

Telling Your Story

A program created by the South Dakota Association of Healthcare Organizations to help health care facilities connect with their patients, the public and media by telling their stories.



Introduction

Health care facilities are the backbone of the communities we live and work in. Care is provided every day, all day and all night, regardless of weather, holidays or any other challenges. It is something that is probably taken for granted by those who receive the care, as well as the employees who are providing it.

The Telling Your Story program and accompanying resources can be simply described as an effort to help health care providers continually share their good news stories in an effort to educate and build relationships with the general public, media, legislators and internal employees. The goal is to be proactive, instead of reactive, and to not only be prepared in the event of a negative situation, but also to help facilities instill in the people they serve the value of the facility. It is important to continually promote community health and highlight inspirational and local stories.

There are many ways to share information and stories. This resource guide will provide a variety of examples of the types of stories to share and how they can be shared. Larger facilities may already have a well-established public relations plan in place and are doing everything outlined here – and more. Other facilities may just be getting started due to limitations of resources and “know how”. No matter what stage a facility is in, SDAHO is here to offer tools and assistance.

What to Communicate

Sometimes the hardest part is knowing what type of stories to share. When brainstorming “what” to share, break it down into two categories: 1) “feel good” or good news stories; and 2) educational/informational stories.

Examples of Stories to Share

- Patient/resident/family stories – positive, touching stories that are personal and outcome based. If you have an example to share, please email info@sdaho.org.
 - [Example A](#)
 - [Example B](#)
 - [Example C](#)
 - [Example D](#)

- Health-related articles or news
 - [National Health Observances](#)
 - [Health Topics A to Z](#)
 - [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- Community involvement activities or good deeds
 - Sponsorships (events, sporting facilities, etc.)
 - Community programs and outreach (health fairs, immunization clinics, etc.)
 - Partnerships with others for the wellbeing of the community
- Innovations and medical advancements
- Improved access
- Quality and safety improvements
- Grants and scholarships awarded or received
- Services provided by the health care facility
- Community needs assessment
- Community benefit report
- Economic contribution (salaries, capital outlay projects, etc.)
- Anything that shows advancement of the facility and its employees (achievements, milestones, renovations, additions, new hires, etc.)
- Employee profiles



How to Communicate

You have a story, now what is the best way to tell it?

There are many channels of communication... press releases, social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, etc.), newsletters, websites, etc. The first step is to decide the best way to share the story by taking into consideration the target audience and how quickly you want to get the news distributed.


Social Media / Digital Channels:

f Facebook – Facebook offers a great medium to share brief overview messages along with a photo and link. When your facility is featured in the newspaper, holds a successful community event or unveils a new technology or treatment, share this news with your online community. Facebook is also a good way to spotlight the work of outstanding employees or promote upcoming events.



t Twitter – Twitter is an effective medium for quick messages that tag or connect you to a common topic or conversation through the use of hashtags. Include a brief statement that links back to your website or someplace followers can get additional information.

YouTube – YouTube is the primary medium used to share videos. The videos you share can be of a patient or family member sharing their positive experience while receiving care, a nurse or physician talking about a specific topic for an informational soundbite or even to showcase new equipment or techniques.

 **Instagram** – The use of photos can be very powerful, particularly as you begin to engage more and more outside the traditional walls of your facility. Instagram can be a great way to depict the community you are serving and to illustrate the impact your programs and initiatives are having.

Website – Your website is a good place to include stories about health care, news about your facility or employees and patient stories. Visit the following websites for ideas and inspiration:

- [Example A](#)
- [Example B](#)
- [Example C](#)

Traditional Channels:

Press releases – If you want your story to be picked up by local news media, a press release is the way to go. The disadvantage is that your story may not run since it is the editor’s choice on what gets “in” the newspaper and what doesn’t. Another disadvantage is time: social media posts are instant, print articles are not.

