

MEDICINE on the Net

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The right info at your fingertips

Together, Revolution Health and Cleveland Clinic develop timely, relevant Web content

by Cindy Johnson

Perhaps you were channel surfing and missed this commercial: It begins with an attractive young woman searching for birth control options on her laptop. The search term “how do you say so long to a period that’s too long?” immediately launches a site by Warner Chilcott, the pharmaceutical company that manufactures the Loestrin® 24 Fe birth control pill (if only using a search engine were that easy). The site describes how well the pill works, how it results in periods that last fewer than three days, and how it uses low estrogen. It’s just what she has been looking for—of course—so she leaps up and grabs the phone to call her doctor’s office.

Clever advertisers know that this woman is not alone in her search for health information. If you are like 10 million other Americans, your computer is the first thing you turn to when you need answers to questions concerning your health. And, if you are like the woman in the commercial, you readily accept the information you find online. In fact, according to the *Online Health Search 2006* report from the Pew Research Center, a staggering three-quarters of us do not consistently check the source and date of information.

The trend of looking up the cause of aches and pains online is unlikely to change, so sites such as the newly launched Washington, DC-based Revolution Health are going the extra mile by ensuring that tech-savvy consumers have ac-



cess to the most timely, reliable, and unbiased information, right at their fingertips.

The health portal licenses content with renowned organizations (e.g., the Cleveland Clinic), which collaborate with the site to develop content. The partnerships allow the health portal to establish its credibility while enabling health systems to brand and market themselves in specialty areas.

Cleveland Clinic: Everywhere and anywhere

“We really listen to our patients,” says C. Martin Harris, MD, CIO at the Cleveland Clinic. “Our patients have been coming in and telling us about the [online] services they use. So, we’ve been collecting that information and using that as a way

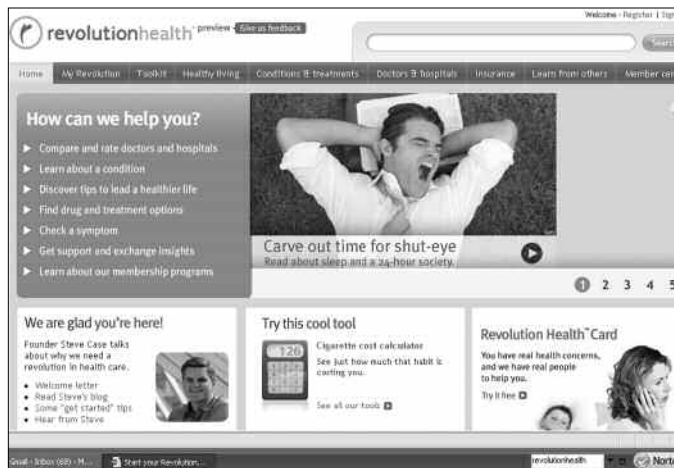
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to get to the partners they have chosen.”

The clinic has been involved in content partnerships for the past seven years, says Harris. However, he doesn't view the partnership that the clinic has with Revolution Health and others as a marketing strategy, but as a patient outreach tool in the age of consumerism in healthcare.



Harris says that as the population ages, there will be 77 million Americans who are relatively well, but spend the majority of their time at home, at work, and at play living with chronic conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, asthma, and heart failure.

As a result, the clinic is constantly working on strategies to reach out and deliver services and tools to patients, wherever they may be. He says that consumer-facing portals are a logical mechanism to reach out to them.

“Our mission is to get the right content to the right person at the right time in their lifestyle,” says Harris.

The clinic's education institute focuses on professional education and consumer and patient information, so it is constantly developing healthcare content and readily uses it within the clinic and on its own Web site.

“This is not a sidelight for us, it is our core business,” says Harris. “It's just that before the age of the Internet, we had to do it in print.”

However, the clinic's content partnerships don't end with health portals. Because its goal is to provide services to patients no matter where they are, the Cleveland Clinic also

provides content to sites owned by large employers, such as General Electric and AT&T.

“We are indifferent in terms of what the portal is,” says Harris. “We are only driven by an association based on the needs of our consumers and patients.”

According to Harris, it is actually beneficial to employers to have employees attend to their healthcare needs while at work. These tasks may include anything from scheduling appointments to learning about test results.

“A lot of healthcare happens in the office,” says Harris. “To the extent that the patient can accomplish things quickly over the Web, they're not taking time off from work in order to go do these things physically.”

He says that employers have shared reports with the clinic that suggest that this kind of activity actually enhances the productivity of their employees.

The clinic—true to its objective of serving patients wherever they may be—began to increase its brand recognition by delivering content to patients online. However, it recently began delivering services online as well using an entire suite of cutting-edge Web technologies.

Approximately five years ago, the clinic implemented an electronic medical records (EMR) system called MyPractice, which is used by everyone who works in the clinic. Then, two years ago, it started an outreach application for patients called MyChart. Patients can use this tool to review past appointments; manage prescription renewals, appointment requests, and appointment cancellations; and access health information.

One of MyChart's cool features is that it includes annotated articles. These articles allow patients to click on a Web link and obtain consumer-friendly definitions to terms with which they may be unfamiliar. The feature allows the clinic to provide information to the newly diagnosed as well as to those who are educated about their condition and looking for information that is more detailed.

Harris says the clinic is working to bring consumers, pa-

Questions? Comments? Ideas?

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tients, and physicians along as medicine makes the journey to a more sophisticated and informative Internet. DrConnect is one tool that it offers to meet this need. It is a physician-to-physician online communication tool that lets referring physicians view information about a shared patient.

Revolution Health rolls with the big names

When doctors diagnosed his brother Dan with brain cancer, AOL founder Steve Case became intimately involved with the healthcare system. And after his brother died, he resolved to do with healthcare what he did for the Internet: take an area that was very hard to use, expensive, and difficult to understand, and make it easier for consumers.



To that end, Case founded Revolution Health just over a year ago in partnership with Colin Powell, Jim Barksdale, Carly Fiorina, Frank Raines, Miles Gilburne, Steve Wiggins, and other coinvestors. Revolution Health unveiled preview editions of its first two products in January.

The site is still under development, with new functions and tools added daily during its preview period. When it was unveiled, it offered more than 125 free tools and online services.

The company's goal is to achieve a "revolution" in healthcare by empowering people to have more control and choices in their healthcare lives.

"It took Steve 20 years to take the Internet from something you had to have a PhD at MIT to use to something that's in everybody's household," says Jeffrey Gruen, CMO of Revolution Health. "We'd like to do something similar in healthcare in some small way."

Providing superior content is just one way in which Revolution Health arms consumers with tools to help them navigate the world of healthcare. Revolution Health has approximately 30,000 articles in its content database so far.

The basics

Here's a look under the hood of Revolution Health:

- » Revolution Health was launched January 22.
- » RevolutionHealth.com is a free online service to help consumers manage their healthcare and achieve their healthy living goals.
- » Revolution Health membership is a subscription-based service with which members can access premium health services.
- » At the time the site launched, it contained more than 125 free tools and online services to help people live healthier lives.
- » The site has a people-powered health approach, meaning every article in its health centers can be rated by users, with new information and links added by community members.
- » Revolution Ratings services provide information to consumers looking for doctors and hospitals. It allows patients to rate their experience with their providers and treatments, and gives consumers access to those ratings.
- » The site's Revolution Circles social networking tool lets patients and caregivers connect with others who have similar interests so that they can share ideas and support one another.
- » Membership services include the conversion of paper medical records to digital storage, personal answers to health questions, help in dealing with insurances, assistance scheduling appointments, access to medical expense management software, and health risk testing (beginning in April).
- » Beginning in April, Revolution Health will charge \$100 per year for membership.

Source: www.revolutionhealth.com.

Along with the Cleveland Clinic, it licenses content from Mayo Clinic, the Harvard Medical School, and HealthWise, a consumer health content developer, to name just a few.

"We think that it's very fundamental that we provide the most trusted, authoritative information and that we also provide new sources of information to consumers who are trying to understand how to keep well or how to manage an illness for themselves or a loved one," says Gruen of the marketing strategy. "We licensed content from the best sources we could find."

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According to Gruen, the information on the site is broad and evidence-based. He says Revolution Health would like to work increasingly with physicians and hospital systems in the future in order to assist at the point of care as much as possible.

