

ANNUAL HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION REPORT 2017:

Diving Into Preferred
Communication



Communication is ever changing.

One minute, email is a new-fangled invention professionals across various industries are fawning over. In another, the President of the United States is using Twitter to disseminate his message. It's crucial for health payers and providers alike to understand and utilize these popular forms of contact to educate and inform their audience.

Good communication is crucial to connect and engage with healthcare professionals.

Communication is not linear among all audiences. Preferences vary among nurse practitioners, physician assistants and physicians so it can be a challenge to determine which channels are most effective to reach each group.

In order to help life science organizations, insurance companies and others better gauge the most effective channels specific

to their industry and audience, HealthLink Dimensions conducts an annual Healthcare Professional Communication Survey. This year's survey polled 787 physicians, nurse practitioners and physician assistants to glean insight into healthcare professionals' needs and preferences. Survey respondents practice in the following areas: Family Practice, Pediatrics, Internal Medicine, General Surgery, Obstetrics & Gynecology, Dermatology, Cardiology, Oncology, Neurology, Podiatry, Rheumatology and Otolaryngology. The responses from the survey yield important clues as to how organizations can best communicate with healthcare providers.

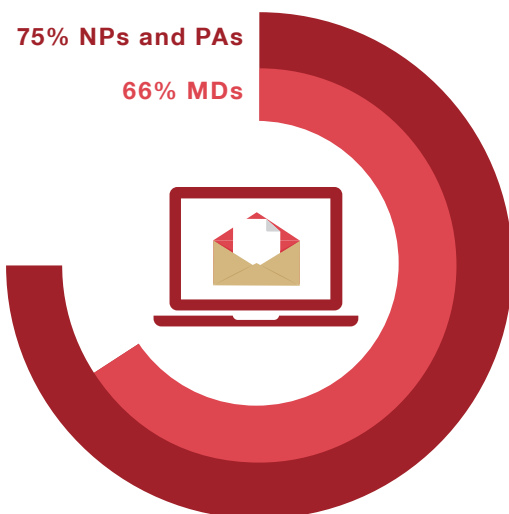


EMAIL REIGNS SUPREME

When searching for information on drugs, devices and disease state knowledge, NPs, PAs and MDs all leverage online sources, mainly UpToDate, WebMD, ePocrates and medical journal websites. While it's important to be cognizant of this selection, email still comes out on top as the favored channel for communication for a variety of purposes among all parties.

For example, 75 percent of NPs and PAs and 66 percent of MDs prefer email for communication regarding the following:

- Industry news.
- Product updates.
- Research opportunities.



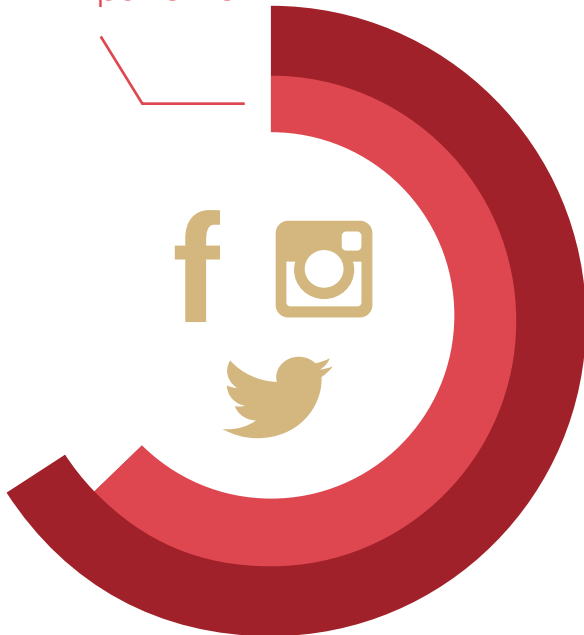
Email is the preferred method of communication.

And while all three groups believe more interaction is necessary from insurance carriers and other payers, 50 percent of doctors believe email is the best tactic for these organizations to provide timely updates.

To keep up with these busy healthcare providers' schedules and preferences, life science organizations and insurance networks must stay aware of access preferences. Specifically, almost 52 percent of NPs/PAs and 46 percent of MDs utilize mobile devices, while almost 53 percent of NPs/PAs and 51 percent of MDs use desktop computers to comb through their emails. Since both forms are similarly popular, industry professionals need to emphasize these choices when developing a communication strategy. That means ensuring email campaigns are optimized for mobile in design, content and call to action (CTA). To keep these working professionals engaged, all text should be kept concise while CTAs should require only a short amount of providers' time.

