# MHCU Policy Learning Lab

## Social Media Best Practices

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ChangeLab Solutions

Moving Healthcare Upstream (MHCU) is a collaborative effort co-led by the Nemours Children's Health System and the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Center for Healthier Children, Families & Communities. MHCU was launched in 2014, with generous support from the Kresge Foundation.

Moving Health Care Upstream (MHCU) creates, tests, and disseminates strategies for producing large-scale, sustainable population health improvements. The focus is on helping health care providers to collaborate with other community-based organizations to help children, patients, and families access new resources to address upstream drivers of health. While the lens is children and families, the work applies generally to communities, and learnings are available to the field at large at *movinghealthcareupstream.org*

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# Introduction

**For more information, please also see the documents bulleted below, which are available at: *movinghealthcareupstream.org***

- **Policy Learning Lab Overview and Lessons Learned;**
- **Policy Learning Lab Compendium of Research & Technical Assistance Memos; and**
- **Policy Learning Lab Resource Directory.**

Moving Health Care Upstream (MHCU) is based on the belief that health systems can address persistent and costly health inequities by moving "upstream"—beyond the walls of hospitals and clinics and into the communities, collaborating with community-based organizations to address the root causes of disease. The various areas of work within MHCU share a common focus—supporting hospitals and community stakeholders in testing and spreading strategies to move upstream, and sharing "what works" to inform the field and accelerate the upstream movement in the field as a whole. Policy Learning Labs are one example of MHCU's work to spread knowledge and accelerate action in the field.

Nemours Children's Health System (Nemours) piloted the Policy Learning Labs under the auspices of MHCU in 2017. They were created to address inter-related challenges in the field:

1) **Sustainability, Spread, Scale:** For sustainability, program work must be combined with policy development. Without this connection, even the strongest programs are at risk of becoming one offs and of disappearing with shifts in funding or staffing. Policy can institutionalize good ideas, yet MHCU and others doing similar work have observed that many organizations and communities have not yet developed policies to institutionalize and grow their programs addressing upstream causes of disease and disparities.

2) **Capacity:** Local public policy and institutional policy is often developed by groups and coalitions whose members are unpaid volunteers or by those taking on the work on top of their formal accountabilities at work. This has implications for the capacity of those involved.

    a. **Knowledge & Skill:** Often, clinicians and other practitioners who develop and implement programs are not "policy people," and don't have a high level of knowledge or skills related to developing local public policy and/or institutional policy.

    b. **Dedicated Time:** Despite the potential effectiveness of learning collaboratives, MHCU staff have repeatedly heard that allocating dedicated time for participation is a challenge. Dedicating time to conduct targeted policy research and scans is also challenge for groups and coalitions.

The Policy Learning Lab pilot converted these challenges into opportunities by using a short-term (4 month) process to increase knowledge and skills of members and to provide teams with targeted policy tools (such as research and scans). These skills and tools are intended to accelerate the development of evidence-informed local public policy strategies and/or institutional policy strategies to target upstream causes of disease and disparities.

Topics for Policy Learning Labs (root causes of asthma and food insecurity) were chosen based on the input of health systems already associated with MHCU and were intended to fill a white space in the field. Our 2017 pilot involved seventeen teams: five in the Policy Learning Lab focused on root causes of asthma and twelve in the Policy Learning Lab focused on food insecurity (broken into two groups with six teams per group). Each team consisted of a health care organization plus an entity from at least one other sector. A list of teams in each Lab is included in *Policy Learning Lab Overview and Lessons Learned* and also in the *Policy Learning Lab Compendium of Research & Technical Assistance Memos*. Please visit ***movinghealthcareupstream.org*** to access these documents.

Nemours contracted with **ChangeLab Solutions** as our lead partner in this pilot based on their subject matter expertise on our chosen topics as well as their expertise in providing technical assistance on the development of local public policy and institutional policy. The expertise of ChangeLab Solutions was supplemented by additional subject matter experts who were involved on an as-needed basis, based on the needs of teams. Subject matter experts for the teams focused on root causes of asthma included **Green & Healthy Homes Initiative** and **Nemours Health & Prevention Services**. Experts for teams focused on food insecurity included **Feed1st at the University of Chicago's Lindau Lab**, **Root Cause Coalition** and **Prevention Institute**.

To learn more about Moving Health Care Upstream, please visit ***movinghealthcareupstream.org*** and follow us on Twitter **@MHCUpstream**.

For questions, please email **MHCU@nemours.org**.

# Social Media Best Practices

This document was created by Beekeeper Group for affiliates of Moving Health Care Upstream (MHCU). MHCU's partners in the upstream movement requested a simple, actionable set of best practices, tips and tricks related to social media—including how to measure the reach of the message. This guide is here to guide your organization's strategy in the digital space.

## Introduction

To create a thriving online community, your organization has to be strategic about where to invest their time and energy. This guide is here to serve as a starting point for your organization to develop their message and use it effectively in the digital space.

