# Healthcare Social Media (hcsm):
## One Residency Program’s Experience Using Twitter

**Avital Y. O’Glasser, MD, FACP1,2; Sima S. Desai, MD, FACP1,2; Thomas G. Cooney, MD, MACP1,3**

1. Department of Medicine, 2Division of Hospital Medicine, 3Division of General Internal Medicine

### #HCSM Background

Physician communication is dramatically evolving in the social media era. Since the creation of Facebook in February 2004 and Twitter in March 2006, social media use has dramatically increased. 65% of all American adults used social networking sites. 2 Social media is a means to connect, share, and participate—tasks all consistent with continuing medical education and professional development. Physician use of social media has grown in parallel to overall use: 72% of physicians use social media, for some combination of personal and/or professional use. 3

Analysis of the impact of hcsm repeatedly draws attention to its educational and professional development value, focusing on the power to rapidly connect via two-way communication. The public, open-access format of Twitter allows physicians at all stages of training to interact locally, nationally, and globally. 60% of physicians also report their most popular social media-related activity is following what colleagues are sharing and discussing. 2 Global interaction, search optimization, lifelong learning, research dissemination, and enriched conference experience have been heralded as key reasons for physicians to be on twitter. 4

### #HCSM and #Meded

Theoretically, social media provides residency programs the ability to disseminate knowledge in novel ways and to draw attention to its residents’ accomplishments. The positive impact of social media to learners has been demonstrated. A 2015 study identified that Twitter provided value in two major domains: access and voice. 7

> “Students gained access to information, to experts, to a variety of perspectives including patient and public perspectives, and to communities of support. They also gained a platform for advocacy, control of their digital footprint, and a sense of equalization within the medical hierarchy.”

“Access” and “voice” have alternatively been phrased as “networking” and “identity.” 6 Literature on the impact of social media use by residency programs is currently limited, and what exists is often from non-internal medicine programs and remains a novel outlet for internal medicine programs. 9, 10 The available internal medicine-tweeting literature also focuses on educational mission and dissemination of conference material, though the minority of tweets highlighting resident accomplishment or social events where highly rated as informative (80%). 9

Among currently active internal medicine residency program twitter accounts, there are a mixture of program-wide accounts and chief resident-driven accounts. For reference, see: https://twitter.com/OHSUIIMRes/lists/im-res-program-tweeters

### Needs Assessment

In Spring 2015, the OHSU Internal Medicine Residency Program began discussions to develop and implement a new, dedicated Twitter account for the program. This was in large part driven by observing, and to a lesser extent, participating in the promoted #meetingtweeting at the 2015 National ACP Internal Medicine Meeting (#IM2015), which promoted the use of social media in conjunction with its 100th year (#ACP100Yrs). At the conference, core faculty members were able to witness other programs and individuals highlighting faculty and resident participation in sessions and poster presentations. The impetus behind our innovation was born. On July 14, 2015, OHSUIMRes was launched. Several program faculty and leadership team members were given access to the account, with a single faculty member assuming primary responsibility for content creation as well as responses to other tweets. Permission and instructions, in accordance with OHSU’s Social Media Policy, were reviewed with the OHSU Social Media Coordinator at the time of account creation.

Here, we report our first 15-months experience. Twitter analytics was used for data collection (analytics.twitter.com).

### Conclusions

Through evolution and maturation of tweet content, @OHSUIMRes became a powerful vehicle to encapsulate who we are as a residency program. We found it an interactive and dynamic process, facilitating new camaraderie and connections, locally and internationally. Through creating, sharing, and participating, we expanded our access & networking while establishing our identity & voice:

- increased connectivity to the program family
- increased connectivity to the OHSU community
- increased connectivity to other IM residency programs
- increased connectivity to national societies
- increased dissemination of resident accomplishments

Thus, tweeting as an IM residency program:

- is feasible, practical, and pragmatic
- has a manageable learning curve with persistence and more experienced tweeters as shepherds
- is capable of significant and sustainable growth in number of tweets and amount of original
- can be an efficient use of resources to spread educational content with available faculty or chief resident resources, a residency-program twitter account
- can also be used to celebrate and champion resident and program accomplishments.