SOCIAL MEDIA FINDS ITS PURPOSE IN NETWORKING

63% MDs do not use social media to communicate with patients.



66% NPs and PAs do not use social media to communicate with patients.

Although medical professionals may use today's popular social platforms (i.e. Twitter, Facebook and Instagram) in their spare time, there's not much of a purpose in their professional careers.

Per the survey, 66 percent of NPs/PAs and 63 percent of MDs don't use social media to communicate with patients. Instead, only one-third of these medical professionals are active on social media – mainly Twitter, LinkedIn, SERMO and Doximity – primarily for networking with their colleagues and peers.

That's not to say this trend won't change over time, especially when 57 percent of NPs/PAs and 56 percent of MDs see value in these platforms and stated they will likely participate in the future.

THE PROMISE IN PROGRAMMATIC ADVERTISING

Although social media is slow on the uptake for medical professionals, digital marketing strategies, such as display advertising, are popular.

Just over one-third of respondents to HealthLink Dimension's survey stated they would be likely or very likely to click on

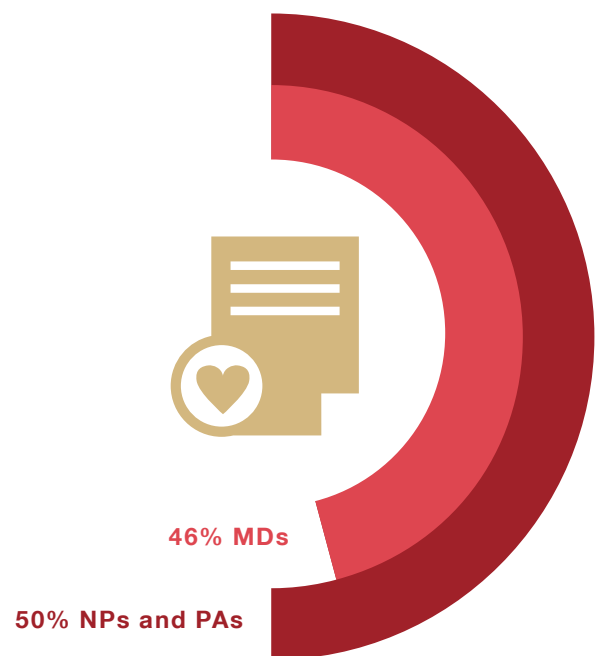
programmatic ads if the content was relevant to their practice. This marketing method may be an efficient channel for brand awareness as time goes on, especially since even those healthcare providers who rarely click for more information tend to retain the overall messaging and source.

EDUCATION IS IN HIGH DEMAND

No matter the method of communication, NPs, PAs and MDs all agree that the type of information they most desire from healthcare companies and patient advocacy organizations is educational in nature. At the top of the list for all these groups are disease state materials followed closely by pharmaceutical and medical device educational resources.

Furthermore, 50 percent of NPs/PAs and 46 percent of MDs frequently use printed materials provided to their practices as well as both sponsored and unsponsored websites for patient referrals. As industry leaders can see, information and care revolving around the patient are becoming increasingly popular.

50% of NPs/PAs and 46% of MDs frequently use printed educational materials.

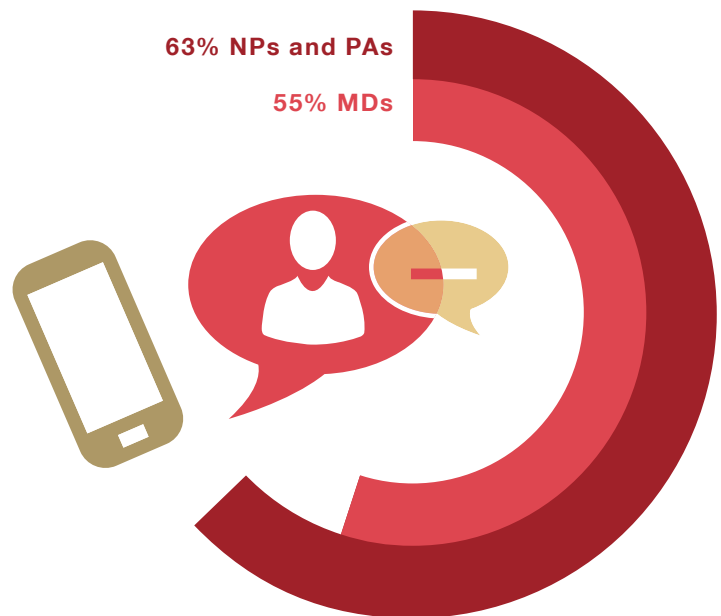


PATIENT CENTRICITY IS A SUCCESS

As the shift from fee-for-service to value-based care becomes more widespread, pharmaceutical companies and other life science organizations are dedicating more resources towards assisting in the effort to improve patient outcomes. For some organizations, it may be difficult to discern if patient centric initiatives such as patient education resources and apps, patient assistance programs, etc. make a significant impact. According to survey respondents, they do.

