Cancer Prevention Month and World Cancer Day
Social Media Toolkit

February 2017
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Use “Ctrl+click” on links to get them to open in a new tab

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ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT
This Cancer Prevention Month and World Cancer Day Social Media Toolkit is designed to help public health professionals establish a social media strategy built around Cancer Prevention Month and World Cancer Day in February.

WHO SHOULD USE THIS TOOLKIT?
Public health professionals, cancer control professionals, cancer centers, coalitions and community-based organizations can all use this toolkit and adapt its messaging for their unique audiences, stakeholders and areas of expertise.

WHAT IS NATIONAL CANCER PREVENTION MONTH?
Created by the American Institute for Cancer Research, National Cancer Prevention Month in February focuses on promoting healthy behaviors to reduce cancer incidence in the United States. Specifically, National Cancer Prevention Month emphasizes that individuals can cut their cancer risk by moving more, maintaining a healthy weight and eating more healthfully (American Institute for Cancer Research, 2015).

WHAT IS WORLD CANCER DAY?
World Cancer Day on Saturday, February 4, 2017 is an initiative by the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) to reduce the burden of cancer worldwide (Union for International Cancer Control, 2016).

CAMPAIGN KEY MESSAGES
The theme for World Cancer Day 2017 is “We can. I can.” Some of the key messages for the campaign are:

- **“We can** prevent cancer
- **We can** create healthy cities
- **We can** challenge perceptions
- **We can** improve access to cancer care
- **We can** join forces to make a difference
- **I can** make healthy lifestyle choices
- **I can** understand that early detection saves lives
- **I can** ask for support
- **I can** take control of my cancer journey
- **I can** make my voice heard”

(Quoted directly from World Cancer Day 2017 Campaign Toolkit)

Here are some key messages for National Cancer Prevention Month:

- Avoid tobacco and secondhand smoke
- Protect your skin from ultraviolet (UV) rays
- Diet, activity and weight control could prevent 1 in 3 cancers
- Limit alcohol intake
- “Choose mostly plant foods, limit red meat and avoid processed meat.
- Be physically active every day in any way for 30 minutes or more.
- Aim to be a healthy weight throughout life.”

(Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center, 2015)
SOCIAL MEDIA 101

According to a 2014 Pew Research Center survey, “74% of online adults use social networking sites” (Pew Research Center, 2014). In addition, Hughes (2010) found that “one-third of adults access social media related to health.”

Social media represents a unique opportunity to reach a large audience of both consumers and professionals. It is more important than ever that online medical and health information is “trustworthy, engaging, and accessible to digitally empowered consumers” (Hootsuite, n.d., p. 2).

When designing and thinking about your social media strategy, consider your audience, the channel(s) you want to use, your objective(s), or what you are trying to achieve, as well as how you will measure success. Remember that your social media activities should ultimately support your organization’s goals (Hootsuite, nd.).

Looking to establish a social media strategy for your organization or make the case for why it’s important? The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers “SocialMediaWorks,” an online step-by-step tool to create and establish a social media strategy. The site also offers pre-tested and effective messages as well as evaluation strategies, tools and templates.

Remember to tailor messaging to your target audience or audiences. Your organization offers unique strengths and expertise; make sure to capitalize on them to make your campaign effective.

SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS

Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, Pinterest and more—social media is growing every day, along with opportunities for outreach.

TWITTER BEST PRACTICES

- Keep Tweets short, between 100-110 characters. This allows other users to Retweet while adding their own comments.
- Add photos or videos. Adding a photo boosts Retweets by 62% on average (Twitter Government and Elections Team, 2014).
- Tweet at author or organizational Twitter handles when possible. Note that Tweets that begin with a username will now reach all your followers (this means you no longer have to use the “.@” convention in order for your Tweet to be seen by all your followers).
- Twitter, Tweetdeck, Sprout Social and Hootsuite all have options to shorten links as you write Tweets. Other options for shortening links are provided under Additional Tools and Resources.
- Promote engagement with other organizations by liking or Retweeting their content. You can even add your own comment before Retweeting.
- Be responsive and recognize Retweets, @ mentions and when others share your content—it doesn’t take much, but a simple “thank you” goes a long way.
- Remember that Tweets cannot be edited once they are posted, so proofread before you post!