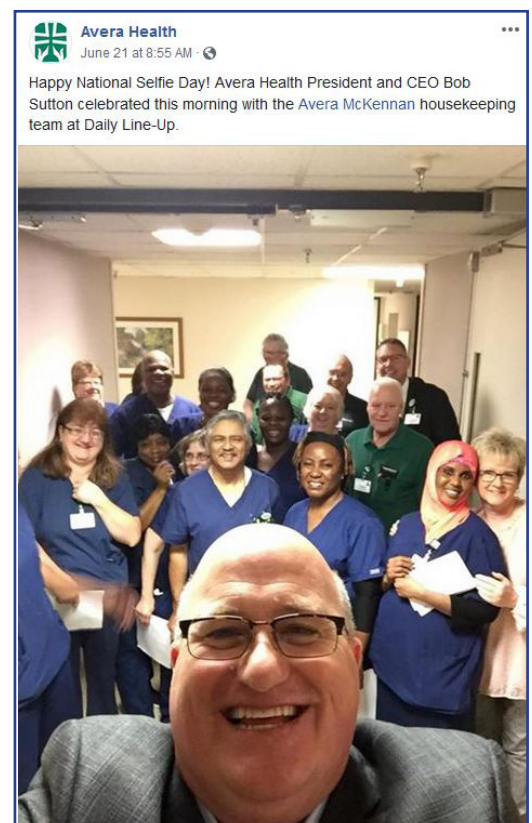
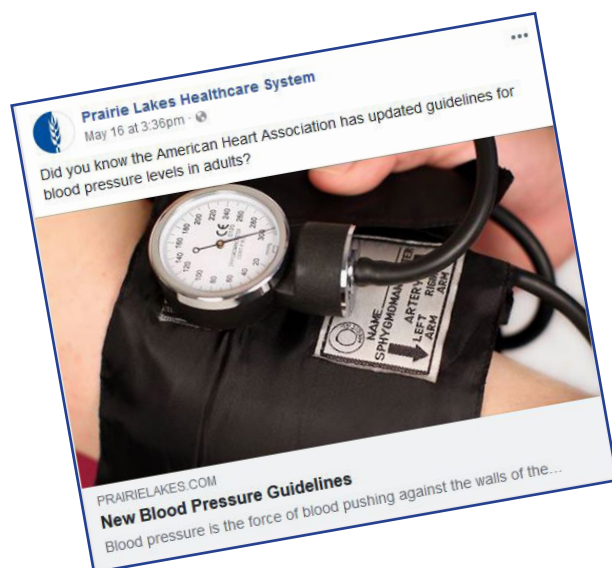
- [Press release example](#)
- [SD newspaper list](#)

Op-Eds – An op-ed is an opinion article, typically written by a subject-matter expert, that is submitted to newspapers or magazines. Local newspapers generally appreciate receiving informative articles that explain a relevant subject matter (something their readers would want to learn more about.) Op-eds are a good way to establish a person or facility as a trusted expert.

Newsletters (internal and external) – Tell your story on a regular basis with a newsletter. It’s an easy way to connect with patients or anyone who wishes to subscribe. There are free or low-cost web-based newsletter platforms available that offer design templates and assistance with managing distribution and opt-outs.

Helpful Links

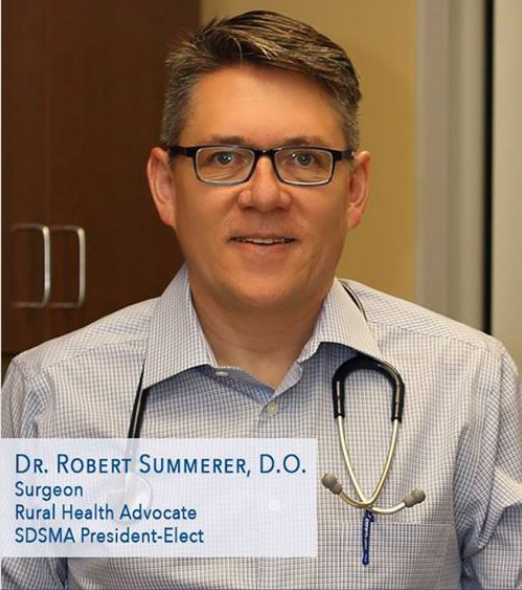
- [A Hospital Leadership Guide to Digital & Social Media Engagement](#)
- [Social Media Platform Comparison](#)
- [Social Media Image Sizes](#)
- [National Day Calendar](#) – fun ideas when you hit a creativity slump



More Examples

Madison Regional Health System
June 19 at 12:41 PM

We want to say congratulations to Dr. Summerer, general surgeon at MRHS, for being elected President-Elect of the South Dakota State Medical Association (SDSMA)!



DR. ROBERT SUMMERER, D.O.
Surgeon
Rural Health Advocate
SDSMA President-Elect

Sanford Health
Yesterday at 12:30pm

Do you know if your child's life jacket fits correctly? Learn more from Valley News Live.



VALLEYNEWSLIVE.COM

Healthier Me: How to properly fit your child's life jacket
In this week's Healthier Me, we tell you how to make sure you child's life...

Avera McKennan
May 30 at 9:31pm

The Avera McKennan Emergency Department held a fundraiser today to assist patients with their needs once they are discharged. Dave Ficek, President & CEO, helped the cause by taking a few pies to the face.



Avera Health
May 21 at 4:31pm

Many men and women experience pain in their lower back, knee and neck as they age. If pain has slowed you down for two weeks or more, it might be time to see a doctor. To receive more stories like this, sign up to receive our e-newsletter at AveraBalance.org.



AVERA.ORG

Aches and Pains at Midlife
Getting out of bed before daylight or out of a car after a 12-hour trip is...

Regional Health
June 21 at 11:00 AM

Welcome new Regional Health caregivers who started June 18. We're proud to have you on the team! #iamRegionalHealth



Sanford Health @SanfordHealth · Jun 19

Have you ever thought of trying #intermittentfasting? @lizkasperekRD gives you the scoop on what you need to know.



Intermittent Fasting: Does It Work?
There are many diets out there that tell you what you can and can't eat in order to get the results you want. But there's one diet that's telling

keloland.com