



UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH  
CENTER FOR  
Behavioral Health,  
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# The HealthTech Update

November 9th, 2020

**Spotlight on:  
Beth Hoffman, MPH**



**Beth Hoffman, MPH**

Beth is a PhD student in the Department of Community and Behavioral Health Sciences. Her research focuses on the portrayal of health topics in television programs, the influence of media on mental health, and the spread of health information (and misinformation) on social media.

**Below is a preview of our interview with Beth.**

## How do you feel about the spread of health information (and misinformation) on social media due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

I think the stage was perfectly set for what we are seeing in terms of the "*infodemic*" or rapid spread of both information and misinformation. This is the first pandemic we have had in the time of ubiquitous social media use. We are seeing science unfold in real time and there is a lot of uncertainty, and when there is uncertainty conspiracy theories and misinformation can really take root. There are a lot of people who are scared and looking for answers, but science takes time and it doesn't take much time for rumors to spread. I think it's important for us to be thinking of what can we do as public health and medical professionals to utilize the same mediums like social media that have been fueling the spread of misinformation. We also can use them to make true information and health recommendations go viral in the same way.

**[Read the Full Interview Here!](#)**

Beth will be presenting, along with [Dr. Jaime Sidani](#) and Dr. Todd Wolynn tomorrow, Tuesday, November 10th, at 12pm regarding **“Vaccine Hesitancy in the Age of COVID-19”**.

**[Watch Beth and Jaime's Presentation Here!](#)**

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