# MedEsthetics®

THE GUIDE FOR EXCELLENCE IN MEDICAL AESTHETICS

January/February 2024
Volume 20, Number 1
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## Bianca Viscomi, M.D., On Liberating Transgender Patients' Voices, Dreams & Identities

## CREATING AN LGBTQIA-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

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*Rebecca Lane*

**Rebecca Lane**
**Managing Editor**

rlane@allured.com
630.344.6074

# The Science of Skin Care

In just the last year, precisely targeted skin care formulations and innovation of new, powerhouse ingredients have advanced by leaps and bounds. Insight into the factors involved in maintaining optimal skin health, including the skin microbiome, gut biome and environmental as well as genetic factors related to an individual's skin health needs, has led to significant advances in skin care products and treatment regimens designed to fit every individual patient's unique skin concerns. More than ever, skin care has entered its dermatological era, with the science of skin care taking center stage and bringing next generation products to the industry at an ever-growing rate. Centered around science-based compounds and clinically proven results, these skin care products are not playing around.

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**Lyma Skin** is a skin science-focused line using the science of epigenetics to tackle the eight mechanisms of skin aging. This innovative formulation is bio-engineered with an 80:20 ratio of active ingredients to water that floods all layers of skin and creates an anti-dehydration shield, boosting skin hydration barrier function by 150% and increasing skin hydration by 72%. Lyma Skin's epigenetic technology utilizes anti-inflammatory ingredients that support oxygen and nutrients in skin cells to boost elasticity and smooth the appearance of wrinkles, clear the way for new active cells and accelerate skin renewal even during oxidative stress to reveal fresher, youthful-looking skin and reduce wrinkle formation, as well as recreate the optimum microbiome environment of younger skin to reduce redness and restore firmness. ***lyma.life/us/skincare***




**SKINCOMM UNICEL System** comprises five products containing powerful, non-comedogenic anti-aging active ingredients combined into two proprietary science-based compounds. SKINCOMM AL-GLUTAS regenerates and re-energizes skin cells, repairing damage and defects at the cellular level, and addressing pigmentation, sagging, fine lines, wrinkles, fatigue and stress-related issues. It blends peptides that stimulate pro-collagen production, fatty acids that strengthen the skin, repair damaged lipid barriers, reduce water loss and increase hydration, and beneficial botanical extracts that lighten, brighten and even out skin tone. HA hydrates, minimizes fine lines and changes wrinkle depth as nano-hyaluronic acid penetrates deeper into the skin. SKINCOMM TriDefenx protects against UVB and UVA rays and reduces damage caused by heat, infrared rays and blue light. ***skincomm.com***




**RMÉD by GoodSkin** is a line of clean clinical skin care, including a trio of serums featuring sh-oligopeptide-1, considered to be the bioequivalent of the epidermal growth factor (EGF), according to a *Cutaneous and Ocular Toxicology* 2023 study. The Radiance Serum features tetrahexyldecyl ascorbate vitamin C, peptides, probiotics, niacinamide and bakuchiol to restore skin's youthful radiance. The Renewal Serum utilizes +++ EGF, five cell-regenerating algae and actives to restore the skin by targeting a loss of moisture and stressed skin, rebuilding skins' collagen, defenses against stressors and repairing the skin barrier. The Resurface Serum includes azelaic, kojic, salicylic and tranexamic acids, probiotics and pumpkin seed extracts to clear imperfections, reduce redness and reveal smooth, glowing skin. ***rmedbygoodskin.com***

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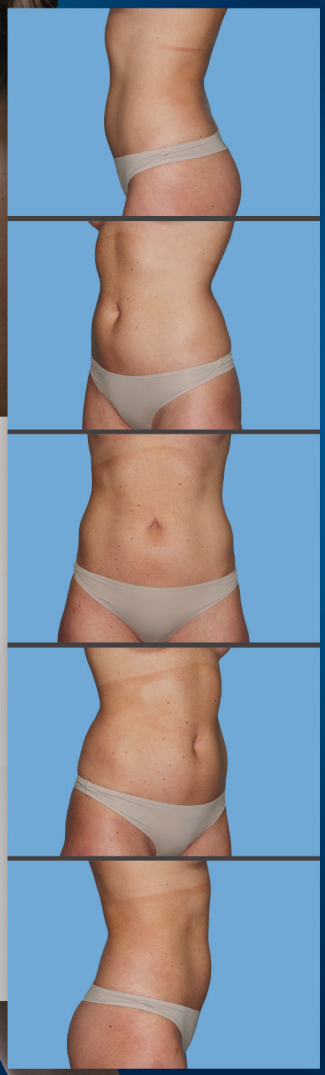

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# Enhancing Confidence:

## Reverse® by Aerolase for Scar Revision in Breast Augmentation and Reduction

Scar revision, particularly for breast augmentation & reduction scars, is a pivotal aspect of postoperative care that can significantly affect patient satisfaction. The quest for an effective treatment to enhance the aesthetic outcome without compromising safety has led to the development of advanced laser technologies. One such innovation, Reverse by Aerolase, promises a comprehensive solution for the improvement and elimination of scar appearances across all skin types.

The Reverse by Aerolase protocol harnesses the power of two state-of-the-art lasers: the Neo Elite and the Era Elite. The Neo Elite is a 650-microsecond Nd: YAG laser specifically designed to remove pigment from scars and stimulate collagen production, leading to a smoother, even skin texture. The Era Elite, a 300-microsecond Er: YAG laser, effectively removes scar tissue while fostering the growth of healthy skin. Individually, each device yields remarkable outcomes, but their combined use significantly enhances the appearance of scar tissue, redness, texture, and underlying pigment. The introduction of laser technology has revolutionized scar management in breast reduction surgery. Where traditional methods like silicone-based products and mechanical massage were once the standard, lasers like those from Aerolase offer a modern, effective alternative. With patient-reported outcomes backing the effectiveness and safety of these lasers, it is clear that Reverse by Aerolase protocol represents a significant step forward in minimizing postoperative scarring and maximizing patient satisfaction.

A clinical study published in the "Dermatology Journal of Cosmetic and Laser Therapy"[1] provides compelling evidence of the efficacy of laser treatment for breast reduction scars. The study included 16 patients who underwent three treatment sessions with the Neo Elite by Aerolase laser. The results were promising, with significant improvements in patient satisfaction and quality of life related to breast surgery. Patients reported a reduction in scar visibility and an enhancement in the overall scar appearance, corroborated by clinical assessments from plastic surgeons. Contrary to thought, the study found that the number of days from surgery, age, and body mass index (BMI) were not independent predictors of the post-treatment breast-Q scores. This suggests that the Aerolase laser treatment is a versatile option that can benefit a wide demographic of patients irrespective of these factors.

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In the study titled "Clinical Efficacy and Patient Satisfaction in Laser Scar Revision using a 300-Microsecond Pulsed Er:YAG 2940nm Laser" by Dr. Khalil A. Khatri and Dr. Viktor Moiseev[2], aimed to assess the effectiveness of a 300-Microsecond Pulsed Er:YAG 2940nm Laser in scar revision. This laser, operating at a fluence of 5 J/cm², demonstrated the ability to ablate scar tissue without causing significant residual thermal damage. The study was based on the premise that the Er:YAG laser is most efficient when applied to hydrated tissue, which corresponds to the early stages of scar formation, typically occurring around 10-14 days after injury. The research involved 32 male and female subjects with various types of scars, divided into two groups based on scar age. The findings indicated that the laser treatment was notably more effective in subjects with relatively fresh scars after fewer sessions compared to older scars. Moreover, the treatment was well-tolerated and yielded high patient satisfaction rates, with 30% rating the results as excellent, 50% as good, and 20% as satisfactory. Overall, the study concluded that the 300-Microsecond Pulsed Er:YAG 2940nm Laser is a safe and efficient option for scar revision, particularly for fresher scars, and holds promise in improving patient outcomes.

Integrating this study into the broader context of scar management, particularly for breast reduction patients, it becomes clear that the Reverse by Aerolase protocol is not just a procedure; it's a patient-centric solution. By incorporating advanced laser technology, this protocol not only enhances the aesthetic outcome but also positively impacts the psychological well-being of patients. We can expect to see the role of laser therapy in postoperative care to become increasingly vital in achieving the best possible results for all patients.


