

## ONLINE HEALTH ADVERTISEMENTS



At some point last year, the University of Pennsylvania Health System decided to find innovative ways of getting new patients to participate in one of its lung transplant programs. In order to gain exposure, they decided to turn to social media, which includes both Google and Facebook. The advertisement campaign for the health system, which cost around \$20,000, was well worth the investment because it was extremely effective and even exceeded the original expectations. In the span of two months, nearly 5,000 individuals clicked on advertisements and went as far as to actually schedule an appointment. Many of the individuals are currently undergoing evaluation. While nearly 5,000 individuals may not necessarily seem like a whole lot, for the University of Pennsylvania Health System, it is more than enough, especially since one transplant is equivalent to about \$100,000 worth of revenue. The chief marketing officer, Suzanne Sawyer, said that the purpose was to see how successful online advertising would be for the health system. They decided to take to a number of different websites, including Google and Facebook, as a way of trying to advertise online. Not many hospitals in the United States use this method of marketing even though this type of marketing actually seems to be quiet effective. Many experts even believe that the number of hospitals advertising on such websites will continue to increase, especially as a way for the hospitals to target specific individuals. In the meantime, there are also some questions asked by critics who believe that such spending is actually wasteful. In fact, some critics say that hospitals waste money on advertising as a way to increase their revenue stream instead of actually helping people to improve their overall health and wellbeing. Some say that the advertisements are only there to persuade people but not for their best interest. Of course, the opinions of such advertisements vary from person to person. There are some people who feel that advertisements on social networking websites, such as Facebook, are a bit of an invasion of privacy. While some people may feel that way, other people feel as though the advertisements are relevant to the information they want to see and do not mind such advertisements being displayed on websites they visit. Penn plans to increase its use of social media to increase awareness and also target individuals with their advertisements for transplants. They will be targeting the individuals based on their habits on Facebook and whether or not they have already "liked" a group on the Facebook page that relates to lung transplants in the first place.

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