“CDC uses social media to provide users with access to credible, science-based health information. …Social media tools are used to reinforce and personalize messages, reach new audiences, and build a communication infrastructure based on open information exchange” (CDC, 2015)
FACEBOOK BEST PRACTICES

- Shorter posts (around 250 characters) get up to 60% more distribution than longer posts (CDC, n.d.).
- Use photos or videos to make your posts stand out. Posts with photos receive up to 50% more likes than non-photo posts (Hershkowitz & Lavrusik, 2013). However, be aware of Facebook’s policies about what can be posted and identifying people in photos without consent (CDC, n.d.).
- Use a conversational tone and explain to your audience why the content should matter to them (Hershkowitz & Lavrusik, 2013).
- Posts that start conversations by asking questions and responding receive approximately 70% above-average engagement (Hershkowitz & Lavrusik, 2013).
- Vary your post type. Users don’t engage the same way with every post (Hershkowitz & Lavrusik, 2013).
- Track your results and act on them. Facebook offers analytic data that you can use to find out what posts are being “liked” or shared and which ones aren’t. Focus your efforts on what is working (CDC, n.d.).

BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNICATING ABOUT CANCER PREVENTION

While communication is not a panacea for cancer control, it can increase knowledge and awareness, inspire action and influence beliefs. Your communication efforts will be most effective when you:

- Know your audience
  - Different audiences respond differently to key messages.
  - Audience segmentation (the process of defining and identifying your audience) allows you to focus your efforts and strategy most effectively for helping your audience adopt new behaviors (Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs, n.d.).
  - Understand the channels your target audience uses to get information and find out who influences their health behavior. This will help you craft your messages appropriately.

- Consider health literacy and numeracy
  - Use simple language and avoid terms not often used outside of the scientific community. Explain how data influences your audience and why it’s relevant (NCI, 2011).
  - Organize information so the most important points are first (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, n.d.).
  - If presenting data, use integers instead of decimals as they are more convincing and easily recalled (Witteman et al., 2011). Visual representations of data, like icon arrays are most effective.
  - Where possible, point consumers to supporting materials, visuals and reliable sources of information such as trusted websites or physicians.

(Pratt-Chapman & Vos, 2016)
Use storytelling as a tool

- Storytelling is an effective cancer communication tool, as it has been shown to overcome resistance, facilitate information processing, provide social connections and represent emotional and existential issues (Wen-Ying, Hunt, Farkers and Augustson, 2011; Kreuter et al., 2007).
- When using storytelling, highlight the positive by telling your audience what they should do rather than what they should not do (CDC, 2010).
- Use narratives to target detection and prevention behaviors (Shen, Sheer & Li, 2015).
- Create narratives with audio and video as they are more effective than text narratives alone (Shen, Sheer & Li, 2015).

Demonstrate cultural humility

- When tackling a global issue like cancer, it is essential that you understand the cultural and social context of your audience and take it into account when designing key messages.
- Cultural humility or sensitivity first requires an awareness of one’s own cultural beliefs and values (Surbone, 2008).
- Understand that different cultures may have different health care values and may evolve over time and that even within racial or ethnic populations there is great diversity across gender, gender identity, sexual orientation and income that may influence how your audience receives and interprets information (Surbone, 2008; Pratt-Chapman & Vos, 2016).
- If you are translating your messages into different languages, be sure to clarify and check your translation with a native speaker if possible (words often have different meanings in different cultures, even within the same language).

Build Partnerships

- Using partnerships can multiply the impact of your communication campaign – don’t go it alone!
- Consider joining with organizations that reach different target audiences than your own. This can allow you to disseminate your message to people you wouldn’t otherwise reach.
- Join movements that are already happening (like World Cancer Day or other health observance events) to increase your reach and avoid reinventing the wheel.