Getting past the velvet rope

“Not everyone can be considered to do this,” says **Anthony Cirillo**, president of Fast Forward Strategic Planning and Marketing Consulting, LLC, in Huntersville, NC. “You’re going to see the same names over and over again—Mayo, Cleveland, Hopkins.”

Sites such as Revolution Health are looking for the pedigree attached to these names to elevate their site and build their credibility, something that’s particularly important to newly launched sites. Community hospitals that don’t do research, aren’t nationally recognized brands, and haven’t been included in the Best Hospital list by *U.S. News & World Report* likely won’t be allowed past the site’s velvet ropes.

“These hospitals do the cutting-edge research that gets the new information out there about cures and treatment,” says Cirillo. “They really are cutting edge, and how do [community hospitals] compete with that?”

Just like a certain city in Italy, brands aren’t built in one day. It takes decades for hospitals to go from regional to national recognition. The association with avant-garde sites such as Revolution Health increases the recognition of content providers. Cirillo says it widens the gap between “who is a regional player and who wants to become a national player.”

Although Cleveland Clinic is already a power brand in Cleveland, if it continues to contribute content, over time it will broaden its brand recognition and continue to expand at the national level, Cirillo says. Simply put, if consumers conduct searches that repeatedly lead them to Cleveland Clinic content, they will begin to trust that the clinic can attend to their healthcare needs.

According to Cirillo, brand changes in the healthcare industry are generational. Citing his own personal experience, he says there were two hospitals where he lived growing up. He was born at one hospital, but was told that it wasn’t where you go for your *real* healthcare needs. To this day, those words of caution would cause him to avoid that hospital if he need-



ed emergency care. And as educated as he is, no amount of quality ratings and satisfaction data is likely to change his opinion.

Cirillo says he always tells his clients that they are marketing something that people don’t want, and it might be years before they need it. “It’s really all about building the relationship over time so that when they’re ready, perhaps they’ll choose you, all things being equal,” he says.

According to Gruen, although Revolution Health partners with institutions that consumers recognize and trust, they are also open to partnering with other established healthcare enti-

What’s inside Cleveland Clinic’s toolbox?

Using MyPractice, MyChart, and DrConnect, Cleveland Clinic physicians, staff, and patients are better able to communicate.

- » MyPractice: a shared EMR system that everyone at the Cleveland Clinic uses—from registration desk personnel to physicians.
- » MyChart: a tool that patients use to review past appointments; manage prescription renewals, appointment requests, and appointment cancellations; and access health information about topics of interest.
- » DrConnect: a physician-to-physician communication tool that lets referring physicians view information about a shared patient.

Source: www.clevelandclinic.org.

ties. Gruen describes the site as an “aggregator of interesting new approaches.”

“There are so many really wonderful, exciting things that people are doing, and we see our role largely as bringing the best to the public eye so that it’s easy for people to use,” he says.

Licensed content

The terms of content partnerships vary. With Mayo Clinic, Gruen says Revolution Health licenses very broadly across all of its content. With the Cleveland Clinic, the majority of the content it uses is cardiology-related. In 2006, *U.S. News & World Report* ranked the clinic number one in heart and heart surgery in its Best Hospitals ranking.

“They have real excellence in cardiology and cardiac surgery,” says Gruen. “It was a logical place for us to emphasize with them.”

Online trends

More Americans are using the Internet to find information than ever before, according to the Pew Internet and American Life Project:

- » On a typical day, 10 million Americans turn to the Web for health information
- » Eight in 10 Internet users go online for health information
- » 80% of American Internet users—about 113 million adults—have searched for information about at least one of 17 health topics
- » Just 15% of health seekers say they “always” check the source and date of the health information they find online, and another 10% say they do so “most of the time”
- » Three-quarters of health information seekers say they check the source and date “only sometimes,” “hardly ever,” or “never”
- » The most likely Internet users to seek health information online are women, Internet users younger than age 65, those with a college degree, more experienced Internet users, and those with broadband access at home

Source: *Pew Internet & American Life Project August 2006 Survey.*

Gruen says Revolution Health works collaboratively with content providers. It consults with experts to help create products, identify new topic areas, and create additional, original content. One way it partners with content providers is by staying up to date with new developments and innovations. It seeks comments from content providers to help put the information into perspective for consumers.

“It’s not just one-time licensing,” says Gruen. “It’s a strategic relationship that we form.”

Whereas a search for cardiology on the Revolution Health site yields an abundance of content provided by the Cleveland Clinic, there’s little more than a small logo that consumers can click on to find out more about the content provider. Cirillo doubts that consumers leave health portals to visit the site providing the information.

Gruen says Revolution Health tracks click stream behavior on its site, so it knows how many times people visit, where visitors come from, and where they go next.

“This can drive traffic not only back to their site, but also, ultimately reinforce consumer belief in what they are doing,” he says. ☒

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VA research suspended after data breach

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary Jim Nicholson has suspended activities at seven specialized research centers nationwide. According to the Associated Press, the suspension comes after an unprotected computer hard drive disappeared from one of the facilities in Alabama in January.

In an internal memo, Nicholson

referred to the data breach as “tragic” and ordered that the VA’s Research Enhancement Award Programs shut down until they are certified as meeting security standards. The research centers focus on studies involving large amounts of data.

Nicholson also announced that the department will begin unannounced inspections at VA sites nationwide.

Security worker loses files

The confidential files of six Wisconsin residents who sought Social

Security disability benefits, along with documents from seven other files, were lost for several months after a Social Security employee took them home to work on them.

According to a *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* article, the files include Social Security numbers, addresses, and phone numbers of family members; dates of birth; and work history information.

All of the applicants had been waiting at least two years for a final decision about whether they qualified for disability benefits when their files were lost. The Social Security Administration has delayed their benefits as a result of the lost files.

Four of the files were never found, and two were anonymously mailed back to the office in early December 2006. Documents from the seven other files also were sent back anonymously to the agency’s Milwaukee office in separate packages in early December. Social Security employees are gathering medical and other information for the four files that were completely lost.

Intel and Motion Computing encourage EMR use

Intel of Santa Clara, CA, and Motion Computing of Austin, TX, have unveiled a notepad-like device for doctors and nurses to encourage them to begin using electronic medical records (EMR) with their patients. According to the article in the *Mercury News*, the device is part of Intel’s plan to take an active role in improving the U.S. healthcare system.

In December 2006, Intel led a

AHA releases health IT survey results

The American Hospital Association (AHA) released the results of a survey about how hospitals are using IT. The survey found that nearly half of all responding community hospitals reported moderate or high use of health IT in 2006, compared to a response of 37% in 2005.

Hospitals also reported dramatic increases in the use of computerized alerts to prevent negative drug interactions. In 2006, 51% of hospitals used real-time drug interaction alerts, up from 23% in 2005.

Other key findings from the survey include the following:

- » 69% of responding hospitals have either fully or partially implemented electronic health records (EHR).
- » Computerized physician order entry is gaining momentum, especially in hospitals that have implemented EHRs.
- » Spending on health IT is high and growing. The median spending per bed for system implementation was \$5,556 in 2006. The median operating costs were \$12,060 per bed, a 4.5% increase over 2005.

To read the entire survey, go to www.aha.org/aha/content/2007/pdf/070227-continuedprogress.pdf.



nationwide consortium of five companies in investing in a nonprofit organization that will develop, manage, and store a Web-based medical records system for its employees.

Research: Video game gurus may make good surgeons

New research has found that surgeons with the highest scores on “Super Monkey Ball 2,” “Star Wars Racer Revenge,” and “Silent Scope” performed best on tests of suturing and laparoscopic surgery.

According to a *Los Angeles Times* article, doctors who reported having played video games at least three hours per week sometime in their past worked 27% faster and made 37% fewer errors on surgical tasks compared with those who had never picked up a game controller. The study appears in the *Archives of Surgery*.

The research looked at 33 surgeons attending a course on laparoscopic surgery and found that their game-playing skill was a better predictor of success on the surgical tests than were years of medical practice or number of surgeries performed.

McKesson acquires Physician Micro Systems, Inc.

McKesson Corporation of San Francisco announced the acquisition of Physician Micro Systems, Inc., of Seattle, known as Practice Partner, a provider of integrated software for electronic health records, medical billing, and appointment scheduling for independent physician practices.

UPMC and MedRespond launch clinical trials site

The University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) Cancer Centers and MedRespond of Pittsburgh are launching an Interactive Web site to help patients and their families learn about clinical trials. According to UPMC, only a small percentage of adult cancer patients currently participate in clinical trials.