## Messaging

- Always have a clear, concise ask across all platforms. An ask, or call to action, can be as easy as forwarding an email, or as complicated as requesting they write a more in depth comment.
- Simplify your ask. Regardless of the platform you are using, make sure it is easy for your audience to understand what you are asking them to do.
- Provide the tools for your audience to complete the ask. Want your audience to go to a webpage? Provide the link a few times in the email. Asking your audience to call their Member of Congress? Provide them with talking points that hit on the issues you are advocating for or against.
- Only one ask at a time. Focus all your energy on one ask. Having too many calls to action can dilute a message and leave the audience confused about what to do next or worse – apathetic about your cause.
- Know where your audience is online. Understand how your audience likes to communicate and create a strategy that caters to their preferences.
- Be aware of the tone on each platform. For example, Twitter tends to be more playful and sarcastic while LinkedIn has a professional tone.

**Pro Tip:**

Understanding each platform's demographics can help you determine the where your audience is online and help you achieve the best results.

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Beekeeper Group

# Email

Email newsletters are an effective way to stay in personal, direct contact with your organization's audience. Emails help recipients stay organized, plan ahead, and alert them about important dates.

## Build an Email Network

The first step is to collect email and organize addresses to build a network:

- Google Forms are an easy and free way to digitally collect email addresses. You can create a fully customizable form that automatically populates responses into a Google spreadsheet.
- Once you've created a form, you can place a link to it on your website and promote on social media.
- Every event you hold should have some way to capture email addresses.
- For in-person events, have attendees sign in through on a laptop using the Google form you created.

> **Pro Tip:**
> You should dedicate a few posts per week to promoting your email newsletter in order to grow your list.

## Manage Your Email Network

Once you have an email list of any size, use an email manager to help you set, manage and distribute emails. We recommend MailChimp, but there are many other free services as well.

- Mailchimp, and other email management systems, offer templates to help you quickly drop in information, logos and images to deliver consistent looking emails to your audience.
- As you continue to grow your list, consider segmenting your audience and sending more personalized emails. This can be as simple as sending a personalized email to people in a state, or people who you know previously attended an event.
- Get in the habit of sending emails on a schedule. Monthly or bi-monthly emails or newsletters are a good starting point. It doesn't overload your audience with emails and avoids annoying them.
- In-between these regularly scheduled emails, you can send follow-ups that act as alerts to events or important updates.
- Keep the same template for each email. Keeping a consistent email format, layout, and style establishes a sense of regularity. This also makes your emails more immediately recognizable to the user and can give them something to look forward to.

> **Pro Tip 1:**
> Include links to your social media platforms in the footer of your email and encourage your audience to stay in touch on social.

> **Pro Tip 2:**
> Statistically smaller, segmented audiences engage more with an email because it is personalized to that group's preferences.

## Email Marketing Pro Tips

- Help people recognize important topics. You can prioritize content using bulleted lists, which make the information more easily digestible and less intimidating than a wall of text.
- Keep emails short. Do not include more than 3 main topics.
- Always include your contact information and links to your website and social media accounts.
- Have a call to action or something the reader can do after reading the email. This can include:
  - Signing up for an event
  - Reading about an important news event
  - Contacting a member of Congress

## Facebook

- Include a strong call to action in your posts. Whether you are asking people to register for an event or to contact their elected officials, including an ask is an excellent way to get your audience engaged and excited about what you want them to do.
- Use Facebook's tagging system to engage other people or organizations. Do this by using the '@' symbol and typing the name of the Page.
- When appropriate, respond to comments in a timely and encouraging manner. Showing that you are a responsive organization will encourage other users who want to engage to do so.
- Your organization should use a consistent tone on Facebook. People often share very personal content on Facebook, so many successful posts use a friendly, conversational tone that is suited to a more social environment.
- Use visually dynamic content. Posts with photos garner 6x more traffic than posts without imagery. Try to pair some sort of visual with every post.

**Pro Tip 1:**

Mentioning other organizations increases your organization's reach by showing your post to users following your page and the tagged page.

**Pro Tip 2:**

Facebook's algorithm favors content with photos and videos by prioritizing them in users' feeds

- Create photo albums with descriptions of what is happening whenever possible, even as simple as "getting ready for our Board meeting."
- User your cover photo to communicate important information to your organization's audience. The cover photo is a great place to convey a lot of information right up front, but you don't want it to look stale to returning visitors. Change the cover photo at least once every two months. For example, rotating with a season or particular event; other ideas include promoting the latest campaign or simply your logo over a solid background.
- Brevity is key. Posts under 90 characters are 4x more likely to go viral and 3x more likely to receive clicks. When you share a post over 90 characters, the entirety of the message gets cut off and hidden behind a 'click to see more' message.
- Ask questions to increase engagement. Think of Facebook as a forum, where once you ask a question, you should be prepared to respond and engage with your audience. Be sure to @mention individuals you are referencing or replying to so they get notified of your mention. Ending your post with a question encourages community response.
- Like other pages. It's important to demonstrate awareness of other related organizations and causes by "Liking" them on Facebook.

