



HOW TO PUT PATIENTS FIRST

An HCIC 2019 Executive Summary



How to Put Patients First

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Introduction

When it comes to developing content, patients come first.

That message was drilled into almost every session during our 23rd annual Greystone.Net Healthcare Internet Conference (HCIC) in Orlando, Florida this fall.

Amanda Todorovich, this year's Healthcare Internet Hall of Fame (HIHOF) inductee and senior director of health content at Cleveland Clinic, said it best when she told a rapt audience: "Don't let internal politics drive your content. If you do that, your patients will suffer."

Whether it was learning how to tidy up social media content (in the spirit of Marie Kondo), the emergence of chatbots or how to encourage nursing staff to use social media to connect to patients, the conference was full of tangible takeaways that marketers could bring back home with them.



Our executive summary dives into the following topics:

- ❑ 3 ways to focus on your patients
- ❑ Key themes from #HCIC19
- ❑ 5 favorite tweets from the conference

We can't wait to see you in Los Angeles for [#HCIC20](#), November 2-4, 2020!



3 Ways to Focus on Your Patients

Amanda Bury, director of channel development and strategy at Kyruus, has been coming to the conference for more than a decade. What struck her about the event this year was that healthcare marketers are getting more focused on a digital patient experience.

“Marketers are working more closely and aligning with IT and technologies that can impact the care level that consumers are expecting,” Bury says.

Here were a few other sessions that included some tips and tricks on how to focus on the patient experience:

Poll patients to find out what they want

Jeremy Rogers, executive director of digital marketing and experience at IU Health, introduced attendees to [IU Health Insiders](#). This is a group of about 2,500+ patients who have elected to participate in online surveys, focus groups and volunteer for media interviews. When the marketing team asks this group questions (a recent one was about clothing attire for nurses), they take back what they’ve learned from this group to the C-suite to make real, actionable changes.

Make it easy for patients to share photos

Henry Ford Health System loves re-posting Instagram pictures from their followers. But it was starting to be a hassle. First, the marketing team had to “like” the content and ask the user for permission to use it. If the user said yes, the user would have to email the marketing team and then fill out a form to give permission.

Emily Stieber, lead social media strategist, knew this back-and-forth was cumbersome. She talked to her legal department and showcased how other hospitals don't follow the same stringent guidelines. Now, legal and marketing are working together to create a hashtag around consent. Simple as that.

Go fast

Gina Morris, head of industry at Google, said the best thing hospital marketers could do is talk to their IT department about making sure content on their hospital website is loading quickly. "The No. 1 way to improve customer service is to make your mobile sites faster," Morris says. What's the best way to do that? "Start with compressing image sizes. You want them to be under 100KB."

Taking a Moment for Reflection

Our hearts were broken when Terri McNorton, famed healthcare marketing and communications leader, passed away in January of this year.

But her spirit, memory and legacy lived on for just a little bit longer at #HCIC19. She was honored posthumously as the 2019 recipient of the John A. Eudes Vision & Excellence Award. Bestowed annually at the Healthcare Internet Conference, the award was created in honor of Greystone.Net co-founder John A. Eudes to recognize individuals who embody Eudes' ideals for excellence.

For nearly two decades, McNorton served as vice president for three major regional health systems: General Health System (Baton Rouge, LA), Ochsner Health System (New Orleans, LA) and Bon Secours Health System (based in Marriottsville, MD).

She was awarded more than 100 regional and national honors for marketing and communications achievements, including a national Lifetime Achievement Award by the American Hospital Association's Society for Healthcare Strategy and Market Development (SHSMD). Also, she mentored dozens of up-and-coming industry professionals and served 16 professional/industry organizations in various leadership roles.

"We will always remember, value and cherish her contributions to Greystone and the industry," Kathy Divis, president of Greystone, says. "She embodied all the elements of this award: she was a visionary, innovative, always sharing insights and was incredibly kind and fun."



Exploring Key Themes from #HCIC19

We asked attendees to summarize the big lessons they learned from #HCIC19. Here's what a few of them said:

We're building stronger teams

“My biggest takeaway from #HCIC19 is observing the simple evolution of the thinking. Gone are the day of talking specifically about a website. Now, we're seeing integrations between departments and joined focus. Quality and marketing, marketing and IT&S — we are all starting to work as a team.”

