



**Steward Health Care Maintains Online
Oversight & Engages Patients Using
Sprout Social**



Steward Health Care manages community hospitals across the United States and the country of Malta, making it America's largest for-profit private hospital operator.

The Boston-based company knows social media is essential to building strong connections with patients, so it uses **Sprout Social** to engage local communities while maintaining oversight of its substantial social portfolio.

Since signing on with Sprout in June 2016, Steward has achieved significant increases in audience growth across its various Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn profiles, as well as increases in impressions and engagements.

Maintaining Oversight

Steward Health Care's social needs expanded alongside the company.

When Colleen Walsh, former Director of Digital Marketing, now Digital Marketing Consultant for Steward Health Care, came on board in 2013, the organization's social presence was practically nonexistent. What began with corporate-controlled Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter accounts quickly grew as Steward expanded.

“All the posts, all the reports, all the paid advertising—everything was done over at corporate marketing, and we knew that was just impossible to continue,” Walsh said. “That’s when we started looking at Sprout to help decentralize stuff but still maintain oversight.”

Through Sprout, teams at local hospitals could manage their content while corporate marketing ensured overall **brand voice** remained consistent.



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Mary Crotty

Marketing Communications and Public Relations Consultant, Steward

Consistency became increasingly important as Steward acquired hospitals in other regions of the country, as it did with Iasis Healthcare in 2017.

Control over what’s published on social is especially important in an industry like health care where strict regulations and stiff penalties are an everyday reality, especially as it concerns patient privacy. Steward needed to balance granting local teams autonomy with ensuring social posts could be thoroughly reviewed to avoid costly mistakes or public relations debacles.

Sprout’s processes and workflows, including **flexible account structures**, user permissions and message approval, made doing so simple.

Engaging Patients

Social is an avenue for strengthening bonds with local community members. While Steward Health Care's initial strategy was focused on promotion, be it hospitals, doctors or service lines, the company now emphasizes patient engagement.

"[A promotional strategy] worked at the time because we had to build our following," Walsh said. "But over time it's definitely evolved to be more engagement-focused. We've realized people really have a connection to their local providers, especially primary care."

It's a sentiment echoed by Jessica Millard, Director of Digital Marketing for Steward Health Care.

"It's more about building relationships and trust," Millard said. "If you're going to receive care as a patient at a hospital, you're looking for safety, quality, compassion—you want doctors who are going to have a good bedside manner. The goal is to engage and show that we're a part of the local community."

Cultivating strong connections with patients means responding quickly on social, something Steward counts on Sprout's Smart Inbox to assist with.

"Every day I go in and I scroll through my message inbox," said Marketing Communications and Public Relations Consultant Mary Crotty. "And I can see everything. I can see if a person sent a private message about something and we still haven't responded. I'll then create a task and assign it to the right person. I like the fact that if you've taken action on a comment or something, you can check it off to let someone know it's taken care of. Everyone knows what's done and what needs their attention."

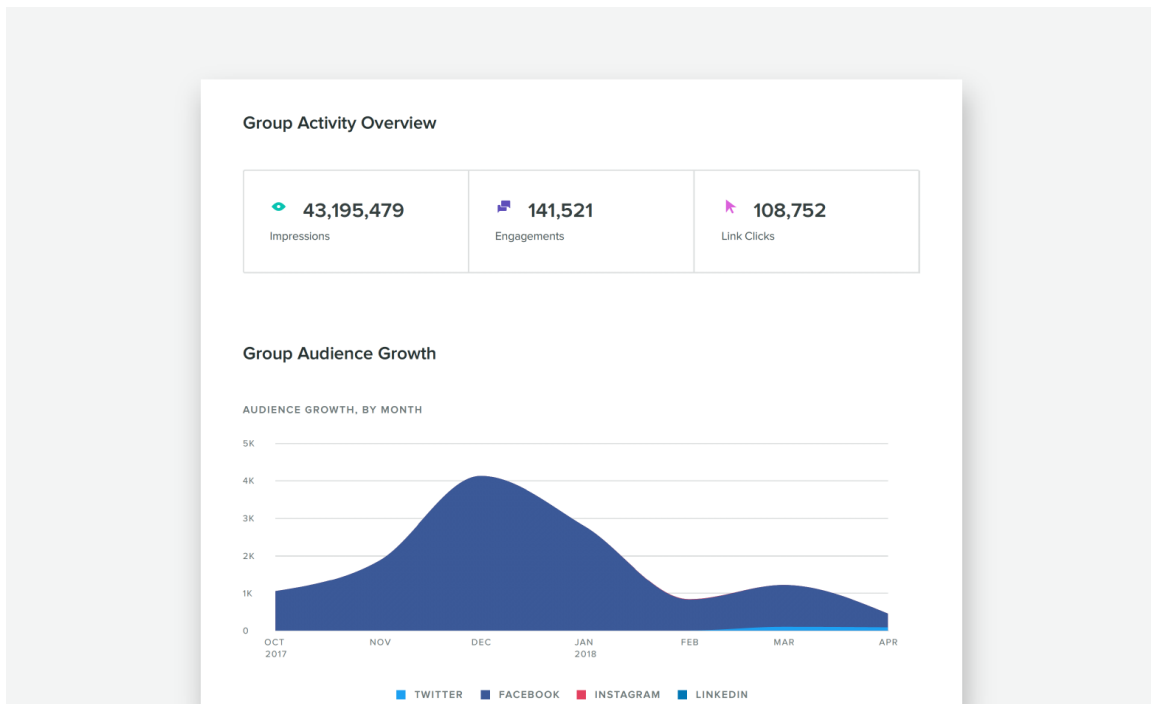
The team also relies on Sprout's publishing features for patient engagement. Sprout provides tools to easily schedule posts, store and edit multimedia content in an Asset Library and apply custom tags to posts for easier organizing and reporting.

Sprout features such as **ViralPost** and organic post targeting also make it easy for local teams to **publish content at optimal times** for their target audiences, maximizing the reach and impact of posts across social channels.

Supporting Growth

Steward Health Care has seen continual growth on social since it began using the Sprout Social platform. Over the past six months, as of April 12, 2018, the organization achieved a 32.3% increase in social followers across its various profiles and channels. This growth translates to approximately:

- 43 million impressions
- 142,000 engagements
- 109,000 link clicks



Choosing where to receive care is a deeply personal decision for people, and one that can be fraught with worry and expectation. Through Sprout, Steward empowers local teams to engage their communities and demonstrate commitment to quality health care, all while maintaining oversight of publishing and outreach efforts to ensure social activity stays in line with the company's values and goals, as well as industry standards.