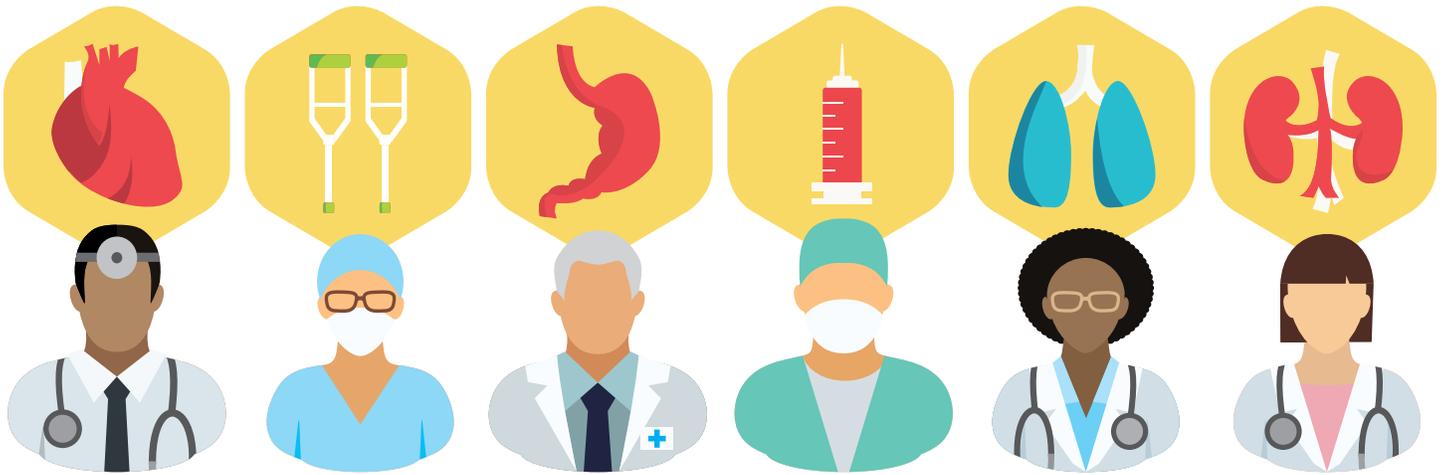




Reaching Beyond the Rx

By Amy Erdman *VP, Marketing* | UBM Americas — Life Sciences Group

Traditionally, healthcare marketers have used prescription data to make sure they're reaching physicians who are most likely to influence use of their products. But, what value — if any — is there in the ability to target by diagnosis or procedure?



Value in the diagnosis

It's fair to say that a number of diagnoses are treated by one or two specialties, which has been a huge factor in how marketers have typically targeted their audience.

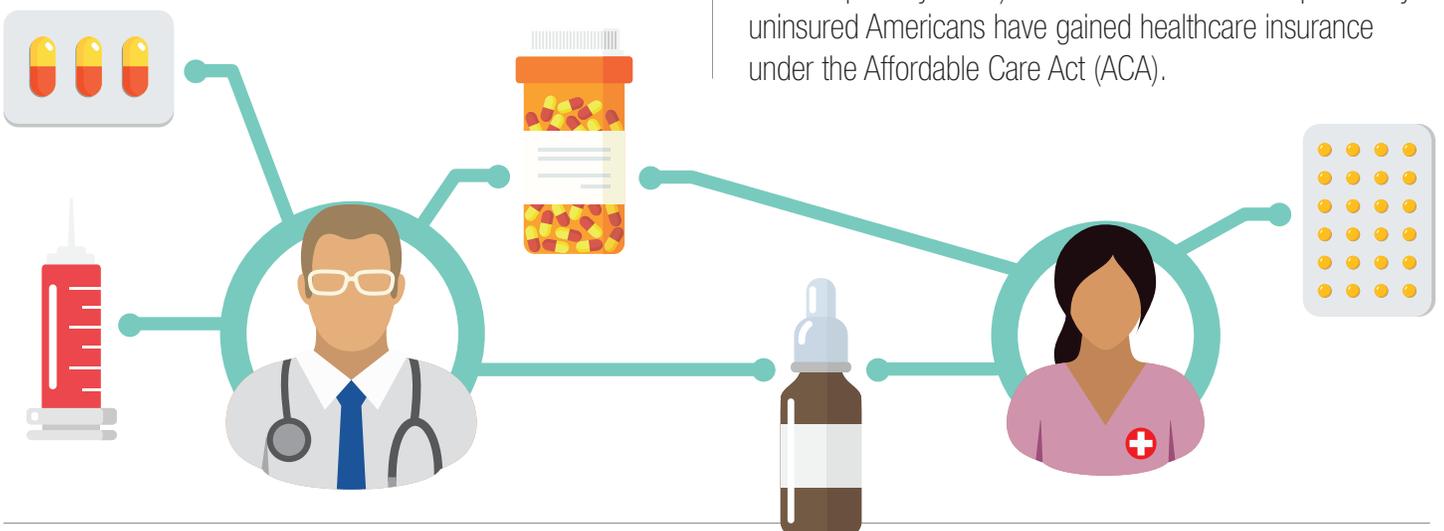
A patient with high cholesterol is almost always being treated by their primary care physician or cardiologist. However, what about a diagnosis that is more multidisciplinary in nature like, say, diabetes? **According to the CDC**, aside from the typical specialties that treat diabetes, other physicians on the healthcare team may include OBGYNs, ophthalmologists, and even psychiatrists. While they may not write a specific prescription to help treat diabetes, recommendations from any one of these specialties could influence treatment of the patient due to the overwhelming possibility of complications that can arise in diabetes patients, such as kidney failure, heart disease, stroke, and blindness.