Around 63 percent of NPs and PAs and 55 percent of MDs feel patient-centric initiatives are having a positive impact. It's crucial for healthcare organizations to continue their work in this important element of medical care. As the provider's patient load and administrative requirements continue to increase, life science organizations can help lessen the burden by helping to inform and support the patient from diagnosis through treatment.

63% of NPs and PAs and 55% of MDs feel patient-centric initiatives are having a positive impact.



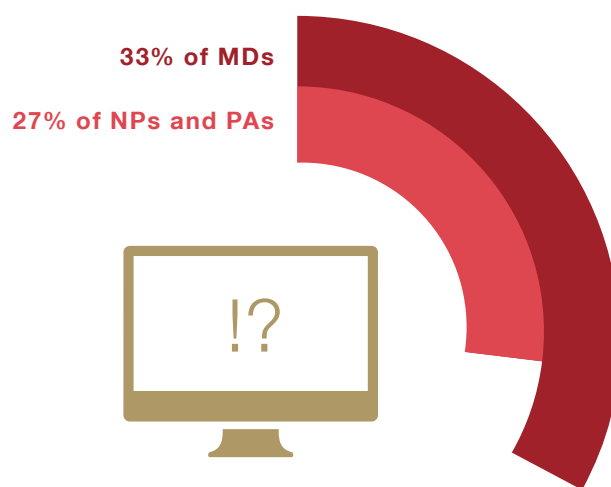
TIMELINESS IS AN ASSET

The strongest relationships between insurance companies and their constituents rely on communication. Yet, 41 percent of NPs/PAs and almost 32 percent of MDs stated they rarely hear from payers. The key may be increasing the number of timely updates to medical professionals. Although there's always room for improvement when it comes to interactions with insurance carriers, PPO networks and pharmacy benefits managers, approximately half of survey respondents are satisfied with the amount of information they're receiving from insurers, especially as it pertains to the following:

- Reimbursement fee schedules.
- Procedures for claims processing.
- Physician members within their referral network.
- Drug formulary coverage and copay schedules.

Once again, 50 percent of both NPs/PAs and MDs identify email as the best way to communicate this information.

But what happens when the data insurers have is wrong or outdated? Information accuracy is a long-time concern of healthcare providers. Around 27 percent of NPs/PAs and 33 percent of MDs discovered their data was incorrect in online directories of insurance plans. Lack of communication may be to blame, but it is the payer's responsibility to ensure the information they utilize remains clean.



27% of NPs/PAs and 33% of MDs discovered their data was incorrect in online directories of insurance plans.

THE FUTURE OF HEALTHCARE

With a new administration in the White House, current policies and procedures surrounding healthcare are subject to change. With a previously promised repeal-and-replace action of the Affordable Care Act, medical professionals are looking ahead to see how any alterations may affect their practices and their patients.

While NPs and PAs are split as to whether they believe future changes will have minimal or detrimental impact, MDs

are more sure of the outcome. Around 46 percent of doctors expect possible healthcare reform to be harmful to their practices, while only 20 percent feel optimistic about the changes they may see in their business. It's critical for industry leaders and healthcare providers alike to be cognizant of any present or forthcoming legislation that could influence the field. Communication between the two parties will become increasingly important as the new administration implements changes.

CLEAN DATA MATTERS

Developing a communication strategy is no easy feat for life science organizations and insurers, but utilizing the aforementioned information is a good place to start.

To maximize the effect of these outreach efforts, these groups need to ensure their data is clean and accessible. Lack of usable information will only result in dissatisfied healthcare providers and the desire for more helpful insight and materials. Furthermore, approaching communication from a multi-


channel perspective will likely be the most effective, as medical professionals rely on various forms of technology during their daily activities.

It's critical for life science organizations, PPO networks, insurance carriers and more to truly understand their audience and its communication preferences to not only identify the most powerful channels but create successful marketing and educational materials.



HealthLink[®]
DIMENSIONS

Empowered Healthcare Intelligence

 6 Concourse Parkway, Suite 1000
Atlanta, Georgia 30328

 404.250.3900