The site features interview clips with clinical trial participants sharing their personal views and experiences. The site allows visitors to access a menu of clinical trials topics and terms. One section of the site discusses the Tuskegee Syphilis Study and its effect on the participation of African Americans in clinical trials.

Users can access the site by clicking on the “Meet, Ask, Understand” icon at www.upmccancercenters.com/trials/.

The companies did not disclose the terms of the agreement.

Thousands denied Medicare benefits due to computer error

The California Department of Health Services has denied Medicare benefits to thousands of low-income seniors and disabled due to a computer problem that the department has failed to resolve. According to the San Jose *Mercury News* article, a coalition of consumer advocates plan to file a class action lawsuit against the department in San Francisco Superior Court over the matter.

Problems with the computer system went unnoticed until 2006, when the department billed qualified Medicare

beneficiaries for premiums that, in some cases, exceeded fixed monthly incomes.

EDS wins contract to upgrade medical claims systems

EDS U.S. Government of Herndon won a \$92 million contract from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to administer and manage software applications that process Medicare claims in 12 states. According to an article in *The Washington Post*, the contract is part of the agency’s migration to an enterprise data center that consolidates and connects IT resources across all aspects of CMS operations.

CMS will reduce its number of data centers from 20 to four when the initiative is complete. The data centers are

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facilities that house computer and network equipment. EDS will provide application hosting and production support at its data center as part of the contract.

System lets emergency workers track hospital capacity

Emergency workers in Rhode Island can instantly track patient capacity in

the state's hospitals under a new program the state developed as a result of The Station nightclub fire. The 2003 fire killed 100 people and injured more than 200. According to an Associated Press article, the program allows emergency responders and medical staff to check the number of beds in hospitals and tell officials whether they need to

send patients elsewhere.

Officials hope the system will help them determine the best place to take patients in the event of an emergency.

The Department of Homeland Security funded the \$200,000 program.

Ohio University names new CIO

Ohio University of Athens has named Bruce Bible as its new CIO. Last year, hackers breached the university's computer systems and exposed the personal information of approximately 173,000 people. The information included medical records.

Surgical patients face risks from fragmented system

Results from the seventh annual national *MEDMARX*® *Data Report* show that perioperative patients face an increased risk of harmful medication errors throughout the surgery process due to a lack of comprehensive oversight of medications. The United States Pharmacopoeia (USP) of Rockville, MD, released the report.

As the largest known national analyses of perioperative medication errors, the *MEDMARX* report examined more than 11,000 medication errors in the perioperative setting and revealed that 5% of the errors resulted in harm, including four deaths. The percentage of harm is more than three times higher than the percentage of harm among all *MEDMARX* records. Children are at higher risk for harm in the perioperative setting, with nearly 12% of pediatric medication errors resulting in harm.

To improve patient safety and

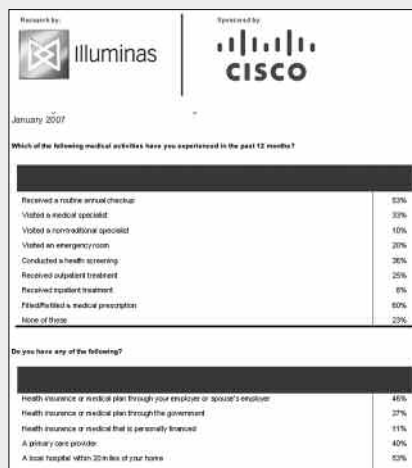
Cisco releases Internet study results

According to an Illuminas study commissioned by San Jose, CA-based Cisco Systems, Americans reported that the Internet has changed the way they manage their health and helped to make them healthier. However, the 4,105 adults who participated in the study also complained that physicians haven't embraced e-Health and aren't offering the online health services that they want.

Following are some highlights from the study.

- » One in three Americans reported that the Internet "has changed the way I go about managing and maintaining my health."
- » One in four Americans reported that they were a healthier person because of the Internet.
- » 62% reported that they have used online health tools, and 56% reported an improvement in their health management due to personal technology.
- » When asked where they were likely to go for information and advice, 62% said their physician, 44% said medical Web sites, and 32% said online search engines.
- » 62% said that their doctor doesn't offer Internet-based tools. Only 27% reported that their physicians have embraced the Internet to deliver health information and services.

For more information about the survey, visit http://austin.illuminas-global.com/cisco_health_management.htm



reduce the risk of medication errors, USP recommends that hospitals and health systems dedicate pharmacists to the perioperative units so they can oversee the distribution of medications and that surgical staff members better coordinate handoffs to eliminate the loss of patient information.

Omtool launches healthcare document management platform

Omtool, Ltd., of Andover, MA, has launched a set of products designed for healthcare providers. The tools help providers streamline the medical document lifecycle, improve the patient experience and patient safety, and accelerate reimbursement processes.

According to an Omtool press release, providers spend millions of dollars each year to produce and process documents and forms.

The suite of products includes an ADT (admission, discharge, transfer) e-Forms production system that provides hospitals with electronic forms for patient registration and identification.

Online report card compares CA hospitals

The developers of the Web site CalHospitalCompare.org have unveiled an online report card that compares more than 200 California hospitals on more than 50 quality measures.

According to a *San Francisco Chronicle* article, the quality measures range from maternity care to cardiac treatment and patient satisfaction.

The hospitals included in the survey represent approximately 70% of all

Clinicians support use of IT in underserved settings

A research paper published in the January 9 *Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association* evaluated the implementation of an electronic health record (EHR) within the Indian Health Services (IHS). The survey of 223 primary care clinicians practicing at 26 IHS health centers between 2003 and 2005 found that 66% felt that the EHR implementation process was positive. One-third believed that the EHR improved overall quality of care, yet many (39%) felt that it decreased the quality of the patient-doctor interaction.

For more information about the research paper, visit www.jamia.org.



California hospital admissions.

Three independent organizations developed the site: The California Healthcare Foundation, the University of California at San Francisco Institute for Health Policy Studies, and the California Hospitals Assessment and Reporting Taskforce.

Clerical error results in confidentiality breach

The California Department of Health Services inadvertently revealed the names and addresses of up to 53 Californians enrolled in an AIDS drug assistance program to other enrollees, according to an article in the *Los Angeles Times*. A newly hired clerk in the department thought the benefit notification letters were form letters and put them in the wrong envelopes. The department learned about the mistake after 12 people in the drug assistance program phoned to say they had received letters

addressed to someone else. The department mailed certified letters to the 54 enrollees, explaining the mistake and asking that anyone who received a wrongly addressed letter destroy it.

Hospital room of the future

Cerner Corp. of North Kansas City, KS, unveiled its hospital room of the future during the Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS) conference in New Orleans. According to an article in *The Kansas City Star*, the smart room, which is not currently available, contains a single in-room screen on which patients can access their healthcare providers, watch TV, order on-demand video, and even play video games.

CareAware, a hardware-software solution designed to connect a patient's electronic health record to a variety of computer hardware at the hospital, powers the room.

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Other features of the room include:

- » An in-room dashboard that tells hospital employees what treatment has been performed and what treatment is due
- » Radio frequency ID tags that identify healthcare workers as they walk in the room
- » Video and audio that physicians can use to monitor multiple patients in different locations and to communicate with patients from a remote location

Survey finds patients favor doctors using EMRs

According to a survey by New York City-based Accenture, a consulting, technology services, and outsourcing company, 67% of consumers said that electronic medical record (EMR) systems play a role in their selection of a physician. Only 10% of physicians surveyed said they had the technology. Eighty-six percent cited the cost of implementing and/or maintaining the system as a concern; however, 51% of consumers said they would be willing to pay for the service if the price was reasonable.

Kaiser hospital opening delayed

Kaiser Permanente has set October 2008 as the date when it will open the 220-bed hospital wing of its new Modesto Medical Center in California. According to an article in the Stockton, CA *Record*, Kaiser wants to open the hospital with its HealthConnect electronic medical records system in place. Kaiser cited a backlog of work for outside hos-

pital-supply vendors as the reason for the delay of the opening from July 2007 to October 2008. Construction is on schedule and is not an issue.

Records of RI hospital patients posted online

A hospital database breach resulted in 2,000 patients at Westerly (RI) Hospital having their names, Social Security numbers, and medical records posted on a publicly accessible Web site. According to an Associated Press report, the hospital says it doesn't know who posted the information.