## Twitter

- The standard rule of thumb is no more than three clickable items per post. This also applies to Facebook.
- The majority of original tweets should include at least one hashtag. Use multiple hashtags sparingly, as this reads like spam and could violate the 'clickable' rule.
- Starting with a draft tweet well under the 280 character limit, cuts down on editing time and allows content to be scheduled or posted more quickly. These are also easier to read in a 'scrolling' environment.
- Avoid excessive abbreviation. You want to save characters by using shorthand, but first try consolidating your message. Consider referring to a thesaurus (or thesaurus website) for shorter words.

**Pro Tip 1:**

The more clickables, the more diluted your call to action becomes. Hashtags, links, and tags are all considered clickable.

**Pro Tip 2:**

Monitor relevant hashtags other organizations are using to see how your organization fits into the larger conversation.

- In addition to building up and using your own repertoire of hashtags, be sure to regularly review and engage with people who are using industry-wide hashtags.
- Follow other users. Set a goal of finding, following and engaging with at least three users per day (or 90-100 per month) to help cultivate the ideal community.
- Use a link shortening service (like Bit.ly) to track how many users click through your links. Make sure to vary the link sources – linking to your material is a good idea, but mixing it up and sharing links to other relevant sources is important.
- Use photos & videos. When possible rich content will help tell your story more completely, try and tweet at least one photo or video per day.
- Evaluate the tone of your content. Make sure the language you use emphasizes a call to action, whether that's to click, share, submit, or otherwise engage.
- Ask engaging questions. Developing language that encourages the audience to involve themselves in the conversation is ideal. This can be simple questions like whether people are attending an event or deeper questions about your issue.
- Balance retweets. The majority of your Twitter content for the day should NOT be retweets.
- About 2 tweets per day should engage with another user on Twitter, ideally an influencer or partner that you'd like to connect with.
- Be responsive. When appropriate, always respond to an @mention. Try to make it about more than just "thanks for the mention" so that the conversation can grow.

**Pro Tip 3:**

Avoid retweeting a number of messages one after another, and stick to 2 organic tweets, 2 RTs, and 2 @ mentions per day, scaled accordingly and spread through the day/evening.

## Shortened URLs

Your organization may want to share links on Facebook, Twitter or in an email. While you could just add a link to a Facebook post, Tweet, or hyperlinked email text, it is recommended to use a URL shortening service, like Bitly. A URL shortener allows your organization to track where your users are coming from and how many times they click on a link.

**Pro Tip:**

Create a free bit.ly account to track metrics. While you can just visit the site and create links, you'll lose out on valuable metrics. Having an account allows you to understand how your organization's links performed.

## Analytics

How do you know if your organization's digital strategy is working? By tracking analytics. Get in the habit of reviewing your organization's social content and using the data to make informed, purposeful and strategic decisions.

Enclosed is an overview of metrics that your organization will be interested in tracking and their definitions.

**Pro Tip:**

Pull top level metrics once a month and compile the data into digestible graphs on a program like PowerPoint. This will help you spot trends in your organization's social content and will inform decisions for strategic next steps.

### Facebook

- **Followers:** The number of users currently following your organization's account and receiving updates in their newsfeed
- **Likes:** The number of users who currently like your page, but might not necessarily receive updates on their newsfeed
- **Reach:** The number of users your posts were served to
- **Engagements (reactions, comments and shares):** The number of times users engaged (reacted, commented or shared) with your organization's posts.
- **Qualitative:** Review new community members to note any that are relevant to your organization. For example, reporters, non-profits, policy makers or other influencers

### Twitter

- **Followers:** The number of handles currently following your organization's account
- **Impressions:** The number of times users saw your tweet on Twitter
- **Engagement Rate:** The number of engagements (clicks, retweets, replies, follows and likes) divided by the total number of impressions
- **Qualitative:** Review new community members to note any that are relevant to your organization. For example, reporters, non-profits, policy makers or other influencers

### Email

- **Opens:** The number of times recipients opened an email
- **Unique Opens:** The number of recipients who opened an email
- **Open Rate:** The percentage of successful inbox deliveries opened by recipients
- **Bounces:** The number of mailboxes an email was not successful delivered to
- **Unsubscribes**: The number of recipients who removed their name from your mailing list.

## Benchmarking

Benchmarking is important for an organization to understand where they stack up against other industry players as well as measuring their own success. Taking a look at your industry's landscape and how your organization fits in will give you a clearer path forward to set goals for your organization.

M+R is one of many resources available online to get more information on your industry's landscape. *mrbenchmarks.com*

**Pro Tip:**

In addition to understanding your organization's landscape, you can create your own benchmarks to measure your organization's progress. Track performance on past social posts and emails to compare against your current performance. This will help you spot trends and map out what success looks like for your organization.

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