 14 who needed hospital care for suicide and self-injury rose significantly between 2006 and 2011. That's according to a new article in the journal *Academic Pediatrics*. The analysis is based on a report prepared from AHRQ data sources and led by AHRQ researchers. Read the article, “Annual Report on Healthcare for Children and Youth in the United States: National Estimates of Cost, Utilization and Expenditures for Children with Mental Disorders,” for more information: www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25444653.

AHRQ Instagram Policy

About Instagram

Instagram is a mobile photo-sharing app that allows users to capture, edit, and upload photos on their mobile device to generate discussion and ideas. Users can apply filters to convert photos to black and white or grayscale or use lighting effects to evoke sentiment.

Facebook owns Instagram, and the app works seamlessly to allow users to share their Instagram photos with their Facebook communities. They can also use Instagram to post images on Twitter and blogs or share them via email and text message.

HHS has signed terms of services with Instagram, allowing HHS agencies to use it. Instagram can be used in conjunction with other social media platforms to drive traffic to HHS sites; to provide visually appealing content to the audiences that HHS serves; and to provide a timely, reliable source of information on topics such as food safety, physical fitness, and health and wellness. AHRQ currently does not maintain an Instagram account.

Instagram Content

All Instagram photo posts will be subject to review by OCKT or the appropriate program staff and must comply with copyright and photo rights laws and statutes. To suggest content for an Instagram post, submit your suggestion to socialmedia@ahrq.hhs.gov.

Instagram Guidelines

All AHRQ Instagram pages must link to the AHRQ Comment Policy. The AHRQ Comment Policy can be found at: www.ahrq.gov/policy/social-media/comments/index.html.

OCKT will work with AHRQ staff members to address any comments that require the attention of an AHRQ staff member before posting a response. If a contractor manages an AHRQ Instagram account, the contractor must work with OCKT and AHRQ staff members to address the comment before responding.

Recordkeeping

AHRQ Instagram users must keep records of photo comments. Email Pat Bosco, AHRQ's Records Management Officer, at patricia.bosco@ahrq.hhs.gov to determine the appropriate records schedule and records management practices.

Approval and Set Up of New AHRQ Instagram Account

To create an Instagram account, meet with the appropriate OCKT Team Lead to discuss managing and supporting the account. Consider the following: Target audience, objectives, activities, technical requirements (e.g., 508 compliance), and resources needed to maintain the account. AHRQ views the Instagram audience as consumers, not health professionals, researchers, or service providers. After meeting with the Team Lead, complete Appendix 4-A. AHRQ Social Media Checklist and send it to socialmedia@ahrq.hhs.gov.

Additional Guidelines

OCKT asks that AHRQ staff follow these guidelines for Instagram:

- Photos should be captioned or contain a brief description written in plain language. Go to www.ahrq.gov/policy/electronic/plain-writing/index.html for guidance on plain language.
- Before uploading a photo, ensure that AHRQ has the digital rights to the image.

- Photos should highlight AHRQ campaigns, toolkits, Web conferences, events, presentations, research findings, publications, etc.
- Send all questions to socialmedia@ahrq.hhs.gov.

AHRQ LinkedIn Policy

About LinkedIn

LinkedIn is an online social network based on professional connections that allows users to connect to one another on areas of professional interest and discuss ideas relevant to their profession. Basic accounts are free and allow people to post information about their education; employment; and knowledge, skills, and abilities. Companies can create company pages on LinkedIn or employees can create them when they list the company as a place of employment. LinkedIn's Discussion Groups are a communications tool that allows users to subscribe to receive updates on a particular subject.

HHS has signed terms of services with LinkedIn, allowing HHS agencies to use LinkedIn. AHRQ exists as a company on LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com/company/agency-for-healthcare-research-and-quality), and the site features Discussion Groups associated with AHRQ programs including, a TeamSTEPPS Showcase page and TeamSTEPPS Group Discussion page, AHRQ Data Resources, and several private groups developed for specific audiences such as Patient Safety Organizations.

LinkedIn Guidelines

All AHRQ-related LinkedIn pages or Discussion Groups must link to the AHRQ Comment Policy. The AHRQ Comment Policy can be found at: www.ahrq.gov/policy/social-media/comments/index.html.

OCKT will work with AHRQ staff members to address any comments that require the attention of an AHRQ staff member before posting a response. If a contractor manages an AHRQ LinkedIn Discussion Page, the contractor must work with OCKT and AHRQ staff members to address the comment before responding.

LinkedIn Content

To submit content to be posted on LinkedIn, send an email to socialmedia@ahrq.hhs.gov that includes: The text for the post, date it should be posted, and any related links, and any related photos. See Guidelines below for additional details.

Recordkeeping

AHRQ LinkedIn users must keep records of comments on Discussion Groups. Email Pat Bosco, AHRQ's Records Management Officer, at patricia.bosco@ahrq.hhs.gov to determine the appropriate records schedule and records management practices.