The Web site included detailed information about patients' surgical procedures, medical histories, addresses, and insurance. The breach affects patients seen during certain days in January. Westerly police were the first to discover a problem when a woman contacted them after looking up her phone number on an Internet search engine and finding a link to the site. Police then contacted the hospital, the FBI, and the state police.

Florida record system will cost \$51 million

It will cost Florida \$51 million to build a secure superhighway for electronic medical information, according to an article in *The Tampa Tribune*. An estimate released by Paul Gionfriddo, director of the Palm Beach County Community Health Alliance, says the state doesn't have to spend all of the money at once and that the Florida Health Information Network will pay for itself many times over.

Gionfriddo wrote the analysis on behalf of the Florida Health Policy Center, an Internet-based think tank sponsored by six health foundations.

Indiana Medical Error Reporting System

Indiana has created a hospital-specific reporting system designed to prevent medical errors. The Indiana State Department of Health runs the site. The site contains information about medical errors, where they occurred, the type of error, and when they happened.

The first report of the Medical Error Reporting System (MERS) disclosed that a total of 77 medical errors were reported in 2006, with 72 events happening at hospitals and five events occurring at ambulatory surgery centers.

Indiana joins Minnesota as the only states with a MERS based on the National Quality Forum's Serious Reportable Events. MERS requires hospitals, ambulatory surgery centers, abortion clinics, and birthing centers to report to the Indiana State Department of Health any of 27 serious reportable events in the following categories: surgical, products or devices, patient protection, care management, environmental, and criminal.

"We are requiring healthcare providers to report errors, not to punish them, but instead, to help to improve patient safety," said Judy Monroe, the state's health commissioner. "This kind of transparency will help to create a healthcare culture that looks beyond blame and supports patient safety via collaboration and responsibility."

New on the net

Kaiser names new CIO

Philip Fasano has been named senior vice president and CIO of Kaiser Foundation Health Plan, Inc., and Kaiser Foundation Hospitals.

Fasano previously served as CIO at Deutsche Financial Services, JP Morgan Chase, and American Financial Group. He also served as CIO at Capital One. Most recently, he was president and CEO of Capital Sources Group, Inc., of McLean, VA.

Tech firms look to healthcare to grow

IBM, Intel, Microsoft, and other technology companies are looking to the healthcare industry to help them grow as their traditional markets mature, according to an article in *USA Today*.

Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer opened the Health Care Information and Management Systems Society conference in New Orleans.

Microsoft acquired medical database maker Azyxxi last year and now

has more than 600 employees working on healthcare products.

In-room services connect with patients

Several Chicago-area hospitals are taking customer service to a level beyond mere in-room television and telephone service. Comer Children's Hospital, affiliated with the University of Chicago, provides a 42-inch liquid crystal display television in each room, which patients can use to check their e-mail, search the Web, learn about their conditions, watch movies, and play video games, according to the *Chicago Tribune*.

Comer isn't the only hospital in the Chicago market that offers such cutting-edge technology. The University of Chicago's Bernard A. Mitchell Hospital, an adult-care facility, now offers free wireless access.

Evanston Northwestern Healthcare will have wireless by the summer, and two other hospitals are expected to jump on board before the end of 2007, the paper says.

Another area hospital, Resurrection Health Care, has started its own patient blog, which allows family members to post updates about their loved ones for anyone to view.

Hospital launches Web site with 'Heart'

Good Samaritan Hospital of Suffern, NY, has launched www.goodsamheart.org, a microsite that provides in-depth information about cardiac healthcare for its patients.

The Web site, which people also can access from the hospital's main site, is divided into nine sub-sections, allowing the viewer to get general information on cardiac health, to take a tour of the hospital, view or request information, and choose a doctor.

Good Samaritan began the new site to celebrate the opening of the Active International Cardiovascular Institute, which offers advanced cardiovascular procedures, including open-heart surgery, emergency angioplasty, and elective angioplasty, among others. ☒

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HEALTHCARE GUIDE TO THE INTERNET

Focus: Obesity and weight loss

This month, our site reviews focus on a condition that affects a staggering 66% of Americans, regardless of their age, sex, or race—being overweight or obese. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) statistics that show the health and economic consequences of the condition are just as astounding.

According to the CDC, a study of national costs attributed to overweight and obesity medical expenses accounted for 9.1% of total medical expenditures in the United States in 1998 and may have reached as high as \$78.5 billion.

This month's site reviews highlight some of the best obesity resources on the Internet today. The sites cover topics such as bariatric surgery, nutrition, childhood obesity, size discrimination, treatment options, prevention, physical activity, weight-loss research, and much more.

Let's start by visiting a small site that has the potential to make a big impact: Smallstep.gov. This consumer site uses a four-step approach to help prevent obesity by encouraging users to take small steps to make changes in their lives. Click on the site's Small Steps link to access a list of 119 small steps that users can take to make a difference in overall health, such as walking to work, increasing fiber intake, and skipping seconds.

If you're looking for a site with interactive content, visit the site created by the Public Broadcasting Service. The *NOVA Science NOW: Obesity* site (www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/sciencenow) contains content from a documentary about obesity.

The episode examines the biology behind the compulsion to eat, touching on topics such as leptin. BioInteractive (www.bhmi.org/biointeractive) is another great site in this category. It consists of a collection of biology-focused teaching materials created by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. It contains nine animations about obesity-related topics such as "How a Heart Attack Occurs" and "The Fate of Fat."

The American Obesity Association (AOA) has a tried and true, go-to site (www.obesity.org). It contains a copious amount of information about obesity, and when you click on a topic on the site it causes related articles to display along the left-hand side of the page.

ObesityHelp (www.obesityhelp.com) is a great site for pa-

tients. It's a peer support community for those facing life-threatening morbid obesity. The site has several chatrooms, programs, and forums.

Last, but surely not least, the Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity is hidden gem of a site (www.yaleruddcenter.org). The center is located at Yale University in New Haven, CT. The site contains information that you'd expect to find, combined with information that you've been looking for, such as the effect that food advertising has on obesity and how economic conditions are central to understanding human diets. And don't miss the Evolution of Eating timeline.

Several obesity resource sites are described and reviewed in the following pages, as listed in the index below. ☐

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OUR SITE-RATING SYSTEM

***** Excellent **** Very good *** Good ** Fair * Adequate

American Dietetic Association

www.eatright.org

Ratings: Content: **** Interface: **** Style: *****

The American Dietetic Association (ADA) is an association with approximately 65,000 members. Founded in 1917, it is the largest organization of food and nutrition professionals in the United States. The Food & Nutrition Information section contains resources for consumers to help them improve their eating habits with the goal of achieving a healthier lifestyle, such as fact sheets, a reading list, nutrition tips, nutrition brochures, and more.

The Careers & Students section serves as an online resource for people interested in education and credentialing requirements for careers in dietetics and nutrition. Here, you'll find education flowcharts, information sheets, and degree program information.

Unique elements: The Food & Nutrition Information section contains resources for professionals, such as an FAQ, a newsletter database, bariatric surgery information, and disaster preparedness resources. Some of the information can only be accessed by members.

Comments: Other resources on the site include conference and event information, professional development information, and news articles.

mation, and news articles.

Cost: The majority of the content on the site is free, with the exception of the Members-Only Web site, which includes items such as the online version of the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*. Click on the Join ADA link to find out more about ADA membership, which includes the ability to take advantage of programs, products, and resources. The site has an online store and accepts online donations as well.

RSS XML Link: None.

Keywords: Obesity, American Dietetic Association, ADA.

American Obesity Association

www.obesity.org

Ratings: Content: ***** Interface: **** Style: *****

The American Obesity Association (AOA) works to change public policy and perceptions about obesity. The mission of the organization is "to act as an agent of change, move society to reconceptualize obesity as a disease, and fashion appropriate strategies to deal with the epidemic." The association has already changed federal policy by having the Social Security Administration and the Internal Revenue Service recognize obesity as a disease.

This site contains the following key features:

- » Advocacy information, including suggestions about how to notify policy-makers about your comments and concerns on obesity issues.
- » A Childhood Obesity section, which contains an overview of the epidemic, including prevalence and identification, causes, prevention, health risks, diagnosis, and treatment information.
- » A Consumer Alert section, which provides information about products and services that have been found to be harmful or are under current investigation, such as ephedra.
- » A Tax Breaks section, which contains information about how to deduct obesity treatments as a medical deduction.
- » Information about how obesity may compromise a person's ability to work. The Disability Due to Obesity section also contains links to legal advice and representation.
- » Fact sheets about topics such as morbid obesity, obesity in minority populations, women and obesity, the health effects of obesity, treatment, and more.
- » Research, including information about funding, news, and clinical trials.