1. Kelsey Lipman, Halley Darrach , Peter Deptula , Dung Nguyen .(2022). Laser Treatment of Breast Reduction Scars - A Patient Reported Outcomes Study. Derma J Cosmetic Laser Therapy, 1(1), 12-16.
2. Clinical Efficacy & Patient Satisfaction in Laser Scar Revision using a 300-µsec Pulsed Er:YAG 2940nm Laser. Khalil A. Khatri, MD, Viktor Moiseev, MD, Presented at the ASLMS Annual Conference 2016

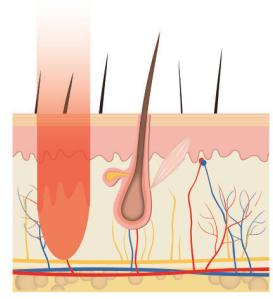



*Post-Surgical Scars Treatment*
*Photos courtesy of Aerolase*



Breast Reduction Surgical Scar Treatment
*Photos courtesy of Stanford University*

## Step 1: neo elite® by aerolase®



- Full-field, high fluence 1064nm delivered in a 650-microsecond pulse duration
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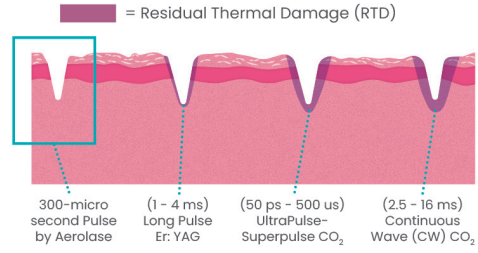



- Full-field 2940nm energy delivery in a 300-microsecond pulse duration
- Uniquely tolerable energy avoids collateral thermal damage by gently ablating the skin's epidermal layer
- New, smooth, youthful tissue grows to replace ablated skin
- The full range of the dermis and epidermis is replenished and strengthened

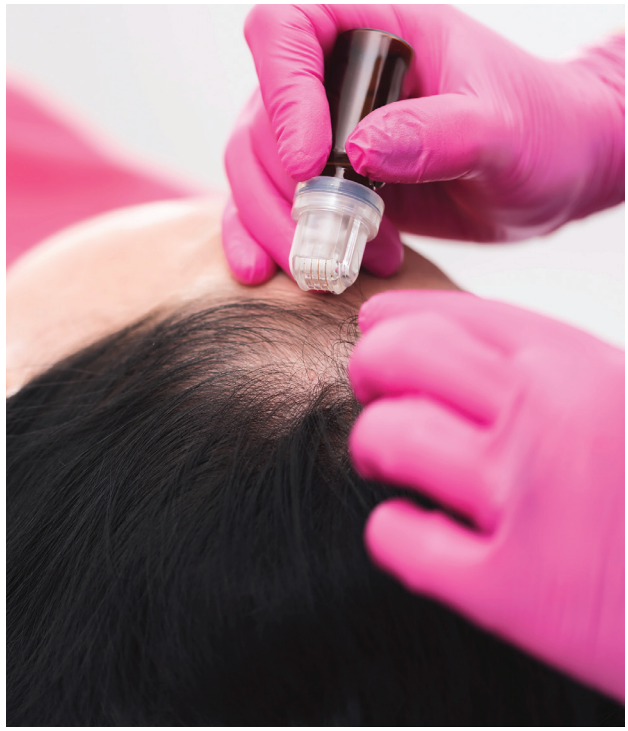
# LATEST IN LITERATURE

## RejuveNAD Boosts Skin's 'Longevity Molecule'



Mibelle Biochemistry's new RejuveNAD technology naturally stimulates the endogenous regeneration of NAD+ by activating the enzyme NAMPT, thereby making the skin appear as much as eight years younger. As detailed in the journal *Nature*, "NAD+ can directly and indirectly influence many key cellular functions, including metabolic pathways, DNA repair, chromatin remodeling, cellular senescence and immune cell function. These cellular processes and functions are critical for maintaining tissue and metabolic homeostasis and for healthy aging." By boosting the "longevity molecule," NAD+, RejuveNAD is able to optimize cellular processes to simultaneously address "at least" five of the 12 hallmarks of aging, including mitochondrial dysfunction, cellular senescence, loss of proteostasis, epigenetic alteration and genomic instability. By energizing mitochondria and promoting DNA repair, RejuveNAD is able to make the skin appear eight years younger within 42 days, per clinical studies cited by Mibelle Biochemistry.

## Targeted Hair Restoration Via Scalp Microneedling Combination Therapy



Microneedling use has expanded into hair loss for its ability to stimulate the scalp and hair follicles directly, providing a targeted approach to hair restoration. Combining microneedling with PRP, oral or topical solutions can further enhance the results and promote hair growth. The initial results likely won't be seen for about six weeks. However, once new growth becomes evident, it is critical to continue with the treatments to achieve maximum results. Most patients require several treatments to achieve ideal results and then continue with maintenance treatments every three to 12 months.

Studies currently indicate that there are positive results when microneedling is used alongside topical or oral alopecia medications. When microneedling is utilized as an adjunct therapy for alopecia, results present an increase in hair density, thickness, and the quality of hair regrowth, Veronica Joseph, an IAT-certified hair practitioner, told Byrdie. Microinfusion is another popular cosmetic procedure that uses tiny needles on the skin in order to achieve a healthy and radiant complexion. Microinfusion involves about 20 to 30 hollow needles that deliver nutrients directly into the dermis. This may lead to more immediate results and less downtime than microneedling, according to a 2016 study.

*From top: courtesy of sasamihajlovic; focusandblur at Adobe Stock*

## Using Acoustic Subcision to Treat Cellulite



Delivering rapid acoustic pulses to improve the appearance of cellulite has similar safety and efficacy results at both 100 Hz and 50 Hz, according to an October 2023 study in *Lasers in Surgery and Medicine* (LSM), the official journal of the American Society for Laser Medicine and Surgery (ASLMS). The study, "Comparing safety and efficacy of acoustic subcision at two different rapid acoustic pulse rates to improve the appearance of cellulite," was led by Brian S. Biesman, M.D., F.A.C.S. and Christopher C. Capelli, M.D. It involved 15 female patients receiving the rapid acoustic pulse treatment on both the left and right buttocks and thighs, with the same number of pulses on each side using either a 100 Hz or 50 Hz pulse rate.

Both 100 Hz and 50 Hz treatments improved cellulite appearance, assessed by blinded independent physician photo review, participant satisfaction ratings and a significant reduction in Cellulite Dimple - At Rest scores. According to Dr. Biesman, while the two rates performed similarly, the study shows that acoustic subcision for cellulite can be performed more efficiently than initially reported while maintaining safety and efficacy, making it a novel energy-based approach to cellulite treatment.

## Penile Enhancement: Motivations & Assessing Results



A 2022 study in the *Aesthetic Surgery Journal* analyzed online questionnaires filled out by men seeking to undergo a penile girth augmentation. The survey aimed to assess patients' motivations, including penile size self-discrepancy, psychological distress, self-esteem, body image–related quality of life, body dysmorphic disorder (BDD) and cosmetic procedure screening scale-penile-focused dysmorphic disorder. Self-confidence was the most commonly reported motivation for men seeking penile girth augmentation, with other motivations including a desire to change penile size/appearance, sexual function/pleasure, feelings of insecurity and medical issues. The men perceived their actual penis size as significantly smaller than the ideal size, the size they believed their penis should be and their expected size post-augmentation, suggesting these men may be underestimating their own penile sizes and overestimating those of other men.

Another 2022 study in the *Aesthetic Surgery Journal* investigated men's experiences with nonsurgical medical penile girth augmentation and assessed the impacts these procedures had on penis size and associated psychological well-being. In this study, around half of the men reported increased self-confidence and increased sexual pleasure after their procedure. Despite an average girth increase of 3.29 cm, the men still perceived that their penile girth and length were less than what they should be or less than the ideal size after their augmentation procedure, per the study. However, this perceived discrepancy was significantly smaller than before their procedures.

