Twitter 101

Definitions:

Twitter—an online social networking platform that allows users to send and receive text-based message, or "tweets."

Tweets—text-based messages of up to 140 characters (letters, symbols, words, spaces, & punctuation.)
@—a way of referring to another user, for example, my username is @JosephSakran

Twitter Feed—the running list of tweets

RT—A retweet– or RT—when you share the tweet of one user with all of your Twitter followers.

MT—a modified retweet—or MT—that's been modified or edited in some way

Reply—when you directly respond to a specific user beginning with their username

DM—direct message—You can only direct message to someone you follow. You can preface your tweet with DM @JosephSakran, for example.

Follower—Users that you follow on Twitter. On Twitter, following is not necessarily a two-way street. You can follow users and they may or may not choose to follow you.

Hashtags—A hashtag (#) is a word or phrase preceded by a "#." By using hashtags, you can aggregate tweets around that topic. Hashtags (#) help you focus on tweets around a specific topic. You can also add a hashtag to any tweet. Just follow the tweet with an appropriate hashtag and it will appear in the group. For example, the Twitter hashtag used for the 2016 EAST Annual Scientific Assembly was: **#EAST2016**

Tricks of the trade:

Starting a tweet -
If you start a tweet with @username it's a reply, and will **ONLY** be seen by the person you're sending the tweet to **and** anyone else on Twitter who is following **BOTH** of you. Nobody else will see that tweet in their timeline as Twitter assumes it's a reply and won't deliver it (although it will be visible on your profile and in Twitter search results to everybody).

If you put someone's @username **ANYWHERE ELSE** in the tweet, it's a mention and will be seen by everyone who follows you.

Images -
A picture says a thousand words. Good thing, because we have a limited number of words to work with on Twitter. Fortunately, users have the option of attaching up to four pictures with each tweet, albeit at the cost of 23 characters.

Less is sometimes more-
You may post interesting content or say witty things, but when you're doing so, you want to give people the opportunity to retweet your stuff. As a rule, you should leave 20 characters worth of spare to allow this. If it's possible leave 40 since that way, the person retweeting should be able to fit in a quick comment.

For those cases where you're retweeting something that's too big, modified tweets come into play. Marked as MT, this lets people know that this tweet has been edited so you can cut down the least essential parts or reword it so you can tweet it.

Shortening URL (bitly)-
Using a URL shortener has its benefits. For one, all URL shorteners include analytics so you can see how effective and popular your links are.

Pace yourself-
The last thing you want to do is spam your followers and if you're one of those people who tweets everything they can think of, you're not doing yourself any favors. Try to space out when you tweet so that you're more consistent throughout the day. If that isn't possible, use one of the scheduling tools mentioned earlier to space them out.

Popular Hashtags in Healthcare-
Just as some example, here are some popular surgical #'s followed by the top 30 Healthcare #, with the one's bolded most used. For the 2016 EAST Annual Scientific Assembly the main # used was **#EAST2016**

Popular surgical hashtags:
- #SurgTweeting
- #Ilooklikeasurgeon
- #theunsungpandemic
- #Trauma
- #Vascular
- #globalsurgery
- #Surgery
- #Surgical

Top 30 Healthcare :
- **#doctors20** (How Doctors Are Using Social and Web 2.0 Tools, etc.)
- **#mhealth** (mobile health)
- **#emr** (Electronic Medical Record)
- **#ehr** (Electronic Health Record)
- **#HCIT** (Healthcare IT)
- #healthtech
- **#digitalhealth** (Digital Health)
- **#hcsm** (healthcare social media)
- **#hcr** (Healthcare Reform)
- #HealthReform
- **#Healthcosts**
- #occupyhealthcare
- #healthcareforall
- **#meaningfuluse**
- #ACO (Accountable Care Organization)
- #ICD10 (ICD-10)
- #hcsmin (Healthcare Communications)
- #ahima (American Health Information Management Association) Anything dealing with medical records, medical coding, transcription, etc.)
- **#HIMSS** (Health Information & Management Systems Society) The organization that pretty much runs the HIT industry
- #physician-Self explanatory you can just include that hashtag in your title
- **#MedEd** – Doctors, physicians, medical education
- **#mdehr** -Doctors and EHR
- #medicalbilling
- #patientengagement
- #nurses
- #Patient
- #PatientExperience
- #HealthTalk