



Health Communication in a Digital World

Patient and Staff Engagement Strategies at MHHC

Claudette Phipps
Bernard Bush

2016 Best Practices Forum
Vancouver, Canada



MHHC: Who We Are

• History

- Since 1981, Morris Heights Health Center (MHHC) has had a record of distinction as the major provider of health care to the Morris Heights neighborhood of Bronx, NY and the surrounding areas.
- Born out of the local need for quality care, MHHC is a non-profit organization funded by federal, state, and foundation grants as well as private and corporate donors.
- For over a quarter of a century, we've provided quality primary health care services to all members of the community, including the medically, socially, and economically disadvantaged.
 - Our services range from medical and dental services to counseling and other supportive services.
- Our health center has always been proud to stand at the forefront in our local and medical communities.



MHHC: Who We Are

- Morris Heights Health Center is recognized as a Level III Patient Centered Medical Home by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) and is accredited by the Joint Commission.
- **Mission**
 - Morris Heights Health Center shall be the vanguard for quality, affordable and accessible health care for all.
- **Vision**
 - The Morris Heights Health Center will use its resources to become and remain a sought after health care organization with an exceptional system of care that identifies and addresses the health care needs of its targeted communities by creating equality in access to affordable quality health care services.
- **Vision Statement**
 - We (MHHC) shall use the collective efforts of our community, providers and staff in developing and maintaining a health care practice that is effective, safe and competitive without compromising our quality of care, sound business, moral or ethical standards.



Patient Demographics

- **# of Patients Served**

- MHHC serves over 52,000 unique patients, annually.

- **Age:**

- 49% of all MHHC patients are under 17 years of age
- 47% are between the ages of 18 – 64 years
- 4% are 65 years of age and over

- **Gender:**

- 61% of all MHHC patients are female
- 39% of MHHC patients are male

- **Race/Ethnicity:**

- 65% of all patients identify as Latino/Hispanic
- 35% identify as African American
- 18% identify as White
- 0.6% identify as Asian/Pacific Islander

- **Income:**

- 73% of all patients are at 100% or below the Federal Poverty Level



Changing the Perception of “Health Centers”

- Research has shown that healthcare consumers prefer the name “Hospital” over “Health Center”.
 - A report by Bauman Research & Consulting LLC showed that survey takers responded to the following question as such:

“Which would you expect to...”	A Hospital	A Health Center
“Have a wider range of services?”	61%	31%
“Provide patients with better quality care?”	52%	32%
“Be on the cutting edge of medicine?”	53%	37%
“Have physicians who are experts in their field?”	46%	34%



Digital Communication

- Digital communication technologies have become pervasive within all industries and have transformed nearly every aspect of the information and media landscape.
- Organizations that fail to adapt their communications practices and outreach strategies find it increasingly challenging to get their stories out, manage their brand, and develop favor amongst their constituents.



Health Center Communication in a Digital Era

- The shift to digital communication has changed the way patients expect to find emerging health issues, share and discuss health information, schedule doctor appointments, view test results, etc.
 - Patients expect to be able to receive and discover up-to-date information instantly online or through other digital medium.
 - Patients also expect to share, rate and discuss, experiences at your center, services rendered, and content/information that is disseminated.



Health Center Communication in a Digital Era

- Since advanced computers, Wi-Fi, tablets, and smart devices have also become widespread, our patients expect to be able to access health news and information on a wide variety of computing devices.
- To stay competitive, health centers must develop new skills, practices, policies and procedures to better communicate, engage, and manage our brands in this new environment.



Effective Communication in a Healthcare Setting

- No business, whether it's in healthcare, pharmaceuticals or in retail, can effectively communicate to its consumers without understanding the need of the consumer.
- Patients want instant access to records, information, and health solutions and less waiting and personal front desk interaction.



Going Digital: Current MHHC Strategies

- Digital Touch-Screen Kiosks



Going Digital: Current MHHC Strategies

- Timely Website Management
- Patient Portal Accessibility



Going Digital: Current MHHC Strategies

- ContextMedia Screens



Going Digital: Current MHHC Strategies

- ideas@mhhc.org
- FitBit Initiative Dashboard



Going Digital: Current MHHC Strategies

- Until recently, communicating effectively meant messaging through local papers, public TV, phone, and by personal invitations to public events.
 - The most direct way to engage communities used to be going to where they gather.
- Now, more and more of our patients gather within online communities through a handful of dominant social networks.