*From top: courtesy of djile; Bowonpat at Adobe Stock*



## Skin Health is a Mental Wellness Issue

A new report from *Topicals* points out just how critical this physical-mental connection is, particularly for people of color. The study, conducted in August 2022 via a web-based survey, featured 775 participants with 64.6% (n=501) identifying as having skin of color. The majority of respondents were female (94.2%) and Black/African American (76.6%), with the largest age group being 18-24 years (48.9%).

Of those respondents suffering from acne, more than 70% had received negative comments about their condition/appearance, and 40% had been suffering from the condition for more than 10 years. Furthermore, nearly 74% suffered from post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation. Of those suffering dark spots, nearly 50% had received negative comments from "someone close to them" while nearly the same amount of respondents felt depressed due to the presence of dark spots. Those suffering from atopic dermatitis/eczema reported missing social activities due to their condition (nearly 58% of respondents), while about 1/3 had edited images of themselves to hide their condition. Overall, 85.2% of participants rated their skin conditions as moderately to extremely bothersome, with 57.4% stating that their skin condition(s) affected their mental health.

## Growing Interest in Exosomes & PRP for Wound Healing

**PRP:** ResearchAndMarkets.com's report on the global PRP market size projects the market to reach $1.94 billion by 2030, registering a CAGR of 15.1% from 2023 to 2030. The growth of the industry is driven by an increasing number of cosmetic surgeries, the rise of national and international sporting events and expanded research in plasma-based therapies, according to the report, which also states that R&D efforts and regulatory approvals for PRP treatments are significant factors propelling the market. The report indicates that PRP is in high demand, as it offers faster healing through growth factors concentration. It is extensively used in regenerative medicine, customizing treatment for each patient to accelerate wound healing and repair, and plastic surgery, providing promising results by leveraging the body's natural tissue repair process.

**Exosomes:** Roots Analysis has released data on the global exosome therapy market projections from 2022-2040. With the rising demand for therapeutic advances in drug safety, the market is expected to grow at an annualized rate of 41% between 2029 and 2040. The projected market opportunity is reported to be well distributed across different routes of administration, types of formulations and key geographical regions. Per the report, both industry and non-industry players are attempting to develop exosome therapy for disease management, some of which are already in clinical trials. In recent years, therapies utilizing extracellular vesicles have garnered significant attention for the treatment of diverse indications. The report cites a review of more than 200 studies evaluating mesenchymal stem cell (MSC) derived exosomes for preclinical use that found that exosomes demonstrated benefits in more than 70% of studies.



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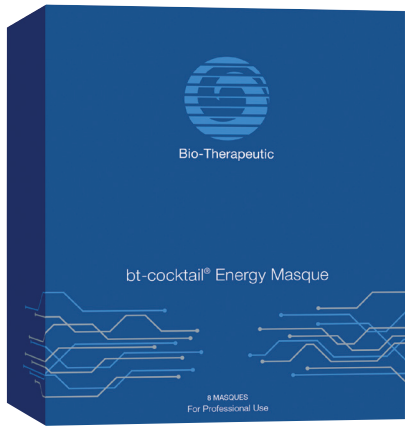


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# Innovative Ingredients in 2024

We asked some of our favorite industry experts to identify skin care ingredients that are set to take off in 2024 and transform the way we look at skin concerns in medical aesthetics.

"The medical aesthetics industry is witnessing a transformative era marked by the integration of innovative ingredients. Piezotome, OviTex Mesh, $CO_2$ Lift and the Tissue Cell-Fat Banking System exemplify the commitment to enhancing patient outcomes and procedural safety, as well as the overall experience in medical aesthetic procedures. The Piezotome is a groundbreaking ultrasonic saw designed to operate at a specific frequency for precise cutting of bone and cartilage. The key concept behind the Piezotome is its ability to enable highly accurate surgery with minimal damage to soft tissues. OviTex Mesh has the unique characteristics of combining a biological lattice and absorbable suture (Vycril) into one structural support mesh. This allows for a multifaceted approach to breast enhancement surgeries. $CO_2$LIFT is clinically proven to uplift, hydrate, brighten and enhance overall skin health, offering a non-invasive alternative to traditional anti-aging procedures. By harnessing the power of carbon dioxide, $CO_2$LIFT stimulates blood flow, promoting collagen production and improving skin elasticity. Tissue & Cell Technologies enable the harvesting and preservation of human tissue with unprecedented survival rates. This development presents a unique opportunity for plastic surgeons to conduct liposuction and store fat for future use in both aesthetic and reconstructive plastic surgery."
*—Johnny Franco, M.D., board-certified plastic surgeon and owner of Austin Plastic Surgeon*

"Human Stem Cell Conditioned (HSC) media in skin care offers groundbreaking benefits supported by research due to its pro-generation properties and compatibility with dermal cells. Skin By Design employs this in their Cyto-Glo Renewing Cream. Not all stem cells are created equal; Skin By Design uses embryonic tissue and Umbilical WJ-MSC's, derived from the umbilical cord, which holds the highest regenerative potential with elevated Epidermal Growth Factor (EGF). These aid tissue repair, reducing wrinkles and enhancing skin texture, contributing to a more youthful appearance. Aging diminishes these factors, making their inclusion in skin care regimens beneficial. The media from umbilical cord tissue surpasses adult adipose tissue or bone marrow as the most abundant and effective MSC source. Skin By Design's products contain non-live stem cells, processed in an FDA-regulated lab, adhering to top industry standards, formulated to penetrate skin efficiently for growth and repair and enriched with natural hyaluronic acid and coenzyme Q10 in a medical-grade base for deep dermal delivery."
*—Cheryl Whitman, CEO of Beautiful Forever*

"Acne is one of the most common skin issues in the United States today. SkinMedica's new Pore Purifying Pro-Infusion Serum contains encapsulated salicylic acid to deep clean clogged pores, bakuchiol targets discoloration of post-acne marks, pomegranate pericarp extract supports the homeostasis of acne-prone skin and a bioactive complex of tropical fruits, comprised of a blend of mango, papaya and pineapple extracts, help to reduce the appearance of post-acne marks. The unique formula not only works to clarify congested skin, but it also helps to maintain the skin's natural barrier. The serum is professionally administered during a DiamondGlow treatment service, which is a resurfacing treatment that exfoliates and extracts impurities from the skin. This is a great solution for acne-prone patients who want to feel more confident in their skin."
*—Prithwiraj Maitra, Ph.D., vice president, Skin Care R&D, Allergan Aesthetics*

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**BUSINESS CONSULT** BY CHERYL WHITMAN



# Creating an LGBTQIA-Friendly Medical Spa/Practice Environment

How to create a welcoming, LGBTQIA-friendly environment in your medspa/practice.

**In modern society, the recognition and acceptance of the LGBTQIA community** have significantly increased. As a result, businesses and organizations are increasingly striving to create safe and inclusive spaces for everyone, including medical spas. In today's diverse and inclusive world, it's essential to ensure that medspas are welcoming and inclusive of all clients, including those who identify as LGBTQIA. I interviewed many individuals within the community to gather their personal quotes, aiming to share their experiences of feeling inclusive. By making your practice LGBTQIA-friendly, you not only attract a diverse clientele but also provide a positive and affirming experience for all individuals. This article will delve into strategies and practices that can be implemented to ensure an LGBTQIA-friendly environment in your medspa.

## Foster a Welcoming Atmosphere

To create an inclusive environment, it is essential to foster a welcoming atmosphere within your medspa. Ensure that your physical space is inclusive and safe for everyone.

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Train and educate your staff on LGBTQIA terminology, issues and sensitivities. Encourage open-mindedness and respect for diversity among your employees, emphasizing the importance of treating all clients equally and without discrimination. Display LGBTQIA inclusive signs, symbols and artwork, such as the pride flag or symbols representing transgender and non-binary identities, in prominent areas of your spa. This will help LGBTQIA clients feel welcomed, valued and recognized.

Dr. Robert Versteeg, D.S.W., shares, "Although some people contend that LGBTQIA people want special treatment, that is actually not the case. It is much more important to be treated just like anyone else: with dignity and respect. This means forms with appropriate language; use of appropriate pronouns, understanding of the LGBT culture and just being respectful of us. Being LGBT is only a small part of our sense of self, and when going to a medical spa, it should not be central to the way that we are approached."