Approval and Set Up of New LinkedIn Group Page

To create a LinkedIn Discussion Group, meet with the appropriate OCKT Team Lead to discuss managing and supporting the account. Consider the following: target audience,

objectives, activities, technical requirements (e.g., 508 compliance), and resources needed to maintain the account. Consider whether your discussion group will target health professionals, researchers, or service providers and whether LinkedIn is the best way to reach these audiences. After meeting with the Team Lead, complete Appendix 4-A. AHRQ Social Media Checklist and send it to socialmedia@ahrq.hhs.gov.

Additional Guidelines

OCKT asks that staff follow these guidelines:

- All posts and discussion prompts should be written in plain language. Go to www.ahrq.gov/policy/electronic/plain-writing/index.html for guidance on plain language.
- If photos are used, ensure that AHRQ has the digital rights to the images.
- Posts should highlight AHRQ data, tools, campaigns, Web conferences, events, presentations, research findings, publications, etc.
- Send all questions to socialmedia@ahrq.hhs.gov.

AHRQ Pinterest Policy

About Pinterest

Pinterest is a virtual bulletin board-style platform for online image sharing. The site allows users to create and manage topic-based image collections on each of their virtual boards. The site can be linked with Twitter and Facebook and allows users to share and interact with topic-based communities.

HHS uses Pinterest as a communications tool to drive traffic to HHS sites, to learn what visual content is most appealing to the audiences that HHS serves, and to provide a timely, reliable source of information on topics such as food safety, physical fitness, and health and wellness. Due to resource limitations, AHRQ currently does not maintain a Pinterest account.

Pinterest Content

The purpose of Pinterest is to strategically disseminate the most up-to-date and relevant information through digital images. All Pinterest photo posts will be subject to review by OCKT or the appropriate program staff and must comply with copyright and photo rights laws and statutes. Suggestions for Pinterest content should go to socialmedia@ahrq.hhs.gov.

Pinterest Guidelines

Pinterest allows for interactivity, and readers can comment and share each other's pins. The ability to comment allows pins to be shared by users and creates a community that enables users to become stakeholders and contributors, generates discussion and ideas, and permits transparency and engagement.

There should be a link to the AHRQ Comment Policy on the AHRQ Pinterest page. The AHRQ Comment Policy can be found at: www.ahrq.gov/policy/social-media/comments/index.html.

In cases where a comment needs the attention of someone outside of OCKT, OCKT will work with an appropriate AHRQ staff person to address the issue or question before a response is posted.

Recordkeeping

AHRQ Pinterest pins and “pinners” (people pinning images onto the digital boards) must keep records of pin comments. Email Pat Bosco, AHRQ’s Records Management Officer, at patricia.bosco@ahrq.hhs.gov to determine the appropriate records schedule and records management practices.

Approval and Set Up of New AHRQ Pinterest Page

To create a Pinterest account or board, meet with the appropriate OCKT Team Lead to discuss managing and supporting the board. Consider the following: target audience, objectives, activities, technical requirements (e.g., 508 compliance), and resources needed to maintain the board. Keep in mind that AHRQ views board audiences as consumers, not health professionals, researchers, or service providers. After meeting with the Team Lead, complete Appendix 4-A. AHRQ Social Media Checklist and send it to socialmedia@ahrq.hhs.gov.

Additional Guidelines

OCKT asks that staff follow these guidelines:

- Pins should feature brief descriptions written in plain language. Go to www.ahrq.gov/policy/electronic/plain-writing/index.html for additional guidance on plain language.
- Ensure that AHRQ has the digital rights to images selected for pinning.
- Boards and their pins should highlight AHRQ campaigns, toolkits, Web conferences, events, presentations, research findings, publications, etc.
- Send all additional questions to socialmedia@ahrq.hhs.gov.

AHRQ Twitter Policy

About Twitter

Twitter is a microblogging site that allows users to share information through 140-character messages. Twitter users follow other users who post useful or interesting information, and users retweet other users’ tweets, thereby sharing those tweets with followers.

Because Twitter broadcasts to a group of people who have self-identified as interested in what a specific Twitter user has to say, a tweet is more targeted than a press release, interview, or media pitch. Twitter can also be used to gauge interest in a topic, gain

feedback on a product, announce a campaign, and measure the impact of dissemination methods.

How AHRQ Uses Twitter

AHRQ uses Twitter to broadcast the Agency's mission to an ever-growing audience. OCKT maintains the Agency's two Twitter accounts, @AHRQNews and @AHRQConf, and has established this policy to ensure that Agency tweets are coordinated, present a balanced view of Agency activities, and further the Agency's mission. AHRQ uses Twitter to achieve three goals:

- To speak with one voice on behalf of the Agency when distributing content.
- To increase the number of followers to spread AHRQ's messages to a diverse audience.
- To raise the Agency's profile by highlighting work that is central to AHRQ's mission.