Consider Media Advocacy

- Utilize existing grassroots networks, faith-based organizations, community-based partners or other stakeholders to translate communication strategies into policy, systems or environmental change (Pratt-Chapman & Vos, 2016).
- Think about using additional avenues like letters to the editor, opinion pieces or blog posts to reach your audience, especially if you are trying to influence decision makers.
- Get creative in your efforts – photography, art work, poetry and other creative expressions can be great methods for conveying your messages about cancer prevention.
### SAMPLE TWEETS AND FACEBOOK POSTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Tweets</th>
<th>Facebook Posts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wed 2/1</td>
<td>It's National #CancerPreventionMonth! #DYK you can ↓ your risk for some cancers? Read more: [link]</td>
<td>Research shows that being overweight or obese raises a person’s risk of getting some cancers. Read more about the connection between weight and cancer and about healthy eating and exercise: [link]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thu 2/2</td>
<td>#WeCanICan challenge perceptions &amp; dispel damaging #cancer myths &amp; misconceptions: [link]</td>
<td>It's National Cancer Prevention Month! Take a moment to dispel some cancer myths and misconceptions by sharing this fact sheet: [link] Which ones surprised you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri 2/3</td>
<td>Tomorrow is #WorldCancerDay. How does your state measure up when it comes to #cancer rates? [link]</td>
<td>Tomorrow is World Cancer Day. Do you know how your state measures up when it comes to cancer rates? Check out these interactive maps from CDC to find out more: [link]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat 2/4</td>
<td>Today is #WorldCancerDay! Help us spread the message that #WeCanICan take action to help prevent &amp; fight cancer: [link]</td>
<td>World Cancer Day is marked on February 4 to raise awareness of cancer and to encourage its prevention, detection and treatment. Take action to help prevent and fight cancer this month and throughout the year: [link]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon 2/6</td>
<td>#CancerSurvivors: getting regular exercise gives you a better #QualityOfLife and improves fitness [link]</td>
<td>Getting regular exercise is good for everybody, including cancer survivors. Improve your health, lower your risk for some cancers and boost your quality of life and mood by getting active today: [link]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tue 2/7</td>
<td>We can fight #cancer by empowering people to make #healthy lifestyle choices. What can you do in your community? [link]</td>
<td>Sometimes the healthiest choice isn’t always the easiest one. You can make a difference and fight cancer in your community by empowering people to make healthy lifestyle choices. Learn more: [link]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed 2/8</td>
<td>#WeCanICan support improved access to #CancerTreatment &amp; services. Practical guidance from @CDCgov: [link]</td>
<td>Looking to promote better health in your community? Start by supporting efforts to improve access to cancer treatment and services. This guide from CDC has practical guidance to get started: [link]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thu 2/9</td>
<td>Many cancers can be treated if found early. Talk to your doc for more: [link]</td>
<td>Screening means checking your body for cancer before you have symptoms. Many cancers can be more effectively treated if found early. Talk to your doctors to see if getting screened for breast, cervical, colorectal or lung cancer is right for you. To read more, visit: [link]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri 2/10</td>
<td>You can reduce your risk of cancer throughout your life. Find out how: [link]</td>
<td>Prostate cancer occurs most often in older men, men with family history and African American men. Talk to your doctor about your options. See this infographic for more information: [link]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon 2/13</td>
<td>Got Valentine’s day plans tomorrow? Make sure they include breaking up with tobacco: [link]</td>
<td>“Dear cigarettes: It’s not me...it’s you” Make sure your Valentine’s day plans include breaking up with tobacco. These 5 tips can help you quit and stay quit: [link]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Tweets</td>
<td>Facebook Posts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thu 2/16</td>
<td>Youth can make healthy lifestyle choices to reduce #cancer risk: #QuitSmoking #BeActive #HealthyFood #WeCanICan <a href="http://bit.ly/2eniIXx">http://bit.ly/2eniIXx</a></td>
<td>Adolescents have unique opportunities to prevent cancer. Start by quitting smoking, being active and choosing healthy food. Little changes add up to big gains in health. Take the first steps today: <a href="http://bit.ly/2eniIXx">http://bit.ly/2eniIXx</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon 2/20</td>
<td>#Cancer affects some groups more than others. #WeCanICan spread the word about why it matters: <a href="http://bit.ly/2j1Zjrd">http://bit.ly/2j1Zjrd</a> #PreventCancer</td>
<td>Cancer continues to affect some groups more than others. Take a moment to get educated about the basics of cancer disparities and why it matters for cancer prevention: <a href="http://bit.ly/2j1Zjrd">http://bit.ly/2j1Zjrd</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri 2/24</td>
<td>Keeping a healthy weight is one way to ↓ cancer risk. These tools can help assess if you’re in a healthy range: [<a href="http://bit.ly/2ef5F">http://bit.ly/2ef5F</a> Zy](<a href="http://bit.ly/2ef5F">http://bit.ly/2ef5F</a> Zy)</td>
<td>Maintaining a healthy weight can go a long way in reducing your risk for cancer and keeping you healthy. These tools from CDC can help you find out if you’re in a healthy range: [<a href="http://bit.ly/2ef5F">http://bit.ly/2ef5F</a> Zy](<a href="http://bit.ly/2ef5F">http://bit.ly/2ef5F</a> Zy)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OTHER IDEAS TO ENGAGE ON WORLD CANCER DAY