## Update Policies and Forms

Rene Silvin explains, "What creates a barrier to providing a comfortable environment at a medical spa for members of this community is when intake paperwork is not inclusive. If someone who is LGBT cannot answer a question because the "multiple choice" answers do not include an option that represents them, it sets a tone of non-inclusiveness from the service provider."

Review and update your medspa's policies and forms to ensure that they are LGBTQIA inclusive and respectful. Revise any gender-specific language, such as using gender-neutral terms like "partner " or "spouse" instead of "husband" or "wife." Additionally, provide non-binary, transgender and intersex individuals with options to select their appropriate gender identity or if they prefer not to disclose. Allow clients to specify their preferred name and gender pronouns. Make sure your privacy forms acknowledge diverse relationships and family structures. It is vital that all clients feel respected, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation. Include LGBTQIA considerations in your dress code and non-discrimination policies.

## Offer LGBTQIA-Specific Services

Consider developing healthcare and wellness services tailored to the specific needs of the LGBTQIA community. Offer LGBTQIA inclusive treatments, such as hormone therapy for transgender individuals or laser hair removal for non-binary clients. Collaborate with LGBTQIA-affirming healthcare professionals or therapists to provide specialized services, consultations and resources within your medspa. Display information and resources related to LGBTQIA health concerns, from sexual health to mental wellness. Annalisa Calisti, M.D., Ph.D., of Rome, Italy, recommends, "It is important not to make members of the LGBTQIA community feel different. They don't want to be treated as outsiders. Be welcoming and accepting and treat them as you would any client – respectfully. As a practitioner, you may wish to consider adding psychological consultations to help address mental health concerns, as this community deals with a substantial amount of negativity and rejection by the general public."



*Image courtesy of Sabrina at Adobe Stock*

## Train Staff on LGBTQIA Cultural Competency

Providing comprehensive LGBTQIA cultural competency training to your staff is crucial to ensure they understand and embrace the unique needs and concerns of this community. Engage experts or consultants who specialize in LGBTQIA training to educate your employees on LGBTQIA-specific terminology, pronouns and the appropriate use of language. Provide training on gender identities, sexual orientations and the challenges that LGBTQIA individuals may face. Additionally, teach your staff about LGBTQIA health disparities and specific concerns faced by this community. This training will help your team provide a judgment-free environment and deliver

competent care to LGBTQIA clientele. Your staff must understand the importance of and exhibit sensitivity, respect and confidentiality.

According to Brandon Christopher, R.N., B.S.N., "The LGBTQIA Community, in particular, has wants and needs that are different from other communities. Remaining knowledgeable, perceptive and familiar with this ever-changing landscape will keep your practice ahead of the game and a trusted practitioner within the community."

Effectively training staff is critical for creating and maintaining a successful and LGBTQIA-inclusive practice. Here are ten recommendations for training:

**First, Awareness and Sensitivity Training.** This begins with general awareness training to teach your staff the terminology and concepts related to LGBTQIA identities. To increase staff sensitivity and build empathy, discuss the challenges and discrimination these individuals face in modern society.

**Second, Consider Cultural Competency Workshops** that explore topics such as gender identity, sexual orientation and how these may cross cultural lines. Promote in-depth discussions and open dialogue in an environment that allows staff to ask questions and learn.

**Third, Engage in Role-Playing Scenarios**. This allows staff members to practice appropriate responses to LGBTQIA clients. It is important for your staff to develop practical communication and problem-solving skills appropriate to dealing with this community**.**

**Fourth, Teach Inclusive Language and Communication Skills.** This includes using the correct gender pronouns and avoiding making assumptions about a client's gender identity. Encourage the use of active listening skills and demonstrating respect for client privacy.

**Fifth, Review Your Policies.** Having specific LGBTQIA policies in place is essential. Be sure your staff thoroughly understand and adhere to them. Provide training and an opportunity for staff members to seek clarification on these policies.

**Sixth, Educate, Educate, Educate.** Promote on-going education and training in the LGBTQIA area. It is important that your staff stays abreast of the latest issues and advancements in treatments and services relevant to this group of clients. Provide periodic refresher sessions to keep awareness and training fresh. Use these to review and update policies as needed.

**Seventh, Provide Feedback Mechanisms.** It is critical that staff have a means of reporting any concerns related to LGBTQIA inclusivity. Review their feedback on a regular basis and make improvements.

**Eighth, Lead by Example.** If management doesn't set a positive example in demonstrating respect and inclusivity, your practice will face obstacles. Management must practice what it preaches.

**Ninth, Set up a Diversity Team.** If you have a large practice, establish a diversity committee to monitor training and LGBTQIA inclusivity. If your practice is smaller, perhaps have an LGTBQIA point person among your staff to handle any upcoming issues.

**Ten, Community Involvement**. Encourage staff to participate in LGBTQIA events to increase their understanding and support for this community. Sponsor LGBTQIA events that promote awareness and inclusion.

## Implement Anti-Discrimination Policies

Create and enforce clear anti-discrimination policies within your medspa. Ensure your policies explicitly state that discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity will not be tolerated. Display these policies in visible areas within your medspa, including your website and entrance. Empower your staff to report any instances of discrimination or mistreatment, and establish procedures for addressing and resolving such incidents promptly and transparently.



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*Image courtesy of Sabrina at Adobe Stock*

## Using Inclusive Language

If your medspa is to be LGBTQIA-friendly, it must use inclusive language. Your brand should expand onto social media and have info on all your brochures and your website. For example, your staff must relearn how to use pronouns. Instead of greeting a client upon entering as Ms.or Sir, which could be taken as offensive, they should simply say "Hello." It is important to use gender-neutral language and to ask clients about their preferred pronouns.

Staff needs to understand the terminology used by this community; for example, transgender, cisgender, queer, non-binary, etc. Using appropriate terminology also extends to relationships and family; for example, using partner or spouse rather than husband/wife. Again, it is best to ask the client about preferred terminology. Asking a client how they wish to be addressed shows respect and helps put them at ease.

Respect is paramount. Unless necessary and relevant for the treatment, don't ask personal questions regarding gender identity or sexual orientation. Keep all information private and confidential. This is especially important when it comes to information shared by the client. The community at large may not be aware of this person's LGBTQIA status.

Finally, mistakes will happen, especially when it comes to using incorrect language or pronouns. Apologize to the client and correct the mistake.

## Network With LGBTQIA Organizations

Engaging with local LGBTQIA organizations and community groups is an excellent way to demonstrate your commitment to creating a welcoming space. Attend pride events, donate to LGBTQIA causes and sponsor community initiatives. Collaborating with LGBTQIA organizations will help you build relationships, gain insights and showcase your medspa as an LGBTQIA-friendly establishment.

## Conclusion

Building an LGBTQIA-inclusive environment in your medspa is a continuous process that requires ongoing effort and commitment. By fostering a welcoming atmosphere, updating policies, offering LGBTQIA-specific services, providing staff training, implementing anti-discrimination policies and networking with LGBTQIA organizations, you can create a medspa that celebrates diversity and supports the unique needs of the LGBTQIA community. By doing so, you not only attract and retain diverse clientele but also contribute to a more inclusive and accepting society as a whole.

Dr. Calisti sums it up very well: " L'amore è una bellezza multicolore," meaning, "Love is a free, multicolored beauty." ME



**Cheryl Whitman** is a celebrated author, speaker, and highly regarded national cosmetic marketing professional with more than 35 years in the Aesthetic Medical Spa Industry. A cosmetic antiaging wellness "Influencer" she is one of the most sought after speakers in the industry. Mentoring all size practices and laser centers. Spends her summers in Provincetown, MA one of the most dense populations of LBGTQIA communities.

Ms. Whitman is the Founder and CEO of Beautiful Forever Consulting where she leads a top-notch team of executive-level consultants and business professionals to assist providers physicians expanding their existing practices and launching new profit centers. Ms. Whitman is also the founder of Beautiful Forever University, which offers educational programs to Medi spas and Aesthetic Practices. She is a Member of the MedEsthetics Advisory Board and is a Consultant for CareCredit Healthcare Financing.

