

FOR MORE INFORMATION contact:

D-D Flannery, 585-703-6243

LOCAL DOCTOR GOES “SOCIAL” TO ENGAGE WITH PATIENTS ON A NEW LEVEL

- *Helendale Dermatology and Medical Spa Enters the Health 2.0 Movement with the Launch of a Social Media Initiative* –

ROCHESTER, NY (October 3, 2011) – Two patient-centered movements, e-patients (engaged and empowered patients who want to partner in their care and discussions) coupled with the health 2.0 movement that lends to an open dialogue between patients and physicians, caregivers, and medical practices, are driving how healthcare professionals communicate. Helendale Dermatology and Medical Spa of Irondequoit, NY has entered the Health 2.0 movement with the launch of a comprehensive social media campaign, making it one of the first private medical practices in the area to engage with patients online in this new way – a two way conversation.

Social networks, which historically have not been accepted by medical professionals as a vehicle to communicate with patients, are now playing a role in healthcare conversations. Physicians like Dr. Arthur, who is a Board Certified Dermatologist at Helendale Dermatology and Medical Spa, are beginning to recognize the value of social media platforms and how they expand the channels of communication between doctors and patients. Although it has taken them time to catch up, physicians have entered Health 2.0 and are now looking to personalize health care, collaborate with patients in preventative medicine, and promote health education.

Dr. Arthur is actively using social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube to engage in dialogue with patients, announce new treatments, guide patients to reputable sources of information, and promote her dermatology practice. This past spring, Helendale launched Live Chats that offers an instantaneous transmission of text-based messages from sender to receiver, as an open online forum for patients to participate in a Q&A session with Dr. Arthur outside of the examining room on topics related to healthy skin. The Live Chats are archived on the Helendale website for future reference by patients. Dr. Arthur also accepts private instant messages during the Live Chats. Helendale also launched virtual video consultations via Skype for those interested in cosmetic procedures without having to come into the office for the initial consultation. This has opened the door to out of town patients.

Dr. Arthur shares tips for patients engaging with medical professionals online:

- Health recommendations posted online are general and should not replace individual and actual health care
- Healthcare providers should not use social media to share any health information that could be linked to an individual patient, such as names, pictures, and physical descriptions, without the patient's consent.
- Accepting an invitation to connect online, such as a friend request, likely would not constitute an adequate consent to the disclosure of patient information under HIPAA and other state privacy laws. Both physicians and patients need to exercise caution about privacy when communicating online.
- Social media is an innovative tool to help physicians connect and re-connect to patients inside *and* outside the exam room.
- Medical professionals who are early adopters of social media utilize it because it provides value and they enjoy engaging with patients on this new level.

“Social media has been instrumental in Helendale Dermatology providing additional value to its patients by offering a vehicle to communicate with patients online in a two-way conversation,” said Dr. Arthur. “It has also allowed us to connect with new patients by engaging with them in a natural way online and urging them to come in for individual follow-up care.”

The iterations of online technology are likely to change faster than our medical institutions can adapt. The next generation of medical students will likely be at an advantage to adopt it more quickly. In order to establish effective patient relations, it is important for physicians to listen and adapt to patients' needs related to communicating.

About Helendale Dermatology and Medical Spa:

Helendale Dermatology & Medical Spa was founded in 2004 by board certified dermatologist, Dr. Elizabeth Arthur, as a full-service dermatology practice that specializes in medical, cosmetic and surgical care of the skin. The on-site Medical Spa offers a wide variety of services aimed at enhancing patients' natural beauty through laser, esthetic and skincare treatments. The practice is located at 500 Helendale Rd, Suite 100 in Rochester, New York and currently employs 18 people. For more information, visit www.helendaledermatology.com.

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INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITY: Dr. Elizabeth Arthur, board certified dermatologist at Helendale Dermatology and Medical Spa, is available to discuss the transformation of healthcare communications and the value of engaging with patients online in two-way conversations. Patients of Helendale Dermatology engaging with the practice via social media are also available for interviews. For more information, please contact D-D Flannery at (585) 703-6243 or dd@flannery-pr.com.