

Respondent



31

Michael Zapor



99:53

Time to complete



1. Please provide your name, position title, and contact information. *

Dr. Michael Zapor, Deputy Chief of Staff, Martinsburg VAMC (michael.zapor@va.gov)

2. Is this submission an idea for a Promising Practice or existing Promising Practice? *

☐ Idea for a Promising Practice

☒ Existing Promising Practice

3. What is the name of your Promising Practice? *

Use of the Medium Online Publishing Platform to Inform and Educate about Coronavirus Disease and Vaccines

4. What type of Veterans does this practice serve? *

☐ Rural

☐ Urban

☒ Both

5. How does this practice promote vaccine acceptance? *

The internet has become a significant source of both information and misinformation for people seeking to learn about COVID-19 and COVID-19 vaccines. Indeed, social media and blogs are commonly used by detractors of vaccines to promulgate anti-vaccination rhetoric. This notwithstanding, such forums also offer an opportunity for subject matter experts to inform and to educate and to dispel the myths surrounding vaccines (such as those against COVID-19). One popular and highly regarded forum is the online publishing platform medium.com.

6. What are the specific steps you took, or would take, to implement your practice and the timeline/timeframe for each? *

To date, I have published seventeen COVID-19-related essays on medium.com, to include several that are specific to vaccines (see: medium.com/@michaelzapor). Each of these is no more than fifteen and generally less than a ten minute read; none have been published in any official capacity; and all have been vetted through our hospital's PIO. Use of Medium and similar forums is a potentially powerful platform by which subject matter experts in the VHA can educate and communicate with our employees, our beneficiaries, and the public at large. Moreover, such posts cement a reputation for the VA as an authoritative source on COVID-19 and COVID-19 vaccines. The topics published to date include: COVID-19: Background (1 March 2020), COVID-19: Therapeutics and Vaccines (23 March 2020), COVID-19: Convalescent Plasma and Masks (6 April 2020), COVID-19: Transmissibility, Fomites, and Case Fatality Rate (14 April 2020), COVID-19: Antibody-mediated Immunity and Antibody Testing (20 April 2020), COVID-19: Disinfectants and Virucidals (30 April 2020), COVID-19: Distinctive Clinical Features of Critically Ill Patients (14 May 2020), COVID-19: Update on the Moderna Vaccine Trial (30 May 2020), COVID-19: Asymptomatic Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 (15 June 2020), COVID-19: Acute and Convalescent Antibody Titers and their Implications for Herd Immunity and Vaccine Development (30 June 2020), COVID-19: Emergence of the D614G Mutation and the Question of Reinfection (15 July 2020), COVID-19: The Dilemma of Reopening Schools (1 August 2020), COVID-19: Hydroxychloroquine Reviewed (15 August 2020), COVID-19: The Russian COVID-19 Vaccine Candidate (6 September 2020), COVID-19: Synopsis of the available and likely soon to be available COVID-19 vaccines (9 February 2021), COVID-19: Synopsis of three notable SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern (5 March 2021), and COVID-19: A musing for the detractors of masking and vaccination (9 April 2021).

7. What departments are involved in implementing your practice? *

The essays would be written by recognized subject matter experts in infectious diseases and other medical subspecialties, vetted through the hospital's public information officer, and approved by the hospital director.

8. What are the costs associated with your practice? *

Negligible other than permitting the subject matter experts time during duty hours to write the essays.

9. What primary metric data is tracked and collected to determine your practice's success? *

Medium.com provides statistics for each author including the number of views for each article, the number read, the read ratio, and the number of fans. Moreover, readers are able to provide feedback for each article.

10. What are the potential risks or barriers of implementing your practice and the proposed mitigations? *

There is always a risk whenever publishing on social media. That notwithstanding, the benefits of vaccine-related informative essays will likely far outweigh the risks, provided that they are fact/evidence-based, include references, and refrain from pejorative commentary. Indeed, each of my essays concludes with the comment: "As with my prior COVID-19-themed posts, my intention here is not to politicize, sensationalize, or trivialize the pandemic, but only to provide information and thoughtful commentary. Until my next update — regards."