Cheryl is the author of the "Aesthetic Medical Success System," a revolutionary program providing a turnkey educational success system that assists clients in brilliantly jumpstarting successful aesthetic and medical spa businesses. Cheryl has authored a second book, "Beautifully Profitable, Forever Profitable". This book represents the compilation of practical, valuable and professional experience she and her team at Beautiful Forever have gathered over several decades. No project is too small. ENJOY mentoring start up and all size expansions.



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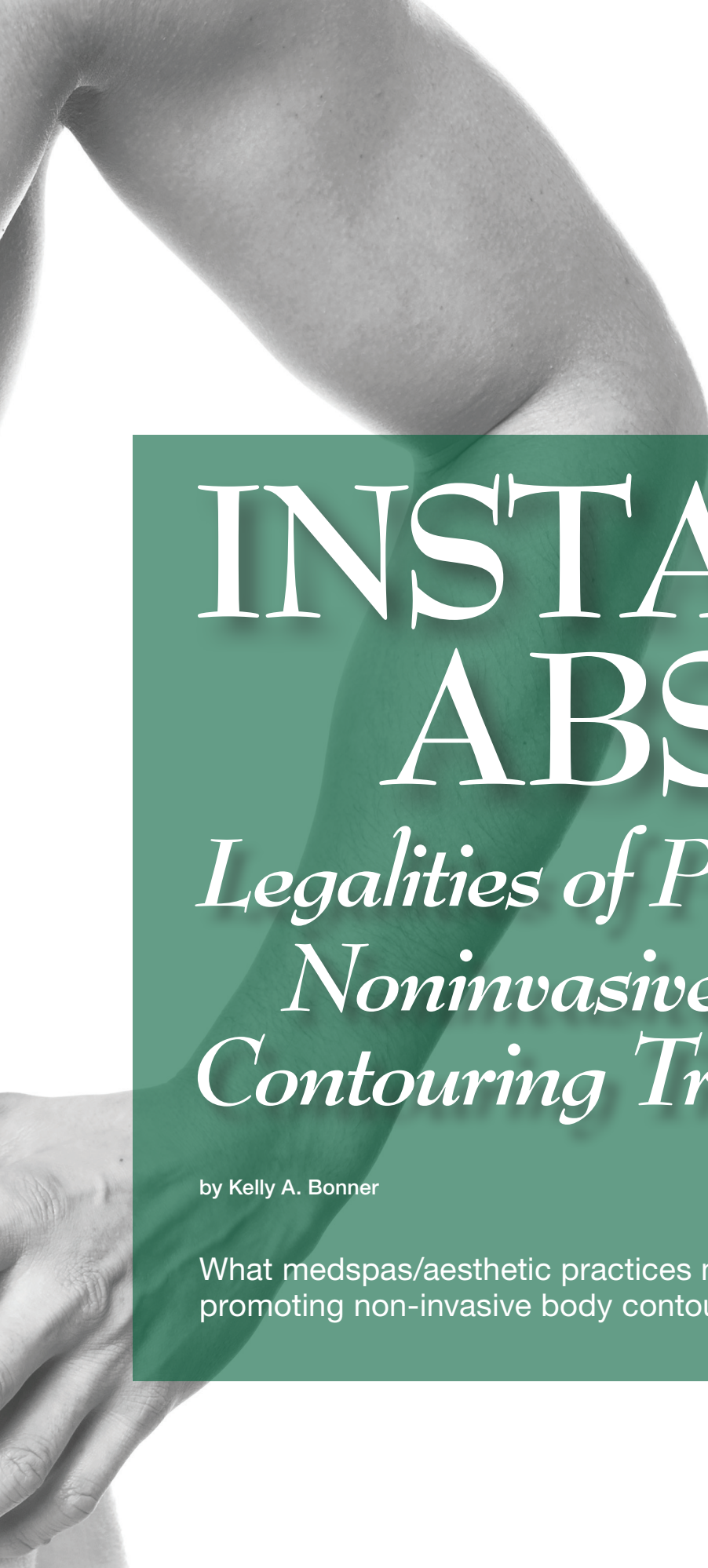


# INSTANT ABS?:

## *Legalities of Promoting Noninvasive Body Contouring Treatments*

by Kelly A. Bonner

What medspas/aesthetic practices need to know about promoting non-invasive body contouring treatments.

## What Is Non-Invasive Body Contouring?

Non-invasive body contouring, also known as body sculpting, refers to using devices and procedures on the surface of the skin in order to change the shape of an area on the body.

Unlike traditional surgical procedures, which remove excess skin, or liposuction, which uses a narrow vacuum-type device to suction fat through a small incision in the skin, non-invasive body contouring does not remove skin or tissue, and thus, requires less downtime. Instead, they improve the appearance of certain areas of the body by:

- Temporarily reducing the circumference of areas of the body such as the waist or thighs.
- Temporarily reducing the appearance of small areas of fat or bulges.
- Improving the tone and firmness of certain muscles.
- Improving the appearance of cellulite.

## How Are Non-Invasive Body Contouring Treatments Regulated?

Non-invasive body contouring treatments may be regulated by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) as medical devices if the product is intended for use in the diagnosis of disease or other conditions, or in the cure, mitigation, treatment or prevention of disease in man, or intended to affect the structure or any function of the body and does not obtain that effect through a chemical interaction within the body or by metabolism. In some cases that fall within the first half of this definition, the product may be regulated as a drug.

*"Companies should be aware of the potential for liability for promoting non-invasive body contouring treatments absent adequate substantiation."*

## How Does Non-Invasive Body Contouring Work?

Non-invasive body contouring treatments can be distinguished by whether they use thermal (cooling or heating tissue) or non-thermal (does not cool or heat tissue) technology to achieve the desired effect.

Thermal treatments, like cryolipolysis (also referred to as fat freezing), use cold temperatures to freeze and kill fat cells, reducing visible bulges. Other procedures, which use radiofrequency energy (RE) or intense pulsed light (IPL), heat the layer of subcutaneous fat and connective strands to temporarily improve the appearance of cellulite or reduce the circumference of the treated area. They also may cause the skin to feel or look tighter because of shrinking or increased collagen production.

Non-thermal treatments, such as pulsed magnetic fields, work by triggering small electric currents in the muscles, causing them to contract repeatedly. Over time, these treatments may improve muscle tone and firmness of traditional problem areas like the abdomen, buttocks, thighs and/or calves.

Non-invasive body contouring may also involve the use of topical creams or formulas that are massaged into areas like the thighs, hips, abdomen and buttocks, in order to minimize the appearance of cellulite or give the impression of smoother, firmer skin.

Topical creams and formulas that are strictly intended to be applied to the human body for the purpose of, "beautifying, promoting attractiveness or altering the appearance," of the body may be regulated by the FDA as cosmetics, and subject to federal laws and regulations governing cosmetics.

Devices like those used to perform cryolipolysis or generate pulsed magnetic fields, while intended to address aesthetic concerns, are regulated by the FDA as medical devices and subject to pre-market approval. In layman's terms, this means that the sponsor of the device must demonstrate its safety and efficacy for its intended use before marketing, distributing or offering the device for sale.

In addition to the FDA, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), in some instances, also regulates promotional claims regarding medical devices, and requires that claims about the benefits and safety of body contouring



*Image courtesy of BigBlueStudio at Adobe Stock*

treatments be truthful, not misleading and supported by science.

Finally, depending on where the products are manufactured and/or sold, body contouring treatments may be subject to a range of state laws.

## What Are the Risks Associated with Body Contouring Treatments?

Non-invasive body contouring treatments have surged in popularity largely due to their lack of downtime, and low incidence of side effects as compared to traditional plastic surgery. However, even non-invasive treatments are not entirely without risk.