Looking beyond the physician

Non-physician healthcare providers are part of this equation, too.

For instance, with diabetes, treatment can be impacted by pharmacists, podiatrists, dentists, and others. And while these specialists might not write the actual prescription, their recommendations will have an impact on treatment, when consulted as part of the care team.

Due to the shortage of primary care physicians, other script influencers that are even more important to engage are NPs and PAs. These advanced practitioners have risen from the role of supporting provider, to **managing 80-90% of care provided by primary care physicians**. In fact, many states are granting greater prescribing privileges to NPs and PAs to keep up with the demand for care (in primary care as well as specialty areas) now that over 16 million previously uninsured Americans have gained healthcare insurance under the Affordable Care Act (ACA).



Procedure

In addition to targeting by diagnosis, another area of impact for healthcare marketers – especially in the medical device industry – is the ability to access physicians by the procedures they perform. While targeting by specialty will get your message to the audience of purchasing decision-makers, the ability for marketers to hone that communication and ensure it resonates can make all the difference. A message designed for a radiologist who specializes in breast imaging can, and should, be differentiated from one who primarily handles musculoskeletal cases.

Now more than ever

Identifying physicians by diagnosis or procedure isn't necessarily new, but it has often been overlooked by marketers who may rely on prescribing trends or sales revenue to demonstrate ROI. But, for the reasons we've outlined, by not utilizing these tactics marketers may be leaving a hole in their marketing strategies or casting too wide of a net and ignoring their most relevant audiences.

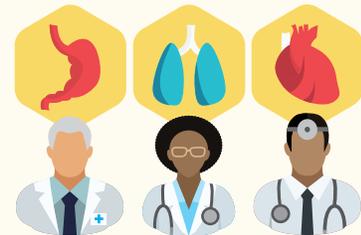
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Quick Glance

Trends to consider when marketing to healthcare providers:

Group practices on the rise

Treating physicians have easier access to a variety of specialists, leading to increased communication and collaboration that can impact the care plan.



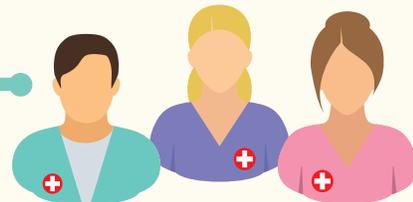
Rise of care coordination

Especially with government incentives, healthcare coordination among providers is more important than ever – which means treatment plans may be influenced by specialties not part of the traditional care model.



Influence of NPs and PAs

As practices are under pressure to increase patient access at lower costs, NPs and PAs are being empowered to take on a more involved role in care.



To ensure your message is hitting key influencers, consider reaching beyond the Rx by including diagnosis and procedure data in your marketing plan.