Going Digital: Current MHHC Strategies

- Integration of Social Media



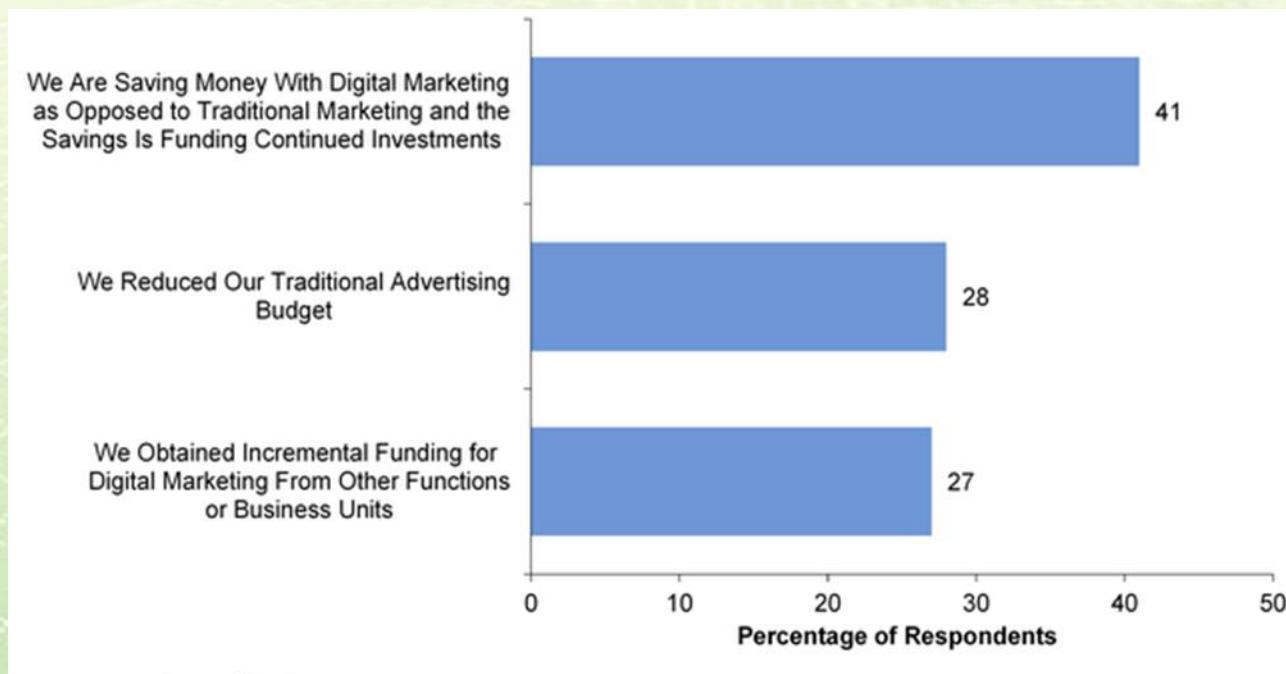
Benefits of Effective Communication in a Healthcare Setting

- Research indicates that there are strong positive relationships between a health center's communication and a patient's experience.
 - **Increased # of Informed Patients**
 - **Increased Patient Engagement**
 - **Enhanced Patient Experience**
 - **Improved Patient Satisfaction**



Digital Communications: Cost-Savings

- A marketing study found that digital communication's effectiveness helps stretch marketing budgets. The chart below shows that two in five marketers are realizing savings from digital marketing compared with traditional techniques.





Key Recommendations

- 1) Invest in both staff and time and capacity in effective engagement via digital communication platforms.
- 2) Establish clear internal guidelines & Engagement policies.
- 3) Encourage often, and timely, two-way communication between your center and patients.
- 4) Establish clear goals and gather relevant metrics to gauge effectiveness of communication strategies.
- 5) Prioritize the use of digital communication platforms to engage, educate, and gain insights from your patient-base.
- 6) Be flexible and receptive to new platforms that may emerge and technologies that evolve.