

## Michigan Chapter Social Worker

Hello friends,

Searching on the internet for information about health care has become a common activity. The internet has become a primary source of health care information for many Americans. The Pew Internet and American Life project has reported that people with disabilities and chronic conditions such as HD are some of the most avid users of internet health sites and their internet searches affected treatment decisions, their interactions with their doctors, their ability to cope with their condition, even their diet and fitness routines. Individuals are taking what they find on the internet very seriously.



Unfortunately, when it comes to information on the internet, it fails entirely in the user to determine the value and truth of what they read. Any one can publish on the internet and there is plenty of information that is untested, inaccurate, even dangerous. Because there is such a vast number of information and (mis-information) to be found on the internet, it is extremely important to use safeguards when surfing the web.

When you use a search engine, such as Yahoo or Google, to research a medical topic, you may be confronted with a list of thousands of websites, with no guidance on their quality and/or accuracy. Some websites are commercial, designed to sell things. Some are filled unsupportive information speculation. Some websites want you to believe that there are some miracle cures that are being withheld from the public. To find reliable information, it is smart to start your research on the websites of reputable organizations: government agencies, not for profits, and entities known for their integrity. As an example, Healthfinder.org is a website sponsored by the office of Disease prevention and Health Promotion for the U.S. Department of Health and Humans Services. It is a solid starting point for finding legitimate, up to date health information from a variety of health sources. HDSA's own website ([www.hdsa.org](http://www.hdsa.org)) has links to resources, current research, and wide variety pdf publications you can download. Other good sources of information are the National Institutes of Health ([www.nih.gov](http://www.nih.gov)), the national institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke ([www.ninds.nih.gov](http://www.ninds.nih.gov)) the HD Lighthouse ([www.hdlighthouse.org](http://www.hdlighthouse.org)) and the Huntington's Disease Advocacy Center ([www.hdac.org](http://www.hdac.org)).

Lastly, I hope this information was helpful and I hope to be hearing from some of you in the future. Please feel free to call the helpline and I will help you with all the questions you have and want information on.

Danny Berry – Family Services Coordinator, Michigan Chapter/Social worker

Reference – Winter 2007/HDSA.ORG