Twitter Content

OCKT works collaboratively with each Office and Center to identify appropriate Twitter content and to develop tweets. Each tweet is intended to strategically disseminate the most up-to-date and relevant AHRQ information. Guidance on developing suggested tweets appears at the end of this policy.

Text for suggested tweets should be sent to twitter@ahrq.hhs.gov. OCKT will review all suggested tweets. When possible, suggested tweets should include a Web link to the AHRQ product being promoted. Individuals who have suggested tweets should coordinate tweets with OCKT to ensure tweets conform to Twitter, HHS, and AHRQ guidelines. Go to the HHS Twitter Guidelines for additional details about Twitter: www.hhs.gov/web/socialmedia. Also, see HHS Social Media Resources for more information: www.hhs.gov/web/socialmedia/additional_resources/index.html.

Hashtags

The # symbol, called a hashtag, is used to mark keywords or topics in a tweet and allows users to track their social influence because hashtags show how many people are talking about a topic. Hashtags also make it easy for AHRQ to brand content and for people to search for AHRQ content. OCKT welcomes suggestions for hashtags and recommends staff use these best practices:

- Use no more than three hashtags per tweet.
- Avoid starting a tweet with a hashtag.
- Introduce a new hashtag when you want to start a conversation.
- To join a conversation, find a hashtag currently being used. Find hashtags by performing a keyword search. Use popular hashtags that best fit your topic.

Interactivity Guidelines

Social media is more interactive than traditional information dissemination vehicles because it establishes a mechanism for action between the sender and receiver.

Interaction occurs in three ways on Twitter:

- Following other users
- Retweeting
- Responding to comments and inquiries

The following guidelines apply to AHRQ's interaction on the @AHRQNews and @AHRQConf Twitter accounts:

- **Following other Twitter users.** AHRQ will follow other Federal, State, and local health care-related agencies as well as partners, stakeholders, and influencers.
- **Retweeting.** AHRQ will retweet information from Federal and State agencies and organizations that have a partnership with AHRQ provided that the tweet aligns with AHRQ's mission. Requests to retweet will be handled on a case-by-case basis.
- **Responding to inquiries. OCKT will assess individual inquiries on Twitter and work directly with AHRQ staff to write a response.**

Neither AHRQ staff nor contractors will respond to media inquiries through Twitter. Media inquiries will be sent to Alison Hunt at alison.hunt@ahrq.hhs.gov.

In cases where these guidelines do not address a specific issue concerning an interaction, OCKT will work with AHRQ program staff to address the issue or question before responding. Send questions to socialmedia@ahrq.hhs.gov.

Approval and Set Up of New AHRQ Twitter Accounts

To create a new Twitter account, please fill out the AHRQ Social Media Checklist and follow the instructions for submission. Submit completed form to socialmedia@ahrq.hhs.gov. See Additional Guidelines and Interactivity Guidelines sections for details.

Additional Guidelines

OCKT welcomes suggestions for tweets from Offices and Centers and asks staff to follow these guidelines:

- Tweets should highlight an AHRQ product, including data, guides, databases, toolkits, Web conferences, events, exhibits, presentations, research findings, funding announcements, final reports, etc.
- Tweets are limited to 140 characters, including spaces, hashtags, and URLs. AHRQ uses a URL shortener that helps keep tweets to the 140-character limit.
- Sample tweets:

- New #AHRQ review finds benefits of #bonemarrow transplants for Wolman’s Disease in pediatric populations <http://go.usa.gov/nVT#CER#PCOR>
- Get AHRQ’s new brief on improving #quality of the #PCMH evidence and evaluation. Read more: <http://go.usa.gov/gKBV>
- Share the latest evidence on C-diff treatment, prevention: Free faculty slide set from #AHRQ <http://go.usa.gov/NkJ>

AHRQ YouTube Policy

This policy is intended to ensure that videos on AHRQ’s YouTube channels are coordinated, present a balanced view of the Agency’s activities, and further the Agency’s mission.

About YouTube

YouTube is a free, online video streaming service that allows anyone to view and share videos that users have uploaded to the YouTube Web site. Users can share videos via YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, other social networking sites, email, and other channels. YouTube users also interact with other users by commenting on videos.

YouTube is the most well-known video sharing network. Like other social media platforms, it can be used to gauge interest in a topic, gain feedback on a product, announce a campaign, see the impact of research, and provide deeper context and resources than traditional dissemination methods.

How AHRQ Uses YouTube

AHRQ uses its YouTube channels to broadcast messages to consumer or professional audiences to:

- Distribute AHRQ content.
- Increase the number of subscribers and video views to spread AHRQ’s messages to various consumer audiences.
- Raise the profile of the Agency by highlighting work that is central to AHRQ’s mission.

