Leveraging social media tools like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube is an inexpensive way to reach a wide constituent audience. Consider using these activities, materials, and quick facts to run a four week diabetes awareness campaign. A good time to launch such a campaign is during the month of November, which is American Diabetes Month.

Also consider providing a link to Women In Government’s Diabetes Policy Resource Center, which contains more information about each of these topics. The Resource Center can be accessed at www.womeningovernment.org/diabetes.

- SOCIAL MEDIA TOWN HALLS
- TWEETING & POSTING
- DIABETES AWARENESS & GOING VIRAL
Social Media Town Halls

Social media tools can be used as a low-cost method of generating interest in diabetes concerns. Several options are available for hosting a town hall with social media resources, depending on the level of your familiarity with tools like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. A social media town hall can be used along with other activities to develop constituent contacts, and distribute photos and press releases after many diabetes awareness activities and events.

- Constituents can “like” a legislator’s Facebook page. You can “call for questions and comments” or inform constituents of diabetes campaigns and resources.
- Constituents can follow a legislator on Twitter, which can allow diabetes information, announcements, and press releases to be distributed instantly.
- Constituents can ask questions via Facebook, Twitter, or e-mail, and answers can be provided using the same tools.
- A legislator can make a video response to constituent questions and put the response on YouTube, which can also be shared on Facebook, Twitter, and the legislator’s regular web page.

Timeline for Social Media Town Halls

Social media town halls can take place at an expedited or prolonged pace and do not have to be conducted in any set time frame. Yet, consider a defined period of time to take questions, which can be as short as a day or as long as a month, and develop responses either from the legislator or from local healthcare providers, diabetes advocates, and other stakeholders.

Tweeting and Posting

Tweeting and posting provides a unique opportunity to inform constituents of important diabetes information and resources. The quick facts and figures found in the following pages are short enough to be used in a Twitter message, or can be pooled together for a Facebook post. You can mix and match the posts to create themes for a specific week or develop a “Diabetes Health Challenge” campaign which challenges constituents to eat healthy and engage in physical activity. Choose the information, facts, and figures that most interest you and your constituents.
List of Tweets & Posts about Diabetes

- Diabetes affects approximately 26 million children and adults in the United States.
- 79 million U.S. adults have pre-diabetes, a condition that can increase a person's risk of diabetes type 2, heart disease, and stroke.
- If the current trend continues, one in three Americans could have diabetes by 2050.
- The national economic costs of pre-diabetes and diabetes reached $218 billion in 2007.
- Around 3.2 million deaths every year are attributable to complications of diabetes; that is the equivalent of six deaths every minute.
- Typical symptoms of diabetes include frequent urination, excessive thirst, extreme hunger, and sudden vision changes.
- The costs of diabetes due to disability, work loss, and premature deaths was an estimated $58 billion in 2007.
- The risk of hospitalization from heart disease is two to four times higher for women with diabetes as compared to women without diabetes.
- Patients hospitalized with diabetes are 28 times more likely to have an amputation than patients without diabetes.
- With appropriate primary care for diabetes, nearly $2.5 billion in hospital costs might be averted.
- Diabetes is the leading cause of kidney disease. In 2008, 48,374 people with diabetes began treatment for end-stage kidney disease.
- Diabetes is the leading cause of blindness among adults ages 20-74.
- Adults with diabetes have a two to four times higher heart disease death rate than those without diabetes.
- More than 60 percent of non-traumatic lower limb amputations occur in people with diabetes.
- Diabetes is the seventh leading cause of death in the U.S.
- Diabetes continues to be the leading cause of kidney failure, non-traumatic lower-leg amputations, and blindness among adults ages 20-74.

Diabetes Health Challenges

• Diabetes Health Challenge [http://bit.ly/oAYs2w]: Take a walk in the local park!
• Diabetes Health Challenge [http://bit.ly/oAYs2w]: Dance to three of your favorite songs!
• Diabetes Health Challenge [http://bit.ly/oAYs2w]: Make a habit of checking your food labels when you go to the grocery store today.

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Diabetes Awareness & Going Viral

“Going viral” is the catch-phrase coined when social media activities are shared throughout social networks. Ultimately, it should be the goal of your diabetes social media campaign to “spread the word” about diabetes. There are two ways to go viral: you can ask your social network to share it with others; or your campaign can be so interesting that people will automatically share your tweets, postings, and videos.

• Consider the following language to include in tweets and posts to get people to make your diabetes campaign viral:
  ○ Please ReTweet…
  ○ Post this on your Facebook…
  ○ Help Me…
  ○ Vote to…
  ○ Questions… e.g. What do you think of…?