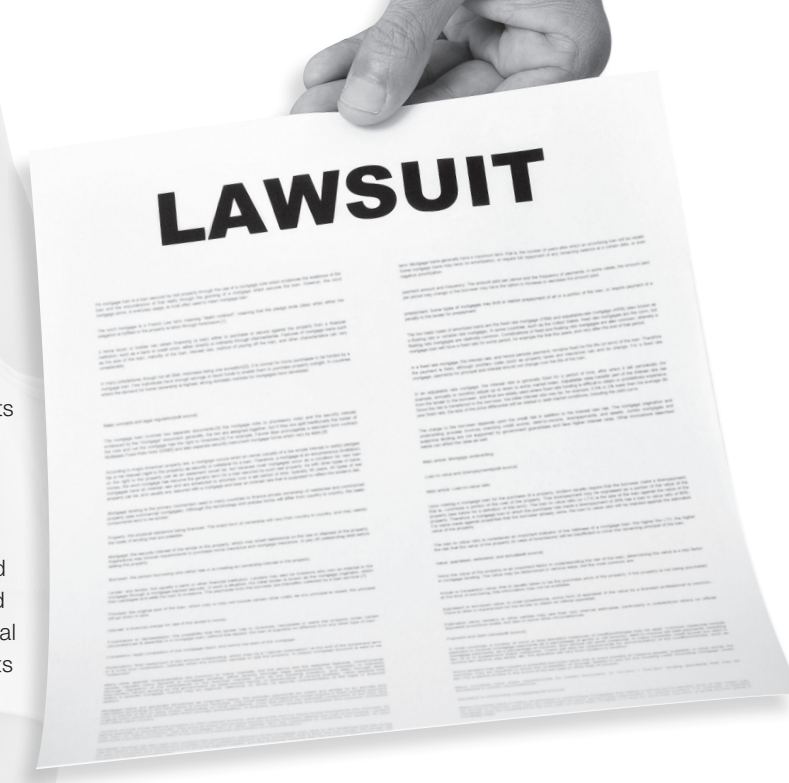
Sides effects may include pain or discomfort, redness, swelling, bruising, numbness and in rare cases, nerve damage or Paradoxical Adipose Hyperplasia (PAH), a phenomenon in which fatty tissue grows instead of shrinking in the treated area.

In addition to health risks, there are legal risks associated with promoting non-invasive body contouring treatments. While certain devices have been approved by the FDA, other treatments have never been cleared or approved by the FDA as safe or effective. Treatments may carry health risks that patients fail to appreciate since they are marketed as non-invasive. Finally, the FDA has warned that non-invasive body contouring is not intended to treat obesity, improve a person's health or result in permanent weight loss.

These legal risks can result in costly and time-consuming litigation. In recent years, consumers have sued manufacturers of body contouring devices, alleging that the devices are defective, unsafe and inappropriate for use as designed, and resulted in injury when used as directed. Other lawsuits have alleged that manufacturers failed to adequately warn consumers of potentially severe adverse side effects.

In addition to lawsuits directed specifically at manufacturers, treatment providers have come under increasing fire with false advertising lawsuits, fueled in part by the rise of social media. These lawsuits alleged that providers offered "sham procedures" using counterfeit devices that were not FDA-authorized, that are otherwise inconsistent with how reasonable consumers interpret these terms.

Finally, in addition to costly litigation, there is the risk of regulatory enforcement against companies that make overbroad or unsubstantiated promotional claims. Both the FDA and FTC have issued warning letters to beauty manufacturers for "drug" claims as well as overbroad or unsubstantiated claims, like promising to stimulate hair growth, reduce wrinkles, prevent aging and repair skin damage.




**The associated legal risks can result in costly and time-consuming litigation.**

## What Are the Takeaways?

Companies should be aware of the potential for liability for promoting non-invasive body contouring treatments absent adequate substantiation.

Wherever possible, companies should:

- Avoid making claims that non-invasive body contouring treatments will result in permanent weight loss or fat elimination, "vanish" cellulite or "cure" medical conditions such as obesity.
- Use caution in describing devices or procedures as "FDA registered" or "FDA certified." These terms are not the same thing as FDA approved, FDA authorized or FDA cleared, and may be misleading to consumers.
- Ensure that treatment providers are trained and qualified, have appropriate medical supervision, discuss any side effects or potential complications with patients and obtain informed consent before performing any treatments.
- Stay current with relevant legislation, as well as federal guidance concerning medical devices and marketing claims.
- Ensure consistency of claims and language with marketers and influencers to ensure any claims are truthful, not misleading and adequately substantiated.
- Consider asking regulatory counsel to review advertising and promotional material (including web advertising and social media). ME



**Kelly A. Bonner**, trial attorney with Duane Morris LLP, focuses on cross-jurisdictional and complex commercial disputes involving pharmaceutical, health-related retail, and consumer branded products. Bonner is a frequent author on litigation risk and regulatory issues affecting businesses in the beauty and wellness industries.

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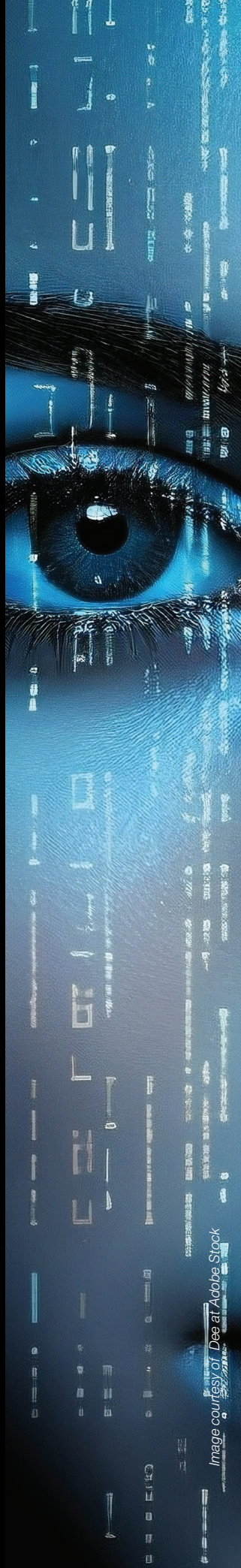
# AI & AR in Aesthetic Consultations: Revolutionizing the Patient Experience

Artificial intelligence and augmented reality redefine how practitioners approach diagnostics, treatment planning and patient engagement.

**by Robyn Siperstein, M.D., FAAD**

IN THE EVER-EVOLVING REALMS OF AESTHETICS, medical and cosmetic dermatology, a remarkable revolution propelled by the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) and augmented reality (AR) technologies has unfolded. This transformation is fundamentally altering how practitioners approach diagnostics, treatment planning and patient engagement. With more than 15 years of experience as a practitioner in this field, I've been thrilled to witness how these cutting-edge tools are empowering providers and revolutionizing the patient experience.



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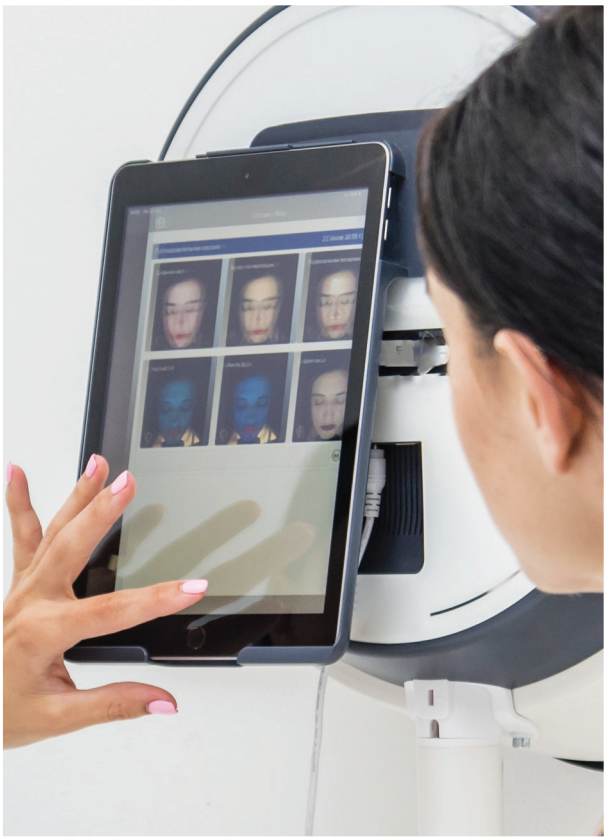
## Enhancing Consultations with Artificial Intelligence

At Siperstein Dermatology Group, we have harnessed these technologies to deliver enhanced consultations and gain unprecedented insights. The adoption of AI and AR technologies is redefining cosmetic and medical dermatological consultations, making our diagnostic procedures, treatment planning and outcomes more efficient and effective.