—*Reed Smith, vice president of digital strategy at Jarrard Phillips Cate & Hancock, Inc.*

Building trust is powerful

“As healthcare marketers, we have to be memorable and relatable. We must answer our consumers' questions and be empathetic. If we're not providing healthcare content that is easy to find, access and understand, then we lose their trust when they need care the most; we lose building that relationship with them from the very beginning.”

—*Jennifer DeLeo Kertz, manager of digital content at Temple University Health System*

Consumer-focused healthcare

“Experts see health systems moving towards a model that approaches its relationship with a consumer across their lifetime, not just as individual encounters. With this shift to a more consumer-focused health care system, health care organizations are utilizing new technologies, like AI and voice-activation, to personalize the patient journey to build relationships both online and at the point of care.”

—Brad Wensel, executive vice president and chief customer officer at Healthgrades

Celebrating Our Newest Inductee into the Healthcare Internet Hall of Fame

Since 2011, we've been honoring individuals and organizations who've made outstanding, lasting contributions to our industry. This year, we welcomed Amanda Todorovich, senior director of health content at Cleveland Clinic, to HIHOF.

She's responsible for growing the No. 1 most-visited hospital blog (say hello to your newest inspiration: [Health Essentials](#)) from 200,000 views a month to 7 million a month. In her first six months on the job, she increased website traffic to a million views a month.

How?

When she was hired, she was given a spreadsheet of 50 pages of what service leaders thought were priority topics for Health Essentials. She chucked it aside (politely). Instead, she focused on what current readers were clicking on and tried to figure out more of what they wanted — not what service line leaders said they did.

“Nobody wants to ‘follow’ your hospital and if they are sick, nobody wants to be reminded of it 24/7,” Todorovich says. “We wanted to give our readers something that mattered to them, instead of just trying to push them through a marketing funnel.”



Passionate about innovative communication and producing strategic content of all kinds, she considers the HIHOF award an incredible honor.

“I’m so grateful to the Cleveland Clinic team for all of their hard work and support throughout our content marketing journey,” Todorovich says. “We’re always evolving and trying new things. This award isn’t just recognition for me, it’s for them, too.”

Interested in being a HIHOF judge? Please email info@hihof.com.

5 Favorite Tweets from #HCIC19

Here are a few Tweets that grabbed our attention:

What reputation means

[@jaredpiano](#): Reputation management isn't about controlling the message. It's about listening & facilitating the conversation with patients. [@AnnieHarm](#), [@its_me_AmandaH](#), [@Reputation_Com](#)

Patients love to research

[@chrisboyer](#): 84% of patients research treatment options online AFTER an initial diagnosis

Why we're all here

<https://twitter.com/MollyGarrity>

[@MollyGarrity](#): "We're all in the business of trust. Building it, maintaining it and repairing it," says [@iSocialFanz](#)

Exploring the patient journey

[@danfell](#): One interesting take away from #HCIC19 and [@NovantHealth](#) on leveraging tech to improve the patient journey is the growing number of patients turning to e-visits over video/telehealth specifically because of the asynchronous convenience. It's all about the consumer.

Let's get organized

[@Andy Lawson](#): "In Healthcare, we do a poor job of organizing our content for consumers — putting the burden on them to dig around to find the information they are looking for." —Jackie Martin

Conclusion

Hospital marketers: Own the data. Know what stories are performing well. Keep track of what digital campaigns are bringing patients to your hospital.

That way, when your C-suite tells you to do this-or-that or someone comes running up to you to say they need you to write a blog post about a new department hire, you'll be empowered to put the patient's agenda first — not theirs.

You might start by teaching your hospital leaders what you're looking for. Take a cue from Stephanie Pierce, director of marketing technology at Arkansas Children's Health System, is doing at her organization.

During her session, she talked about how one of her goals is to educate the whole hospital about the digital experience for patients. She leads regular educational programming about SEO, marketing technology and influencer marketing to various hospital groups. "We want to elevate the digital savviness of everyone in the hospital," Pierce says.

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