

Summary

Nearly all survey respondents noted that it is acceptable for healthcare organizations to use social technologies to communicate with patients, consumers and the broader public in general. Respondents were most likely to indicate that it would be appropriate to share information via a social technology tool in the event of a natural disaster or public crisis, to share information about local health issues, upcoming programs or events at a healthcare organization or information on general health/well-being. Approximately one-third of respondents noted that they work for a healthcare provider organization that communicates (or plans to communicate) with patients and other individuals using social technology tools. Among the tools tested for in this research, social networking sites are most likely to be used by healthcare organizations for communicating information to patients and other individuals.

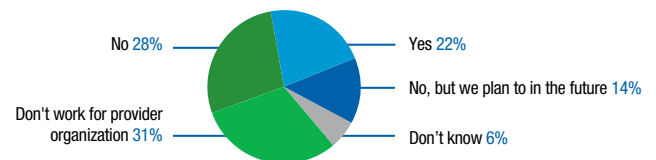
Types of Organizations For Which it is Permissible to Use Social Technologies

Nearly all survey respondents (90 percent) noted that it is acceptable for healthcare organizations to use social technologies as a means to communicate with patients, consumers and the broader public in general. Respondents were most likely to report that it would be appropriate for healthcare delivery organizations, such as hospitals, ambulatory facilities or long-term care facilities to use this type of technology as a means of communication. Another three-quarters noted that it would be appropriate for public health entities to use this type of technology for communication purposes.



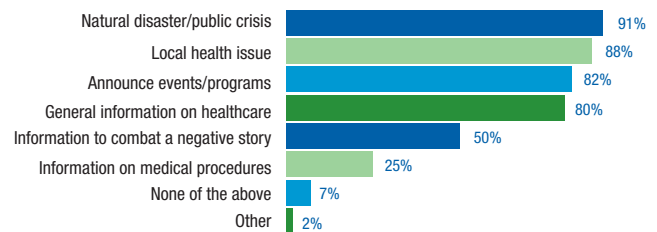
Does Your Healthcare Provider Organization Communicate via Social Networking Technologies?

Approximately one-quarter of respondents noted that they work for a healthcare provider organization that communicates with patients and other individuals using social technology tools. A similar number (28 percent) reported that their organization does not use these types of tools for communication and has no plans to do so in the future.



Type of Information it is Permissible to Share Via Social Networking Tools

Nearly all respondents (90 percent) thought it would be permissible for healthcare organizations to share information with patients and other members of the community in the event of a natural disaster or public crisis. A similar percent indicated that it would be acceptable to share information on local health issues, such as alerting asthma patients that the pollen count in their area is high. More than 80 percent of respondents also thought it permissible for healthcare organizations to share information about upcoming programs/events or general healthcare information, such as information about high blood pressure. Only one-quarter of respondents indicated that it would be appropriate to share information about an on-going medical procedure, such as a pediatric kidney transplant.



Does Your Organization Have a Policy Outlining Appropriate Use of Social Technologies by Employees?

More than one third of respondents noted that their organization has a plan in place that outlines the appropriate use of externally-operated social technology tools by employees. Another 17 percent reported that their organization will be developing such a policy in the future.

