



The NP/PA Factor

Why Advanced Practice Providers Are Essential for Life Sciences in 2025

For decades, life sciences companies have centered their marketing efforts on physicians, assuming they hold the solitary influence over prescribing and treatment decisions. However, the healthcare landscape has shifted. Nurse practitioners (NPs) and physician associates (PAs) are not just supporting players—they are primary prescribers shaping patient care across every therapeutic area.



This shift is being recognized across the industry. According to the 2024 MM+M Healthcare Marketers Trend Report, NPs and PAs **were considered important to by 20.9% in 2023 vs. 4.8% in 2022, reflecting a shift in strategic focus, budget allocation, and targeting efforts.** This rapid increase highlights the growing realization that brands must prioritize NP and PA engagement—or risk missing a significant market opportunity.

The real influence of NPs and PAs on prescribing and patient care

With **over 685,000 NPs and PAs in the U.S.**, this segment represents the fastest-growing group of prescribing healthcare providers. Our data shows:



660,204 NPs and PAs are active prescribers—meaning they are directly responsible for initiating and managing therapy decisions.



They see 47.7% of all U.S. patients, making them a critical audience for treatment access and adherence.



NPs and PAs write 40.9% of all U.S. prescriptions—not just supporting physician-led decisions but independently diagnosing, prescribing, and managing treatment plans.



Their reach spans **primary and specialty care**, with significant influence in cardiology, endocrinology, gastroenterology, dermatology, and more.

Beyond prescriptions: The expanding role of NPs and PAs

NPs and PAs are frontline providers, often spending more time with patients than physicians. They excel in chronic disease management, patient education, and treatment adherence. Their unique role translates to:

Managing long-term care: NPs and PAs are adjusting treatments, prescribing medications, and monitoring progress for millions of chronic disease patients.

Initiating new therapies: They are responsible for identifying patient eligibility, starting treatment, and ensuring adherence.

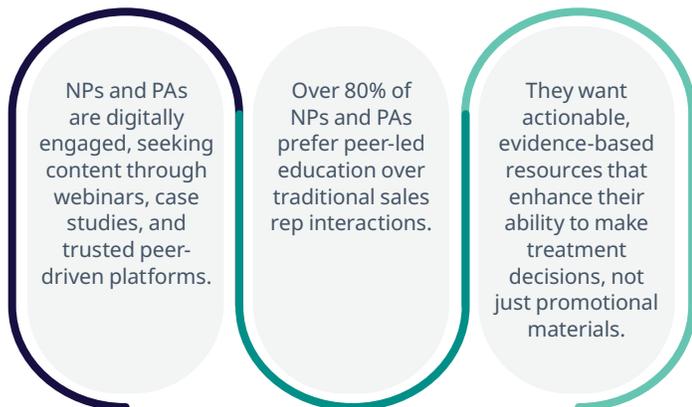
Providing access to underserved populations: In many rural and underserved communities, NPs and PAs are often the only primary care providers available.

Despite this, life sciences marketing strategies continue to prioritize physicians—often overlooking the providers who are making the actual treatment decisions.

The engagement gap: Why life sciences must rethink their approach

Many pharma brands still operate on outdated engagement models that focus heavily on physician sales calls and traditional HCP outreach. The challenge is that NPs and PAs are not engaging in the same way physicians do.

Our research shows:



If brands continue to rely on physician-first engagement models, they risk missing out on the very prescribers who are driving therapy decisions.

How to effectively reach NPs and PAs

For life sciences companies to successfully engage influential prescribers, they must align with how NPs and PAs consume information and pull that through to clinical practice.

Peer-driven content drives impact: Over 80% of NPs and PAs prefer learning from their peers. Integrating NP and PA KOLs into content, advisory boards, and peer-led discussions will significantly increase engagement.

Targeted digital education is essential: NPs and PAs are digital-first providers who actively engage in online education. POCN's Centers of Excellence deliver on-demand, clinically relevant content in a format that aligns with their needs.

Reaching the Right Networks Matters: Traditional HCP models often overlook NPs and PAs. POCN Group provides exclusive access to a verified NP/PA community, ensuring brands connect directly with engaged clinicians who drive prescribing decisions.

Orchestrated Engagement Works: NPs and PAs do not engage through one-off tactics. The most successful pharma brands are implementing multi-touch, strategically timed engagement plans—including programmatic, social, and content-based strategies.

The future of provider engagement starts now

The data speaks volumes: NPs and PAs are not only prescribing treatments—they're shaping care decisions, improving outcomes, and expanding access. Life sciences brands that recognize their influence and invest in meaningful, peer-driven engagement will be best positioned to support providers and patients alike. As the healthcare landscape continues to evolve, so must our approach. The question isn't whether to include NPs and PAs—it's how quickly your brand can build authentic connections that reflect the way these clinicians practice, learn, and lead.

About IQVIA Digital

IQVIA Digital powers exceptional brand experiences, delivering innovative solutions based on a customer-first, insights-driven, and integrated omnichannel vision. We provide authenticated, enhanced data and analytics, innovative fit-for-purpose healthcare technology, and the expertise to enable an effective and adaptable marketing model that drives better quality of care and patient outcomes. IQVIA is the leading global provider of data, advanced analytics, technology solutions and clinical research services for the life sciences industry.

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