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- » Obesity prevention content, including a list of prevention and wellness programs.
- » A Treatment section, which contains weight loss strategies, guidelines and programs, and information about the costs of obesity.
- » Information about discrimination related to obesity, such as employment, healthcare, and education.

Other resources on the site include conference information, editorials, obesity headlines, an AOA career center, personal stories submitted by site visitors, community programs and resources, and a member's directory.

Unique elements: When you access a topic on the site, it causes related articles to display along the right-hand side of the page. For example, clicking on Causes within the Childhood Obesity section will display an article about television viewing and childhood obesity.

Comments: The Childhood Obesity section contains growth charts to help identify obesity in children.

Cost: The majority of the site is free. To find out how to become a member, click on the Membership link. Benefits include discounted conference registration and e-mail updates. Rates vary depending on the membership category you select.

RSS XML Link: None.

Keywords: obesity, American Obesity Association, AOA.

American Society for Bariatric Surgery

www.asbs.org

Ratings: Content: **** Interface: **** Style: ****

Surgeons formed the American Society for Bariatric Surgery (ASBS) in 1983 to provide education and support programs to surgeons and allied health professionals. The purpose of the society is "to advance the art and science of bariatric surgery."

The site contains several resources for patients within the Patients section. It contains a search engine that patients can use to find bariatric surgeons, as well as an online body mass index calculator.

Patients can also read a story about obesity surgery and the rationale behind it. The section also includes contact information for the Obesity Action Coalition.

The Health Care Professionals page contains resources aimed at bariatric healthcare professionals. Here, users will

The screenshot shows the ASBS website homepage. At the top, there is a header with the ASBS logo and contact information: 100 SW 73rd Street, Suite 201, Gainesville, FL 32607, phone 352-331-4500, fax 352-331-4773, and email info@asbs.org. Below the header is a navigation menu with links for Home, Patients, Health Care Professionals, Allied Health, About the ASBS, Corporate Council, and Members Only. A search bar is located on the left with the text 'Find an ASBS Member!'. The main content area features a welcome message: 'The American Society for Bariatric Surgery (ASBS) is the largest society for this specialty in the world.' Below this, there is a section titled 'News and Quick Links' which includes a banner for the '24th Annual Meeting' and several news items, such as 'Diabetes Surgery Summit coming to Rome, Italy March 29-31, 2007' and 'Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality reports bariatric surgeries performed annually in the U.S. grew nine fold from 1998-2004'.

find information about upcoming courses and meetings, as well as malpractice insurance. It also contains information about membership and guidelines for granting privileges in bariatric surgery. Those looking for more resources can type keywords into the ASBS Resource guide to obtain information about equipment, consulting, supplements, insurance, and pharmaceuticals.

Unique elements: The Resources for Allied Health Professionals page contains a presurgical psychological assessment of bariatric surgery candidates.

Comments: The Home Page has a helpful list of news and quick links.

Cost: The majority of the site is free, with the Members Only section reserved for ASBS members. It contains bylaws, a members forum, a member directory, a job board, access to the ASBS newsletter, and memos.

RSS XML Link: None.

Keywords: bariatrics, obesity, American Society for Bariatric Physicians, ASBS.

American Society of Bariatric Physicians

www.asbp.org

Ratings: Content: *** Interface: ** Style: ***

The American Society of Bariatric Physicians (ASBP) is a nonprofit international professional medical association founded in 1950. Its physician members specialize in bariatrics and its associated conditions. The society's mission is to establish and maintain practice guidelines, as well as provide education to its members, the healthcare industry, and the public.

In addition to serving as a source of information for its members, the site also contains information for the public, such as weight-loss tips and education programs. Key features of this site include:

- » Information about upcoming conferences
- » An FAQ section that touches upon topics such as the prevalence of obesity and diet medications
- » Continuing medical education opportunities for members
- » Links to associations, government resources, and publications

Unique elements: The site contains a search engine that lets users locate physicians specializing in bariatrics by state.

Comments: The Medical News section contains obesity news articles.

Cost: The majority of the site, with the exception of the Members Only section, is free. Members receive benefits such as participation in the patient-referral program, discounted merchandise, continuing medical education programs, access to a message boards, and more. To join, click on the Membership link and select Join to access the appropriate PDF application form.

RSS XML Link: None.

Keywords: bariatrics, obesity, American Association of Bariatric Physicians, AABP.

America On the Move Foundation

<http://aom.americaonthemove.org>

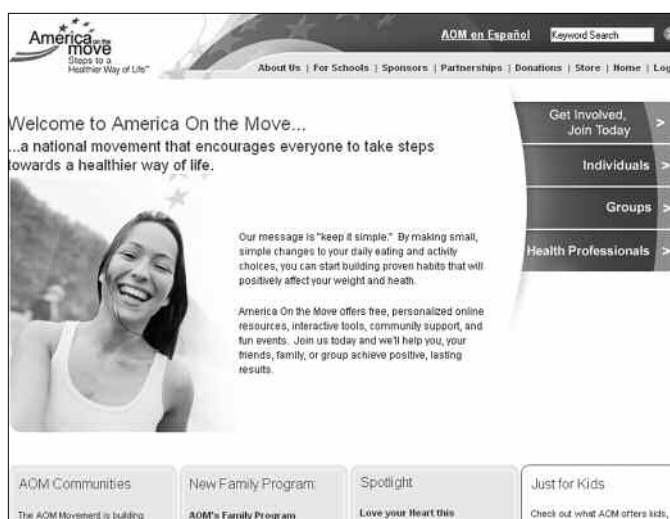
Ratings: Content: **** Interface: ***** Style: *****

America On the Move (AOM) is a national nonprofit organization with the mission “to improve health and quality of life by promoting healthful eating and active living among individuals, families, communities, and society.” It is a physical activity and healthful eating program.

You have four options from the Home Page: You can click on the Get Involved, Join Today link and register for services through the site. AOM has member options for individuals, healthcare professionals, and group leaders.

You also can click on the Individuals and Groups links to access expert advice, interactive tools, program information, and links. Here, you can also find out how you can help AOM and tell others about the program.

The Healthcare Professionals link contains a bit more than what’s contained in the Individuals and Groups sections.



Here, you’ll find a toolkit, as well as information about the program and advice and links specific to healthcare professionals. There’s also a Tell a Colleague link.

Unique elements: The site has free tools and online resources for schools to help them encourage students to develop positive, healthy habits. These include lesson plans for elementary and middle schools and special Web pages for children and adolescents.

Comments: The site is also available in Spanish.

Cost: Free to individuals. Groups can use the basic option for free. There is a fee for groups to customize the site for their organization. The site has an online store and accepts online donations.

RSS XML Link: None.

Keywords: obesity, nutrition, exercise, America On the Move Foundation.

BioInteractive

www.hhmi.org/biointeractive

Ratings: Content: ***** Interface: ***** Style: *****

BioInteractive is a Web site that contains a collection of biology-focused teaching materials created by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. To access the obesity content on this site, click to expand the Obesity link on the left-hand side of the page. This site contains a lecture called “The Science of Fat” by Jeffrey M. Friedman, MD, PhD, and Ronald M. Evans, PhD. The researchers discuss how the body regulates weight by controlling the storage and burning of fat. They also discuss how a better understanding of these metabolic

systems could lead researchers to treatments to curb obesity and improve public health.

Users can view lecture Webcasts on demand. The lectures include “Deconstructing Obesity,” “Understanding Fat: Syndrome X and Beyond,” “Balancing the Fat Equation,” “Exploring Obesity,” and a Student Discussion Session.

In addition to the lecture Webcasts, users can view a 60-minute presentation by Friedman titled, “The Biology of Obesity,” which focuses on the role of leptin in regulating fat accumulation.

Unique elements: The amount of interactive content on this site is truly impressive. Click on the Animations link to view a list of nine animations related to the topic of obesity, including “How a Heart Attack Occurs,” “Obesity-Related Health Problems,” and “The Fate of Fat.” The site also contains Click-and-Learn Macromedia Flash presentations about topics such as “Measuring Obesity” and “How the Body Uses Fat.” Still want more? Click on the Video Clips link.