**VISIA 2D Facial Imaging:** For instance, 2D facial imaging systems enable me to capture standardized images of patients' left, right and frontal views. The VISIA Skin Analysis System by Canfield is able to take these images and, using AI-driven scoring, almost instantaneously evaluate key skin features both on the surface and subsurface, identifying spots, wrinkles, texture, pores, UV spots, RBX Brown, RBX Red and Porphyrins in great detail. This not only provides high quality visualization, but also generates crucial scoring metrics. Complex algorithms calculate the number and distribution of spots within the evaluated area and assign a percentile score, facilitating comparison with individuals of the same age and skin type within the VISIA database.



**AI skin analysis is able to evaluate key skin features on the surface and subsurface for improved diagnostics.**

This meticulous accuracy in assessing our patients' current skin conditions enables the creation of highly customized, accurate treatment plans.

The significance of these scores lies in their role in crafting personalized treatment strategies with unparalleled precision. This departure from generic, one-size-fits-all approaches significantly increases the likelihood of optimal, tailored results for each patient. Moreover, the standardized capture process allows for meaningful comparisons and objective tracking over time, enabling better assessment and adjustments in follow-up consultations.

**HairMetrix:** AI's impact extends beyond facial applications. Canfield's HairMetrix software is the first AI-driven, real-time hair analysis tool. This technology revolutionizes consultations related to hair transplantations, platelet-rich plasma (PRP) treatments, and hair and scalp care. Its unclipped insights, immediate in-depth analysis of follicle count, anagen/telogen ratio and individual hair follicle growth rate documentation enable swift, precise decisions, especially for urgent cases or patients reluctant to sacrifice thinning hair for analysis.

With other game changing AI tools in development, such as the total body photography system called IntelliStudio DermaGraphix, used in monitoring and evaluating suspicious skin lesions, AI is showing tremendous potential and success in ongoing research for its ability to profoundly aid in dermatologic consultations and accurate diagnosis.

## Incorporating Augmented Reality: Combining AI & AR in Consultations

Augmented reality (AR) takes the information and data gained from AI analysis tools and transforms them into a simulation that patients can engage with visually to enhance the consultation experience. AR is an incredible tool for helping demonstrate how certain treatments, changes in skin care regimen and other aspects of a patient's aesthetic goals discussed during consultations will affect their appearance and ability to maintain their natural beauty as they age. This makes the experience much more collaborative and helps engage patients in actively achieving their aesthetic goals with the help of their physician. As the saying goes, "Seeing is believing."

**VISIA Advanced Aging Simulation:** Understanding that each patient's skin care needs, age, genetics and aesthetic goals differ significantly, VISIA's Advanced Aging Simulation, utilizing AR technology, has been transformative when it comes to patient consultations. This simulation, demonstrating a patient's appearance up to 80 years old in real-time, serves as an engaging visual aid. It guides targeted focus for early prevention and highlights areas needing attention to minimize future damage such as



*Image courtesy of romaset at Adobe Stock.*



**AR simulations of treatment results engage patients visually to enhance consultations and ensure superior outcomes.**

sunspots or wrinkles. This tool actively engages patients in the decision making process, motivating proactive skin care and fostering collaborative efforts to maintain graceful aging.

**VECTRA 3D:** 3D imaging technology utilizing AI in combination with AR simulations of treatment results is another exciting new tool for enhancing patient consultations and treatment outcomes. One such 3D AI/AR aesthetic tool is the VECTRA 3D imaging system, which utilizes software that combines AI Skin Analysis scores with simulations of both surgical and non-surgical facial procedures. In addition, VECTRA also assists in consultations for other treatment areas in medical aesthetics, allowing for 3D imaging of the breasts and body, with software capable of capturing and analyzing automated measurements specific to breast augmentation and body sculpting procedures to simulate treatment outcomes. This comprehensive approach allows practitioners to discuss patient outcomes more holistically, seamlessly elevating complexion and simulating realistic 3D results within a singular software interface.

## Leveraging AI & AR Technologies

By leveraging these advanced tools, my team and I not only offer a diverse range of services tailored to customers' needs but also provide personalized insights. These technologies empower practitioners across fields to deliver highly customized treatments, ensure superior outcomes and actively engage patients in their care journey.

Contrary to any perceived complexities, integrating AI and AR technology into my practice has been remarkably seamless for my staff. The intuitive interfaces and user-friendly design of AI-enhanced systems have facilitated their swift adoption into our daily routines, enhancing the patient experience, expediting diagnostics and ensuring more accurate skin condition assessments.

In conclusion, AI and AR technologies are reshaping the landscape of aesthetic and medical dermatology. This revolution heralds an era defined by precision, personalization and patient empowerment, setting a new industry standard. Committed to remaining at the forefront of these transformative technologies, I firmly believe that AI and AR will continue to revolutionize our field, empowering both practitioners and patients and establishing new benchmarks for personalized, effective care. The future has arrived, and I am excited to be an active participant in this extraordinary journey toward excellence in aesthetics and dermatology. ME



**Robyn Siperstein, M.D., FAAD**, is a board certified dermatologist and founder of Siperstein Dermatology Group.

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# The Natural Needle Lift: 20's & 30's

How to maintain a patient's natural beauty as they age with combination injectable treatments.

By Nicole Frontera

## About the Natural Needle Lift

The Natural Needle Lift was created to naturally balance the face and soften fine lines and wrinkles without making the face look "done" or unnatural.

My goal with creating the Natural Needle Lift, decade by decade, was to create a formula that I could follow for my clients that was still customized to each person's unique face. People tend to seek similar results around the same age, but everyone is different, and everyone ages differently, so the Natural Needle Lift was developed to create a treatment protocol to address the signs of aging at each decade utilizing injectables in the most natural way possible, working with the client's own face to maintain their natural beauty. Facial injectables are never one-size-fits all, so this gives me the opportunity to be creative while educating the client on what we are doing and ideally maintaining a more affordable price for it.

In recent years, there's been a notable uptick in younger girls coming in asking for treatments in general, as well as all clients asking me for a specific treatment or product, versus explaining what they were hoping to achieve and letting me recommend a plan to achieve it. Aesthetic medicine is the only practice in medicine where patients come in wanting a prescribed treatment that they might not be a candidate for, and social media has made this more pervasive. Just like anything else people see on social media, many people now view cosmetic treatments as "shoppable," with a desired treatment being a google search away, which is a stark difference to how one would access a cosmetic procedure 15 or 20 years ago. Overall, I think an openness about cosmetic treatments can be a good thing and help better educate consumers, but social media is often targeted at people who don't need injectables and can spread misinformation or push the message that a treatment can be one-size-fits-all.

## How To Treat Signs of Aging

As a provider in aesthetic medicine, my approach to how to treat signs of aging is focused on prevention and preservation from a holistic standpoint. While there are small treatments that you can do to address early signs of aging - like Baby 'Tox, neurotoxins or even a custom facial - a detailed, specific treatment plan is more effective at addressing the aging process versus small fixes. After several years in the medical spa world, I have curated a specific treatment plan that is made to provide a natural refreshed look without overdoing it. My signature treatment, The Natural Needle Lift, was created for those looking to achieve facial symmetry and youthfulness without compromising their unique features. While I do offer a Natural Needle Lift procedure across multiple age groups that involve a medley of different treatments, my Natural Needle Lift 20's and 30's are focused on delivering natural looking results. Involving a light dusting of Baby 'Tox, a Lip Flip and a Light Lip Fill, The Natural Needle Lift 20's prevents permanent signs of aging that may potentially develop during a patient's 20's, but also lets patients maintain their natural look.

The Natural Needle Lift 30's, while more targeted, also aims to add a natural oomph to a patient's face; halting and reversing the signs of aging, while adding a natural makeup-free contour that can be attributed to the Baby 'Tox, Lip Flip, Light Lip Fill and bio-stimulating filler that naturally enhances contour to the cheeks, chin and/or jawline, stimulating the body to produce its own collagen.

