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8 Tips for Managing COVID-19 Communications with Patients and Local Communities
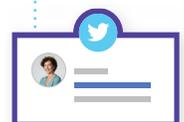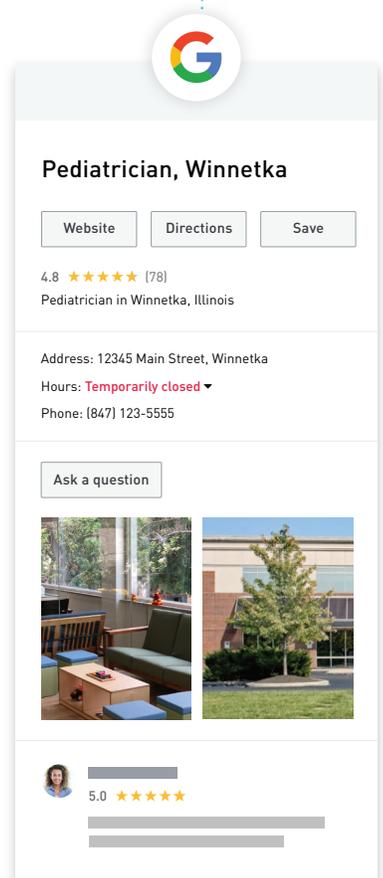
Communicating effectively with patients and local communities is essential during this uncertain time to ease fears, ensure communities have access to essential healthcare information, and help to slow the virus from spreading. Following are 8 tips for simplifying communications and easing the strain on your staff.

On Google

1. **Update your Google My Business (GMB) listings.** Your GMB is an essential front door to your organization. Update the business descriptions in your GMB listings to include information about COVID-19. Include links to relevant resources on your website, as well.

2. **Use Google posts to educate your audience.** Add Google posts that appear prominently within your GMB listing and in search results.

3. **Mark locations as "Temporarily Closed" if appropriate.** Google is now supporting the ability to label a location, such as a clinic or urgent care facility, as temporarily closed. This helps mitigate the chances of patients showing up to locations that are closed.

On Social Media

4. **Use social media to combat misinformation about COVID-19.** Set up social listening to monitor conversations and respond to concerns. Remove inaccurate posts from the community to keep them from being shared widely. Use the "pinned" post/tweet feature to ensure the most important info stays prominent.

5. **Communicate consistently with templates.** Create pre-approved response templates for all social communications, to simplify and reduce the need for time-consuming, one-off responses to common inquiries, and provide information and updates about the virus.

Is my pediatrics clinic open?

Pediatrician, Winnetka

Website | Directions | Save

4.8 ★★★★★ (78)
Pediatrician in Winnetka, Illinois

Address: 12345 Main Street, Winnetka
Hours: Temporarily closed ▾
Phone: (847) 123-5555

Ask a question

5.0 ★★★★★

On Your Website

6. **Update your website with prominent messaging.** Communicate the most important information. Ensure that all pages, including provider and location pages, are consistent up to date. Schema.org has released special guidance for Coronavirus-related content on your website. Ensure your website reflects the latest schema guidance so that Google and other search engines can rank your pages appropriately in search results.

7. **Create a dedicated COVID-19 page on your website.** This page should include relevant information and resources, and enable linking from social media and Google posts. If you work with a chat provider, make sure your key messages and scripts are updated so agents are properly prepared.

8. **Provide clear directions about how to get help.** Consider removing online scheduling capability from your website to discourage healthy people from showing up at your facilities without calling first.

Questions?

Please contact our team at HealthcareStrategy@reputation.com.

Helpful Resources:

> Reputation.com COVID-19 page

> World Health Organization

> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

> United States Department of Labor