Comments: The site contains obesity articles.

Cost: Free.

RSS XML Link: None.

Keywords: bariatrics, obesity, Howard Hughes Medical Institute, HHMI, BioInteractive.

Brigham and Women's Hospital

www.brighamandwomens.org/weightmanagement

Ratings: Content: **** Interface: **** Style: ****

Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston has weight management and weight loss surgery information on its Web site. It contains information about surgical and nonsurgical options available through the hospital.

Click on the Weight Loss Surgery link to learn more about obesity surgery, patient support, and surgery expectations. The information is of interest to patients, healthcare professionals, and site visitors alike.

Other resources on the site include information about the hospital staff, services, and information aimed at patients and medical professionals.

Unique elements: Users can replay a live Webcast of hospital surgeons performing Lap-Band surgery.

Comments: In general, the site contains an abundance of information if you are willing to click on the links within the section to get to the text you're looking for.

The screenshot shows the website for Brigham and Women's Hospital, specifically the "Weight Management/Weight Loss Surgery" page. The header includes the hospital name and navigation links like "Request Appointment", "Find a Doctor", "Careers", "Donate", "Contact Us", and "Site Map". A search bar is present. The main content area is titled "Weight Management/Weight Loss Surgery" and includes a sub-header "We invite you to learn more about our programs:". There are two main sections: "1. Surgical" and "2. Non-surgical". Under "1. Surgical", there is a link to "Weight loss surgery program" and a bullet point: "See BWH surgeons perform the LAP-BAND procedure to treat patients with morbid obesity". Under "2. Non-surgical", there is a link to "Medical weight loss/weight maintenance options". To the right, there is a "Contact Us" box with phone number 617-732-8500 and address: Brigham and Women's Hospital, 75 Francis Street, Boston, MA 02115. There is also a small image of a person and a logo for the ACS Bariatric Surgery Center Network Accredited Program.

Cost: Free. Users can register to attend a free weight loss surgery seminar at the hospital.

RSS XML Link: None.

Keywords: bariatrics, obesity, obesity surgery, weight loss, Brigham and Women's Hospital.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Overweight and Obesity

www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/obesity

Ratings: Content: **** Interface: **** Style: ****

If you're looking for information about how specific states differ when it comes to obesity, look no further than the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC's Overweight and Obesity section addresses many obesity topics, from defining overweight and obesity, looking at trends, and providing resources, to state-based programs.

Some of the key features of this site include:

- » A list of funded overweight and obesity state programs.
- » Statistics that detail the gravity of the obesity problem in the United States.
- » Definitions for overweight and obesity using body mass index measures.
- » Obesity trend statistics for children, adolescents, and adults in the United States. Most of the data are presented in Microsoft PowerPoint slide format.
- » A list of factors that contribute to obesity, such as how behavior, environment, and genetic factors may have an effect in causing people to be overweight and obese.
- » A Health Consequences section, which lists the diseases

and health conditions that the overweight and obese face if they do not make changes in their lifestyle.

- » Estimates on the national medical costs associated with obesity.
- » A Recommendations section, which contains Surgeon General fact sheets. Topics include “Healthy Weight Advice for Consumers” and “Health Consequences.”
- » An FAQ section that contains answers to basic questions, such as the number of U.S. adults who are considered overweight or obese.
- » A list of resources to information about weight, nutrition, health, research, and more.
- » An online body mass index calculator for adults, children, and adolescents.

Unique elements: Like many of the sites we reviewed, the CDC site has a section about how obesity affects children and adolescents. This section contains information out the contributing factors, consequences, and also provides references.

Comments: The site contains a list of state-based nutrition and physical activity programs to prevent obesity and other chronic conditions. Click on the State-Based Programs link to find out what your state is doing to address obesity.

Cost: Free.

RSS XML Link: None.

Keywords: obesity, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC.

Center for Weight and Health

<http://nature.berkeley.edu/cwh>

Ratings: Content: *** Interface: **** Style: ****

The mission of the Center for Weight and Health at the University of California, Berkeley is to “provide leadership for the development of science-based solutions to weight-related health problems, with a focus on children and their families.”

The site’s Home Page contains a list of Hot Links that contain typical information that most visitors are looking for on the site, such as information about children and weight.

The Programs & Materials section contains links to information about nutrition, physical activity, and obesity programs and projects. Here, users also will find links to resources and helpful education tools and materials on topics such as weight management, body image, and eating disorders.



Under Organizations & Links, users can view a list of organizations specializing in aging and health, body image, size discrimination, consumer fraud, school health, and much more.

The Surveys and Data section is where you’ll find summaries and links to surveys that collect health and behavior data in California and nationwide. This section includes an interactive census map, hunger statistics, a child trends database that indicates the rise in obesity rates, and more.

Other resources on the site include a list of published literature, as well as funding sources and resources.

Unique elements: The References Lists section contains links to a wealth of information about topics such as dietary factors related to weight and health, television, and socioeconomic factors.

Comments: The center publishes a variety of books that users can purchase through the site, including “Obesity: Dietary and Developmental Influences.”

Cost: Free.

RSS XML Link: None.

Keywords: obesity, Center for Weight and Health, University of California Berkeley.

Columbia University Department of Surgery

www.columbiasurgery.org/divisions/obesity

Ratings: Content: **** Interface: **** Style: ****

Columbia University Department of Surgery is home of the top-rated weight loss surgery center, with a five-star rating from HealthGrades. The obesity center uses a multidisciplinary approach to weight loss that includes surgical options, nutrition, physical activity, and behavioral services, to name a few. The site contains an abundance of general

information about obesity, its causes, and its risks.

The Surgical Options area has information on surgical options, the risks and rewards, and how to pick a surgeon. The options discussed in this section include laparoscopic versus open approach, roux-en-Y gastric bypass, banded gastric bypass, and Lap-Band®. Each section within this area contains diagrams on the individual procedures and who may be eligible for them. Some other features of the site include:

- » The success stories section contains before and after photos of patients along with their individual success stories
- » The FAQ section contains in-depth answers to many questions about obesity surgery
- » The Patient Experiences section contains information on appointments, seminars, surgery preparation, postoperative care, testimonials, and hospital services and amenities
- » Other resources on the site include information about the department staff and center, links, research and publications, and newsletters

Unique elements: Users can play video interviews of the center's surgeons about obesity surgery.

Comments: The department has a Pediatric Obesity program aimed at helping adolescents lose weight with and without surgery.

Cost: Free. The Members Only section contains information for members on Pre-Op and Post-Op. Login is required.

RSS XML Link: None.

Keywords: bariatrics, obesity, obesity surgery, Columbia University Department of Surgery.

Food and Nutrition Information Center

<http://fnic.nal.usda.gov>

Ratings: Content: **** Interface: **** Style: *****

Since 1971, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Information Center has been providing resources for nutrition and health professionals, educators, government personnel, and consumers. To access the Weight & Obesity section of the USDA site, click on the Weight and Obesity link under the Browse by Subject heading. This section contains national guidelines, educational materials, weight management tools and resources, information about adolescent and childhood obesity, and resources for promoting a positive body image and healthy living.

Unique elements: If you access this site to obtain information about weight and obesity, chances are that you will stay and peruse the rest of the site. You can read more about dietary guidance, lifecycle nutrition, diet and disease, dietary supplements, nutrition assistance programs, and more.

Comments: Much of the information on this site consists of links to other government sites. What's nice about this site is that you can access a variety of information from one site, rather than visiting several individual sites.

Cost: Free.

RSS XML Link: None.

Keywords: obesity, nutrition, United States Department of Agriculture, USDA, National Agricultural Library, NAL, Food and Nutrition Information Center.

National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance

www.naafa.org

Ratings: Content: *** Interface: *** Style: ****

The health risks of being overweight and obese are well known and documented. However, many healthcare professionals are still uneasy as to how to communicate with and treat obese patients because of their size and the psychological and sociological aspects of being overweight.

The National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance (NAAFA) is a nonprofit human rights organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for overweight people. They provide support and attempt to eliminate discrimination against overweight people. They also provide information to health professionals on how to treat large patients.

