

Tiromed.com: Networking for Doctors and Med Students

Social networking sites are quickly becoming an important part of business, and the medical community is right on board. Realizing the impact the Internet has on communication, Max Sanel, co-founder of Tiromed.com, decided to put it to use for medical students and physicians. Tiromed, an Arizona-based Internet company, hosts a website that allows college pre-med and medical students, residents, fellows and physicians to network with each other. "It was very clear to me that social networking and social media were going to have a vital role in the way we share information," explains Sanel. "I felt that these concepts could be applied to the medical community to create an environment where information would flow and allow medical students and professionals to partake in a greater communal discussion.

"In the process of preparing for medical school, I found that it was very hard to 'preview' med school life, the residency experience and what being a practicing physician is actually like," explains Sanel. "I longed for a way to actually 'see' all the different levels of the journey of practicing medicine." He, along with three physician co-founders, including Dr. Ann Mai, a California internist, created www.tiromed.com to offer a new forum for students, and established practitioners to communicate and share experiences. Tiromed is based on an important assumption: Members will want to "give back" and share their knowledge. Practicing physicians become mentors to residents, residents to medical students and so on. "We believe that medical students genuinely want pre-meds to succeed and residents want medical students to as well; the process of becoming a physician is so challenging and galvanizing to this community that camaraderie plays a huge

role," says Dr. Mai.

Sanel believed there was a void of information about the different stages of medical education and what was expected of students through this experience. "One of the biggest benefits of the site is for our members to make contacts, share, learn and even mentor each other," says Sanel. He felt that technology, paired with people who actually lived through the process, could fill that void. He wasn't alone; there are over 2,500 current subscribers from over 60 countries using the website.

It seems to be a popular concept. The Maricopa County Medical Society (MCMS) agrees with the philosophy of sharing information between various education and career stages, and has recently joined Tiromed to help serve their members. Dan Mitten, Associate Executive Director of the Medical Society, believes in Sanel's vision and is excited about their new affiliation. "The Medical Society recognizes the importance of camaraderie and communication within the medical community. The Society has always been about getting physicians together and members using their expertise for the betterment of themselves and the community," says Mitten.

"The ability of our members, both young and old, to participate in the online community is a huge benefit to them. Whether they are interested in getting to know other medical professionals or wanting to provide their expertise to a younger generation of physicians, Tiromed provides that link necessary regardless of generation," Mitten adds.

Association management is all about the diversity of physicians and their practices. The Medical Society has been an expert in that arena for a very long time. "The combination of new technol-

ogy, Tiromed's online abilities and the Society's reputation and history make a perfect environment for the physician and up-and-coming physicians," remarks Mitten.

This environment is thriving and proving to be a valuable tool for everyone involved. "Physicians often tell me how they wish Tiromed was around when they were in medical school," says Sanel. "Tiromed is about community and community continues to be our sole focus." ■