Host or Participate in a Twitter Chat

Twitter chats are a great way to expand your audience and promote engagement with other partners and organizations. You can organize a Twitter chat yourself or simply participate in another one. Twitter chats are live moderated Twitter conversations focused around a specific topic, using a single hashtag. They usually last an hour and involve a list of pre-circulated questions to participants. If you are organizing a chat, reach out to partners early and provide the list of questions as far in advance as possible.

Host a Twitterview

A Twitterview is an interview conducted through Tweets. A Twitterview is a form of Twitter Chat where individuals participate in a live moderated Twitter conversation focused around a specific topic using a single hashtag.

For a Twitterview, typically an interviewer asks questions directly to the interviewee and participants can follow the conversation through an event hashtag. You may also open up the interview to questions from the audience. The benefits of a Twitterview include the creation of relevant and interesting content, dissemination of accurate and evidence-based information, increased visibility of your organization and increased engagement with followers.

Pick a hashtag. Using hashtags is a way to group and organize messages together. In Twitterviews, hashtags are used to distinguish your interview from regular Tweets in the feed. Your followers will also be able to filter and track your Twitterview posts by searching your hashtag. Symplur amalgamates popular and established Tweet Chat hashtags on health care topics. If you use an established hashtag, your Tweets may reach audiences that you usually do not reach. If you would like to create your own hashtag, make sure it is short and intuitive. Don’t be afraid to use abbreviations and acronyms, because your questions and answers including the hashtag must be under 140 characters.

Pick a date and time, then secure a speaker or speakers to be interviewed. Potentially influential speakers might include researchers, cancer survivors or caregivers, health care providers or other subject matter experts. Provide your speaker(s) with a list of what questions will be asked before the event, so they can prepare their answers in under 140 characters, which can take time and editing. Decide in advance whether you are going to open up the interview to your followers and let your speaker(s) know what to expect. Consider using a website to help manage the Twitterview such as TweetChat or TWUBS.

Promote the event to your followers. Host the event, running it similarly to how you would host a live in-person meeting (introduce topic, speaker, your organization). Number your questions starting with a “Q” for question. For example: Q1: What is a kid-friendly #healthy recipe for dinner? #FightCancerChat. Your speaker(s) can either “reply” to the question you Tweet or Tweet starting with an “A” and the corresponding number. For example: A1: Whole grain pasta w/ tomato and veggie sauce is a way to go! Check out this recipe: www.xxx.com #FightCancerChat

Retweet or favorite the best questions posed by your followers and answers by your speaker(s) and be sure to share relevant links and resources. After the event, archive an event summary and share with participants and your other followers. Consider using Storify to create a visual transcript of the Twitterview.
Launch Event or Giveaways

Consider hosting a launch event to generate interest around World Cancer Day and National Cancer Prevention Month. World Cancer Day is a prime opportunity to re-launch your Twitter account if it’s been dormant or less active.