The site contains NAAFA policies on topics such as weight-loss drugs, weight-loss surgery, employment discrimi-

The screenshot shows the NAAFA website interface. At the top left is the NAAFA logo with the tagline 'national association to advance fat acceptance'. A navigation menu on the left lists various site sections. The main content area features a large banner for the 'NAAFA 2007 CHICAGO CONVENTION' with a photo of a woman and the text 'WE COME IN ALL SIZES... UNDERSTAND IT. SUPPORT IT. ACCEPT IT.' Below the banner is a 'News and Action' section with the heading 'LATEST NEWS & EVENTS' and a list of recent press releases from January 2007, including 'NAAFA Press Release - January 31, 2007 Stop Targeting the Fat Kids!', 'NAAFA Press Release - January 19, 2007 Chicago to be Location for NAAFA 2007 National Convention!', and 'NAAFA Press Release - January 13, 2007 FTC Confirms Diet Pills Don't Work'.

nation, dieting, and more. The site also contains several brochures. Topics include airline tips, guidelines for healthcare providers, guidelines for therapists, and more.

NAAFA has a Kids Project that provides speakers and curriculum materials on the issue of body image. Click on the NAAFA Kids Project link on the Home Page to access the section. Other resources on the site include conference and event information, news articles, NAAFA newsletters, and local chapter contacts.

Unique elements: Click on the Information Brochures link to view the NAAFA Guidelines for Health Care Providers brochure. It contains information for healthcare providers about the special needs of overweight patients, such as their attitude, weighing them, medical procedure special needs, and special accommodations that can be made to ensure that they are comfortable both physically and emotionally.

Comments: The site has a number of special interest groups that users can join.

Cost: Free. Membership rates vary from \$15 to \$500 and include official communications and newsletters via e-mail. Users can also join e-mail lists on the site.

RSS XML Link: None.

Keywords: fat, obesity, size acceptance, National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance, NAAFA.

NOVA Science NOW: Obesity

www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/sciencenow

Ratings: Content: **** Interface: ***** Style: *****

NOVA creates science documentaries for television. In 2005, NOVA premiered its first *ScienceNOW* episode. The series, hosted by astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson, covers developments and personalities in science and technology by presenting multiple stories in a magazine format. The show airs five times per year.

Click on the Obesity link on the *ScienceNOW* page to access the series content from this episode. This episode examined the biology behind the compulsion to eat.

Some of the key features of this site include:

- » A weight-loss researcher who talks about why it's difficult to lose weight and how a protein called leptin may help
- » Researcher Jeffrey Friedman answering viewer questions about leptin, obesity, and weight-loss research
- » Weight-loss links and books

- » A PDF teacher's guide containing key terms, viewing ideas, classroom activities, and ideas from teachers

Unique elements: Users can access the 12-minute broadcast segment online using QuickTime, RealVideo, or Windows Media. Users can also watch the complete episode or access the episode transcript online.

Comments: The site has an obesity discussion forum.

Cost: Free.

RSS XML Link: None.

Keywords: obesity, NOVA, Science Now, Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Obesity in America

www.obesityinamerica.org

Ratings: Content: **** Interface: **** Style: ****

Two sister organizations, The Endocrine Society and The Hormone Foundation, developed the Obesity in America site to help users understand the topic of obesity. The site contains statistics, research advances, obesity trend information, the costs related to obesity, medical complications, resources, and more.

The Obesity Basics tab contains information about the epidemic, including how to measure obesity, its causes, and its complications. Here, you'll also find information about the benefits of weight loss, medications and herbal remedies, and surgical options. This is where the site's body mass index calculator is located.

Those looking for statistics should click on the site's Obesity by the Numbers tab. It contains numbers related to



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obesity trends, geography, and the economic effects of obesity. You'll also find statistics related to childhood obesity in this section.

The Recent Advances tab contains information about trends in obesity research and explains why some people are obese whereas others are not, examining topics such as energy imbalance and the impact of environmental agents. A great feature within this section is that it discusses how obesity affects other aspects of a patient's health, such as hypertension, metabolic syndrome, and diabetes.

Other resources on the site include patient profiles, resources (e.g., support groups and programs), and advocacy information.

Unique elements: The Endocrinologist tab contains information about the endocrinologist's role in obesity by diagnosing and treating diseases related to hormones and glands. Users can learn why they would need to see an endocrinologist, clinical guidelines, and what to expect from an appointment. It includes a patient checklist and doctor lookup tool.

Comments: Users can download the site's free, 117-page handbook, *The Endocrine Society Weighs In: A Handbook on Obesity in America*.

Cost: Free.

RSS XML Link: None.

Keywords: bariatrics, obesity, hormones, The Endocrine Society, The Hormone Foundation, Obesity in America.

Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity

www.yaleruddcenter.org

Ratings: Content: ***** Interface: ***** Style: *****

The mission of the Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity is "to improve the world's diet, prevent obesity, and reduce weight stigma." The center is based out of Yale University in New Haven, CT.

Under the What We Do link, users can access a list of publications and presentations, an archive of monthly newsletters, and Rudd Reviews. The Rudd Reviews section is worth a look. It contains PDF presentations about topics such as "Breastfeeding and Obesity," "Nutrition and Academic Performance," and "Advertising, Marketing, and Disparities in Obesity Rates Among Children."

Key features of the site include:

- » The Science & Medicine section contains information about the causes and consequences of obesity, such as how society explains the causes and how that influences government policy. Here, you'll find information about childhood obesity, environmental influences, culture, physical activity, eating disorders, the debate on food addiction, and much more.
- » The Food & Agriculture section contains information about the food industry, food subsidies, and sustainability and genetic modification.
- » The Advertising & the Media section addresses the effect that food advertising has on children. This section also contains polling data on public opinion about obesity.
- » The Government & Legislation section contains information about government policy and how it shapes the nation's diet, eating patterns, and levels of physical activity. Economics is also addressed in this section, which discusses how economic conditions are central to understanding human diets and the obesity problem.
- » A Weight Bias section that contains information about employment, education, and other areas of discrimination.

Other resources on the site include news, surveys, and event information.

Unique elements: Your visit to this site would be amiss without clicking on the Evolution of Eating link. It launches a fascinating, interactive food timeline.

Comments: The site's Front Burner contains the five most recent news items.

Cost: Free. Click on the E-mail Updates link to sign up to receive news from the center.

RSS XML Link: www.yaleruddcenter.org/frontburnerrss.aspx

Keywords: obesity, Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity, Yale University.

Smallstep.gov

www.smallstep.gov

Ratings: Content: ***** Interface: ***** Style: *****

The smallstep.gov site is a service of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. The site, which is aimed at consumers, contains small steps that consumers can take using a four-step approach to live a healthier life. The main topic of the site, which is available in both English and Spanish, is obesity prevention. Systematically, the site contains the following:

- » **Step 1: Get the Facts** contains what users need to know about having a healthy lifestyle, such as facts about health, diet, and activity.
- » **Step 2: Eat Better** contains information about how to set goals to manage a new eating lifestyle, including food choices and recipes.
- » **Step 3: Get Active** contains tools to help integrate activity into your life. This section contains an Activity Tracker tool that helps you set goals, enter and save physical activity information, track and view progress, and more. Users need to create a free account to use this feature.
- » **Step 4: Learn More** contains a list of additional resources, such as organizations, additional reading, a parent's guide, and more.

Click on the site's Small Steps link to access a list of 119 small steps you can take today to make a difference in your overall health, such as walking to work, increasing your fiber, skipping seconds, and more.

Unique elements: The site contains a Web site for kids called Be a Player, which uses the popular Shrek character to teach children about food and what it can do for them. It contains television ads, Web links, games, and activities.

Comments: The site's approach of taking small steps makes the overwhelming task of losing weight seem doable.

Cost: Free. Users need to create a free online account to use some site tools, like the Activity Tracker. Users can sign up on the site's Home Page to receive the Small Step newsletter,



ter, which includes tips, recipes, and more.

RSS XML Link: None.

Keywords: bariatrics, obesity, Smallstep.gov, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services.

The Obesity Society

www.naaso.org

Ratings: Content: ***** Interface: ***** Style: *****

Founded in 1982, The Obesity Society (part of the North American Association for the Study of Obesity) is a scientific society dedicated to the study of obesity. It encourages research on the causes and treatment of obesity and works to keep the medical community and public informed of new advances. Its mission is "to promote research, education, and advocacy to better understand, prevent, and treat obesity and improve the lives of those affected."

The major selling point of this site is Obesity Online (www.obesityonline.org), which is an education resource for clinicians, researchers, and educators with an interest in obesity and its related disorders. It contains scientific obesity information and educational tools developed by The Obesity Society's editorial board, as well as information to help assess, treat, and manage obesity.

