**Division of Health Informatics and Surveillance  
Communication Office  
Social Media Strategy Plan**

# Executive Summary

This plan outlines the social media strategy of the Division of Health Informatics and Surveillance, Communication Office (DHIS CO), and highlights the available social media channels for DHIS programs to promote their content.

Social media is a variety of web-based platforms, applications, and technologies that enable people to interact socially online. The use of social media allows users to generate and access content when, where, and how they want to.

The Pew Research Center reports that 74% of online adults use a social networking site. Facebook remains the most popular social media site, but other platforms like Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, and LinkedIn saw an increase in usage.1

The dissemination of health messages, through social media sites like Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and other social media tools has grown significantly, and continues to rise. Social media tools expand reach, foster engagement, and increase access to credible science-based health information, with the potential to increase the impact of health and safety information.

Social media is used at the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to provide users with access to credible, science-based health information. These social media tools reinforce and personalize messages, reach new audiences, and build a communication infrastructure based on open information exchange.

There are three key attributes of social media channels, which make them highly effective as health communication tools:

* Personalization – content tailored to individual needs
* Presentation – timely and relevant content accessible in multiple formats and contexts
* Participation – partners and the public who contribute content in meaningful ways

# Objectives

The primary goal of the DHIS CO, through its social media strategy, is to promote DHIS program-specific content, by reaching a target audience, who access CDC’s surveillance data and tools. The social media strategy also includes the following objectives:

* Implement new social media initiatives
* Increase current social media efforts

Currently, Twitter is the only social media channel in use by DHIS programs. DHIS CO promotes CDC WONDER content through Twitter, using the [CDC eHealth](https://twitter.com/CDC_eHealth) profile, which is one of the top 10 CDC profiles.

Working with the Office of the Associate Director of Communication (OADC) social media team, and a CDC WONDER subject-matter expert, DHIS CO posts new CDC WONDER tweets, as new surveillance data becomes available.

# Recommendations

There are several advantages to using social media channels: facilitate social engagement, viral sharing of information and trust. As a result, DHIS CO recommends the use of social media, as an additional communication channel for DHIS programs to expand reach and promote their content.

DHIS CO is evaluating several social media channels for promoting other DHIS programs such as Epi-Info, NNDSS Modernization Initiative (NMI), Countermeasure Tracking Systems (CTS), and the National Syndromic Surveillance Program (NSSP).

The table below displays the social media and networking channels available for programs to promote content, and identifies the channels currently in use or planned for future use in DHIS:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Channel\*** | **Description** | **Currently in Use** | **Planned (Future Use)** |
| [Blogs](http://intranet.cdc.gov/cdcweb/managing-content/blogs/) | Blogs, or web logs, are regularly updated online journals that almost anyone with an internet connection can use. A blog can be used to discuss a topic that may be too complex for other channels and to give your topic or program a more personal and engaging presence than a website allows. |  |  |
| [Content Syndication](http://intranet.cdc.gov/cdcweb/managing-content/syndication/) | A technical application that enables partner organizations to display current CDC health and safety content and allows visitors to the public health partner’s website access to CDC content without leaving the partner website. |  |  |
| [Facebook](http://www.cdc.gov/socialmedia/tools/guidelines/facebook-guidelines.html) | Social networking site, or online community, where people can interact with friends, family, coworkers, acquaintances, and others with similar interests. |  |  |
| [GovDelivery](http://intranet.cdc.gov/cdcweb/managing-content/govdelivery/) | GovDelivery (GovD) is a Digital Communications Management (DCM) system used to promote and/or alert users via email to new information. |  | C:\Users\iuy7\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\AGY4BK01\MC900432530[1].png |
| [RSS Feeds](http://www2c.cdc.gov/podcasts/rsshelp.asp) | RSS stands for Really Simple Syndication. CDC RSS feeds enable partners to personalize the health information they receive by subscribing to the topics of greatest interest to them. |  |  |
| [Twitter](http://www.cdc.gov/socialmedia/tools/guidelines/twitter.html) | Twitter is an information network made up of 140-character messages called tweets. It is used by millions of people, organizations, and businesses to discover and share new information. These short, easy to read, public messages make Twitter a powerful, real-time way of communicating (Twitter, 2011). | C:\Users\iuy7\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\AGY4BK01\MC900432530[1].png |  |

**\***Additional information on each channel is available by clicking on the channel name.

# Roadmap and Expectations

The table below illustrates the planned and ongoing social media initiatives in DHIS, over the next 12 months:

| **#** | **Milestone Actions** | **Timeframe (months)** | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1** | **3** | **6** | **12** |
| 1 | **Expand use of social media channels** |  |  |  |  |
| 2 | **Evaluate opportunities for other programs - Epi-Info, NSSP, NMI** (ongoing) |  |  |  |  |
| 3 | **Evaluate other social media channels** (ongoing) |  |  |  |  |

# Follow-Up/Measurement/Tracking/Reporting

* Metrics for all CDC social media channels are available on the [CDC.gov Metrics Dashboard](http://www.cdc.gov/metrics/).
* The OADC social media team provides monthly analytics on program-specific, social media initiatives. DHIS CO compiles this data and communicates this information as a Weekly Bullet, and provides to DHIS leadership.
* DHIS CO will report social media activity monthly to the CSELS representative.

1Pew Research Center. Social Media Update 2014 (<http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/01/09/social-media-update-2014/>).