Consider reaching out to local organizations to solicit donations or prizes. Organize a giveaway or prizes to encourage people to use your hashtag and engage with your content. For example, in 2014 the GW Cancer Center used #iExerciseBC and #iEatHealthyBC to engage followers to share why they engage in healthy behaviors in order to be entered in a contest to win gift cards to a local salad shop and fitness studio. In order to qualify, participants had to include #WorldCancerDay, @GWCancer and the gift card sponsor’s Twitter handle in their Tweet. This campaign allowed us to share information about how healthy eating, physical activity and weight management reduce the risk of cancer. Twitter photo contests are another a great way to get your followers involved and engaged.

You might also consider hosting a special webinar or panel to launch your cancer prevention or World Cancer Day activities. Make sure to reach out to potential partners early to ensure support.

Best Practices for Engagement Events and Activities

- Plan early and well
- Expand your audience and reach by partnering with another organization
- Make sure you use an original hashtag (unless it makes sense to use an established hashtag)
- Prepare as many questions and responses in Tweet format as possible in advance
- Involving well-known local figures may help raise the profile of your event(s) and increase participation and engagement

MEASURING SUCCESS

Looking to measure the success of your social media campaign? Twitter and Facebook both offer free analytic tools to allow you to demonstrate the impact of your social media efforts.

Twitter Analytics allows you to see and download detailed tracking information about Tweet activity, engagement, audience and trends over time. Log in to analytics.twitter.com with your Twitter username and password to learn more.

Facebook Insights allows users to track page likes, post reach, number of visits, specific posts as well as who is following your page. According to Facebook, “posts that get more likes, comments and shares show up more in News Feed and are seen by more people. Posts that are hidden, reported as spam or cause people to unlike your Page reach fewer people.”

Klout tracks the influence and reach of your social media profiles and provides a score based on how others are interacting with your content across multiple networks. It also provides information on your top posts so you can see what content is generating action from your networks.
ADDITIONAL TOOLS AND RESOURCES

**UICC World Cancer Day Toolkit**: Contains additional campaign key messages and social media guidance

**Owly**: Link shortener from Hootsuite

**TinyURL**: Link shortener that allows for customization of URLs to make them more memorable

**Goo.gl**: Link shortener that allows for tracking of clicks

**Hootsuite, Sprout Social**: Online platforms that allow organizations to schedule Tweets and Facebook posts, keep up with their feed (the posts of those they follow), and collect basic analytics for evaluation

**Tweetdeck**: Platform from Twitter that allows for pre-scheduling Tweets, including pre-loading photos

**Periscope**: Live-streaming video app so you can show events or videos live to your audience on social media

**Klout**: Service that tracks your organization’s level of online social influence

**Canva**: Allows users to create visually appealing graphics and photos for social media and print materials; includes a collection of low-cost or free stock photos and backgrounds

**Thunderclap**: Social networking tool that allows you to “crowdsource” your social media campaign to increase its impact

**CDC Public Health Image Library (PHIL)**: Free image library. Search “exercise,” “nutrition” or “tobacco” for relevant results to go with cancer prevention messaging.

**CDC “photostream” on Flickr**: Website designed for public image sharing. CDC images include public health photos and graphics developed for public health events that users can comment on and share.

**CDC Infographics**: Gallery of CDC-designed infographics to visually communicate data or information

GLOSSARY

**Facebook**: A social networking site that allows people to create personal profiles and stay connected with others ([www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com))

**Feed**: News feeds which you receive straight into your account

**Followers**: People who have agreed to receive your Tweets or Facebook posts

**Hashtags (#)**: A form of metadata tag that makes it possible to group messages

**Retweet (RT)**: Re-posting of someone else’s Tweet

**Tweets**: 140-character text messages

**Twitter**: An online [social networking](http://socialnetworking) and [microblogging](http://microblogging) service that enables users to send and read short 140-character text messages, called “Tweets” ([www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com))

**Twitter chat**: A live moderated Twitter conversation focused around a specific topic using a single hashtag
**Twitter handle:** Your Twitter name that begins with the “@” sign. For example: @GWCaner

**Twittersphere or Twitterverse:** The total universe of Twitter users and their habits

**Twitterview:** A combination of the terms Twitter, a popular microblogging platform, and interview. It is a type of interview for which the medium restricts the interviewer and interviewee to short-form responses. See Twitter’s “Twitter Glossary” for more.
REFERENCES