The society also hosts virtual meetings that let users participate in presentations given during national meetings.

Other resources on the site include continuing medical education activities developed by the society. Topics include "Understanding and Treating Obesity," "Office Management of Obesity," and "Assessing and Managing Overweight and

Obesity in Adults.” The Information section contains fact sheets, statistics, and obesity guidelines. Here, users can also access a publication titled *The Practical Guide: Identification, Evaluation, and Treatment of Overweight and Obesity in Adults*.

Other resources on the site include meeting and event information, news articles, case studies, book reviews, funding opportunities, a library of links, and more.

Unique elements: The society’s Slide Library offers users the opportunity to create their own Microsoft PowerPoint presentations from hundreds of downloadable slides. The slides contain talking points and references.

Comments: Users can read an online version of *The Obesity Society’s Strategic Plan* to expand the society’s focus.

Cost: Free. Member benefits include discounts, free subscriptions, education programs, advocacy, and networking opportunities to name just a few of the perks. Users can sign up for the society’s mailing list online.

RSS XML Link: None.

Keywords: bariatrics, obesity, North American Association for the Study of Obesity, NAASO, The Obesity Society.

Thinner Times

www.thinnertimes.com

Ratings: Content: **** Interface: ***** Style: *****

The Thinner Times site is published by two bariatric surgeons, Charles Callery, MD, and Kyle Potts, MD, of Poway, CA. The surgeons specialize in performing Roux-en-Y gastric bypass and Lap-Band® surgery for people with severe obesity.

This site contains the following sections:

- » Gastric Bypass: This great area contains diagrams and photos that walk users through the gastric bypass surgery process. The site also contains information on typical surgery candidates, expectations, outcomes (diabetes, GERD, sleep apnea), consequences, complications and postoperative nutrition. Here, you’ll also find information on the complications and cost of obesity.
- » Lap-Band®: This section contains information on the procedure, adjustments, typical surgery candidates, expectations, and complications. It includes diagrams and photos.
- » Ed Seminars: Here, users will find information on the education seminars offered by the practice. This section also contains a list of books on obesity and nutrition as well as news articles.

- » Support: This section contains information on the office’s support groups, gyms and yoga, and surgical supplies. The support group forums include preop education, preop nutrition, early postop, general postop, and the Thinner Times Forum.

Unique elements: The site contains a gastric bypass and Lap-Band forum. Users must register before posting to the forum. The forum has many areas of interest.

Comments: It’s a great example of a physician practice putting together a medical Web site on the topic of bariatric surgery. The content on the site compares with more well-known healthcare organizations.

Cost: Free. Many features (e.g., the support groups) are only for patients of the practice.

RSS XML Link: None.

Keywords: bariatrics; bariatric physicians; obesity; gastric bypass surgery; Lap-Band; Charles D. Callery, MD; Kyle B. Potts, MD.

Weight-control Information Network

www.win.niddk.nih.gov

Ratings: Content: ***** Interface: ***** Style: *****

The Weight-control Information Network (WIN) is an information service of the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Established in 1994, WIN provides the public, health professionals, the media, and Congress with information about obesity, weight control, physical activity, and nutritional issues. WIN produces, collects, and disseminates materials about obesity, weight control, and nutrition.

This site contains the following content:

- » Publications for health professionals and the public about topics such as Choosing a Successful Weight-loss Program, Dieting and Gallstones, Tips for Pregnancy, Helping Your Overweight Child, Gastrointestinal Surgery for Severe Obesity, Medical Care for Obese Patients, and much more.
- » A newsletter for health professionals called *WIN Notes*. It contains information from NIDDK and other organizations about obesity, weight control, and weight-related nutritional disorders. The site contains *WIN Notes* archives online, including the present issue.
- » A Statistics section containing statistics related to over-

weight and obesity, including a Body Mass Index table.

- » A selection of obesity-related research activities supported by NIH and NIDDK.
- » A Resources section that contains links to federal clearing-houses, federal agencies, nongovernment agencies, interactive tools, and related sites.

Unique elements: The site has a section dedicated to helping black women over age 18 maintain a healthy weight by becoming more physically active and eating healthier foods. The section, called *Sisters Together: Move More, Eat Better*, contains culturally relevant brochures, such as the *Sisters Together Program Guide*.

Comments: Many WIN publications are also available in Spanish.

Cost: Free. Click on *WIN Notes* to subscribe to the WIN newsletter. You can view the publications on the site or download the PDF free of charge. If you want to order copies, the first 25 are free of charge.

RSS XML Link: None.

Keywords: bariatrics, obesity, weight control, physical activity, nutrition, National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, NIDDK, National Institutes of Health, NIH, Weight-control Information Network, WIN.

World Health Organization: Obesity

www.who.int/topics/obesity/en/

Ratings: Content: **** Interface: **** Style: *****

The World Health Organization (WHO), the United

Nations' specialized agency for health, has a section within the Health topics page dedicated to obesity.

It contains links to the agency's activities, reports, news, and events. The site also contains links to related Web sites and topics.

At first, the site appears to be little more than a list of links, but if you click through some of the links to dig deeper, you will find loads of information.

Here is a sampling of some of what you'll find on this site:

- » How people throughout the world are affected by obesity
- » Access to the WHO Global InfoBase, which contains health statistics on chronic disease as well as the global database on body mass index
- » Obesity and overweight fact sheets that contain information about causes, health consequences, and prevention
- » WHO publications, some of which are available as PDFs; users can order others from the WHO Bookshop


Unique elements: Under Features, users can learn more about the scale of the obesity problem by country.

Comments: This is the go-to site to find out more about how obesity affects those around the world and what WHO is doing to address the problem. If you're hungry for facts and figures, you've come to the right place.

Cost: Free.

RSS XML Link: WHO News: www.who.int/feeds/entity/mediacentre/news/en/rss.xml

Keywords: bariatrics, obesity, World Health Organization, WHO. ☒

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SITE OF THE MONTH

Obesity Action Coalition

www.obesityaction.org

The mission of the Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) is “to elevate and empower those affected by obesity through education, advocacy, and support.”

Coalition members include patients and their family members, as well as healthcare professionals. The OAC is a 501(c)(3) public charity.

The coalition works to educate patients, family members, and the public about obesity and morbid obesity.

The OAC also works to improve access to medical treatments for obese patients, advocates for safe and effective treatments, and works to eliminate the stigma associated with obesity.

The All About Obesity section—true to its name—is where users will find an abundance of information about obesity, morbid obesity, comorbid conditions, treatment options, childhood obesity, stigma, statistics, body mass index (BMI), and a glossary of terms.

Clicking on any of these links provides users with an abundance of statistics, treatment options, risk factors, causes, related articles, and more.

The Treatment Options section contains information about clinical programs, nonclinical programs, and surgery options.

The Surgery Options section has excellent information for patients, such as the different types of surgical options, how to determine whether you are a good candidate, and plenty of questions to ask potential surgeons.

What’s unique about this site is its Co-Morbid Conditions section.

It pulls together thorough descriptions of all of the conditions associated with obesity and morbid obesity, such as cancer, diabetes, gallbladder disease, heart disease,

osteoarthritis, and depression.

Within each topic, the site provides statistics and detailed information about the condition, as well as links to further information about the condition. The links are bolded text, so you’ll need a keen eye to spot them.

Some of the key features of this site include:

- » An Advocacy section containing information about how patients can advocate for change on national and state issues.
- » Facts and figures about obesity.
- » Public policy statements.
- » News, resources, support group tools, and links.
- » PDF brochures about topics such as Understanding Obesity, Understanding



Childhood Obesity, Understanding Morbid Obesity, and the OAC Weight-Loss Surgery Coverage Fact Sheet.

- » Online patient stories aimed at increasing awareness of obesity and morbid obesity. In fact, the OAC offers a one-year complimentary membership for patients affected by obesity, morbid obesity, and childhood obesity who are willing to share their personal story.
- » An OAC Insurance Guide aimed at helping patients work with insurance providers when they are seeking weight-loss surgery.
- » Information about the OAC’s Walk from Obesity fundraiser.

The site is free. Membership rates vary from \$20 for a patient to \$1,000 for an institutional member.

Benefits vary based on the level of membership, but, in general, members receive a membership card, the OAC newsletter, a subscription to a monthly electronic newsletter, and representation through advocacy. ■