YouTube Content

Each video should strategically disseminate up-to-date and relevant AHRQ information. To identify appropriate YouTube content, AHRQ staff and contractors work collaboratively with the appropriate program and OCKT staff members. All videos are subject to review by AHRQ’s YouTube Content Manager, Biff LeVee in OCKT, who maintains AHRQ’s YouTube account.

To submit content to be posted to one of the established AHRQ YouTube channels, send an email to socialmedia@ahrq.hhs.gov. Please follow the YouTube Video Submission Questionnaire found in Appendix 4-B.

Interactivity Guidelines

YouTube is a communication tool that places a high value on sharing and commenting on videos. The following guidelines govern AHRQ's interactions on YouTube:

- **Subscribing to other YouTube channels:** AHRQ will subscribe to YouTube channels that belong to Federal, State and local health care-related agencies as well as channels that belong to partners, stakeholders, and influencers. AHRQ will not subscribe to political YouTube channels.
- **Responding to inquiries or comments:** Users may leave comments on AHRQ YouTube channels provided the comments adhere to the AHRQ Comment Policy (www.ahrq.gov/policy/social-media/comments/index.html). AHRQ YouTube channels will include a link to the AHRQ Comment Policy. AHRQ's YouTube manager will work with AHRQ staff to address comments or questions on specific videos.

In cases where these guidelines do not address a specific issue concerning an interaction, OCKT will work with AHRQ program staff to address the issue or question before responding. Send questions to socialmedia@ahrq.hhs.gov.

Approval and Set Up of New AHRQ YouTube Channels

To create your own YouTube channel, fill out the Social Media Checklist and submit it to socialmedia@ahrq.hhs.gov. See Additional Guidelines and Interactivity Guidelines for details.

Additional Guidelines

- Videos should highlight AHRQ products including campaigns, toolkits, Web conferences, events, presentations, research findings, etc.
- The OCKT Team Lead should be included in discussions early on when creating a video or a new YouTube channel. Decisions regarding creating a YouTube channel need to consider AHRQ's overall needs rather than what is needed for a specific instance. Ideas for videos should be listed on the AHRQ Social Media Checklist and coordinated with the OCKT Team Lead and Office or Center Director.
- Videos must be captioned according to YouTube's specifications. Either a separate .srt file with time stamps must be prepared or a transcript must exist to caption a YouTube video. No transcript is needed if the .srt caption file works correctly.
- Please read the YouTube Video Submission Questionnaire in Appendix 4-B for more information.

- OCKT prefers to receive time-coded transcripts. This satisfies a requirement for videos placed on sites outside of YouTube. Transcripts can be Word or .txt files. An example of the format for a time-coded transcript is as follows:

Dr. Doe

Min:Sec:Fps

01:50:00

Good afternoon. My name is Dr. John Doe and I would like to start by welcoming everyone to this Web cast.

Dr. Doe

02:00:00

We will start today with brief remarks from each of our experts.

AHRQ Comment Policy

This policy applies to public comments and content submitted to AHRQ sites. AHRQ encourages the public to share comments on the content of this or any AHRQ Web site to promote an active exchange of ideas.

AHRQ reviews all comments and content that the public submits for posting and reserves the right not to post submitted content or to remove content that is inconsistent with this policy.

AHRQ has the right to delete comments if they contain:

- Vulgar, profane, or abusive language; personal attacks of any kind; inappropriate religious, sexual, political, or racial references; or unsupported accusations.
- Endorsements of commercial products, services, organizations, or other entities.
- Endorsements of political parties, candidates, or groups.
- Content that infringes on copyright.
- Solicitation of funds.
- Comments on any ongoing investigation.
- Procurement-sensitive information related to any current or future AHRQ acquisitions.
- Surveys, polls, questionnaires, etc., subject to OMB Paperwork Reduction Act clearance.
- Reporters' questions. All media inquiries must be directed to Alison Hunt at alison.hunt@ahrq.hhs.gov.

In posting comments or other content to a Web site owned or administered by AHRQ, the submitter irrevocably grants AHRQ permission to copy, distribute, make derivatives of, display, or perform the work publicly and free-of-charge. All submitted content is understood to reflect the opinion of the submitter, and its appearance on an AHRQ site

does not indicate that it reflects the official views of the AHRQ, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, or the Federal Government.

Because posts are public, submitters should not include information (for example, Social Security numbers) in the text of a comment that personally identifies them in a way they do not intend. Additional guidance on how AHRQ regards privacy issues can be found at AHRQ's Privacy Policy page. All third party Web sites must link to AHRQ's privacy policy.

AHRQ welcomes submissions of comments and content at any time. Comment and content review and posting will generally occur during regular business hours from Monday through Friday. AHRQ will review and post comments and content submitted at other times as soon as possible.