## When To Treat Signs of Aging

In our 20's, collagen is still naturally being produced at a good rate and deep-set wrinkles are unlikely. The most common complaint I see from girls in their 20's who are seeking neurotoxin injections is that their makeup is starting to settle into little lines and creases in and around the forehead, and I would use 'Baby Tox', a light dusting of neurotoxin injected across the forehead, to relax those lines. This is also preventing the lines from getting deeper as they first start to form.

As part of the Natural Needle Lift 20's, I also add some lip filler and sometimes a lip flip, or a little bit of neurotoxin injected along the upper lip, to keep the lip from curling under and correcting a gummy smile, if the client needs it. While this is a treatment that has recently been more popular or trendy, it is something that most women desire, so if their faces can take it, I'll give a bit of a fuller pout.

Oftentimes for girls in their early 20's, the desire to receive neurotoxin injections or lip filler is born out of seeing someone they follow on social media get it. If someone comes to me and truly doesn't need the treatment they're





Images courtesy of Pixel-Shot at Adobe Stock

asking for, or is asking for more than I think their face can take while maintaining its natural beauty, I won't do it. Most 20 - 22 year olds don't really need neurotoxins, even preventatively. At this age, I try to push a good skin care routine and emphasize sunscreen. As opposed to administering a neurotoxin, educating younger patients on the most effective way to use sunscreen and how to limit harmful UV exposure is how my practice approaches the topic of aging in your early 20's. I always say the canvas needs to be good before I can paint on it. It wouldn't make sense for me to go in and inject and enhance a face if the skin isn't being taken care of properly.

While preventive and conservative methods are our go-to for our patients in their early 20's, for our patients in their late 20's and especially into their 30's, we do use light and strategic cosmetic treatments to tackle signs of aging. Early 30's are when most people start to notice more permanent signs of aging and start to seek treatments to address what they aren't loving. A key indicator that I look for when choosing to administer anti-aging treatments is if the wrinkles/fine-lines that appear are deep set.

At this age, I like to start using biostimulators to encourage natural collagen production, in addition to a bit of neurotoxin and lip filler, similar to what I do for girls in their 20's. Depending on the changes in their face my client is looking to address, I may use a CaHa biostimulator to add some instant fullness along with natural collagen stimulation, or if they don't need the fullness, I'll use just a PLLA biostimulator to keep encouraging the collagen production over time and create a long-term, natural result. A lot of people notice the contours of their cheekbones, chin and jawlines changing or lessening, and this is where I would go in to add that fullness back with a CaHa biostimulator. My focus around this age is facial balancing as people begin to notice these changes. Using Caha biostimulators to restore some volume can also lessen the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles in the areas I inject it, while it gets that collagen building at the same time, to keep them from re-forming.

## Anti-Aging Trends

Although there has been a drastic change in the way we as a culture discuss cosmetic treatments, we have started leaning towards a more natural look. The signature "look" of the 2000's and 2010's was dramatic makeup and pillowy results with cosmetic treatments, as well as dramatic cosmetic makeovers on celebrities. Now, on the heels of the "clean-girl" aesthetic, which plays on a simple, natural makeup look, more and more people are searching for natural-looking treatments that make one's face look "snatched." We can see this best displayed in trending treatments like the fox eye lift, which lifts the eyes towards



**Biostimulators encourage natural collagen production and restore volume and fullness, lessening the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles.**

the temple, giving an upswept appearance, and the buccal fat removal procedure, which hollows out the face, giving a contoured appearance. While these treatments are trendy for creating a makeup-free, contoured look, they can lead to the face aging more quickly, as we know that loss of volume in the face and reabsorption of fat into bone is a part of the aging process that fillers were actually created to reverse. I think trends are shifting to be even more natural than that. The more injectors can educate their clients, and especially the younger ones, on what treatments were created to do and how the aging process works, the more people will prefer a conservative approach to cosmetic treatment. My philosophy is all about maintenance, maintaining natural beauty and never creating an obvious or intentionally "over done" face. ME



Nicknamed "The Queen of Injectables" by her clients, **Nicole Frontera** is the owner and lead injector of both Nicole Frontera Beauty and The Formula, both medical spas that prides themselves on offering the best care for its clients. As a board-certified esthetician with 15 years of experience, Nicole's offices are always offering the most up-to-date treatments. Her journey into beauty started in the ICU unit of a hospital, where she gained unique insight into aesthetics' ability to change a patients' life, and she still works as a plastic surgeon's first assistant. She is a master in the art and science of facial rejuvenation and is one of the top medical spa experts on the New York scene right now.



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# TRANSGENDER AESTHETICS: TRANSFORMING LIVES & TRANSCENDING SOCIETAL STIGMA

Bianca Viscomi, M.D., On Liberating Transgender Patients' Voices, Dreams & Identities Through Aesthetics.

**Written By Rebecca Lane**

Being the daughter of two doctors, Bianca Viscomi, M.D., did not initially plan to go into the field of dermatology. She explains, "Before choosing to be a dermatologist, I chose to be a doctor. I am the daughter of a mother and father who are doctors, and since I was a child, I followed this work routine and became passionate about 'taking care of others'."

After earning her medical degree in 2004 from the Pontifical Catholic University in Sao Paulo, Brazil, Dr. Viscomi chose to do her first residency in Internal Medicine. The sudden passing of her father at the end of residency led Dr. Viscomi to change course and enter her second residency in Dermatocosmiatrics from the ABC Faculty of Medicine. Shortly after, in 2008, she started her practice. By mid-2016, when her work with transgender patients began, she had a well-established practice, ready to take on the mission that would transform lives.



**Gender-affirming treatments help align gender expression & identity, freeing transgender patients' trapped internal identities.**

## THE START OF A MOVEMENT

The LGBTQIA+ movement has come to represent acceptance, freedom and self-expression. However, transgender and gender-diverse communities in particular are in need of support and care from medical professionals, and those in aesthetics specifically, in the form of gender-affirming care and treatments aimed at aligning gender expression and identity. Dr. Viscomi became aware of the increasing need for research and the development of aesthetic techniques to provide gender-affirming care and treatments, such as facial feminization and masculinization, to help transgender patients through their transition process.

She remembers, "I saw this possibility of working with trans people in 2016. It all started with a patient who asked me to look more androgynous. He wasn't trans, but he wanted a more feminine face. So, I went to PubMed to study and, to my surprise, I found nothing in the entire international literature. That was in 2017. There was nothing for us to feminize a male face. There was only little information about how to feminize a cis female face or how to masculinize a cis male face. And then the seed of this project was born in my head."[2]

Dr. Viscomi spent these first years researching and developing treatment techniques for transgender patients going through a transition process. She recalls, "A good friend of mine worked with a trans person and I asked him to consult her to see if she would be willing to participate. Then she came to me and was my first patient, the first trans woman I treated. Through her, Beta, I ended up meeting other women who brought other women, and things got going."

Dr. Viscomi knew once she started this project that she would need to gain adequate resources and support to begin a thorough study of these techniques that could be published and bring awareness of this need for gender-affirming care in the transgender community. She states, "I wanted to publish studies to bring these people into science, this agenda into the scientific space. They are on the margins of many things, including science. There are 4 million people in Brazil, and in São Paulo there are only 10 care centers for trans people. I always wanted to bring them into my dermatological office, but not in a niche way."[3]

## AMPLIFYING THE VOICES OF TRANSGENDER WOMEN

Transgender individuals live in a constant state of vulnerability, at high risk of encountering violence and harassment, with lack of access to fundamental human rights that many of us take for granted. Aesthetic practitioners have the unique ability to change transgender patients' lives, helping them to look, feel and live better. Practitioners can help free transgender individuals from being trapped in bodies that don't express their internal identities.

Dr. Viscomi explains the dangers posed to transgender individuals seeking gender-affirming treatments from unqualified practitioners, "Although the estimated number of transgender individuals in the U.S. is increasing, this community still struggles to get adequate health care access. Transgender patients face several healthcare barriers, among which are social stigmatization or discrimination, economic marginalization and lack of specialized healthcare providers. Due to hurdles to receiving adequate medical care or aesthetic procedures, transitioning patients may submit themselves to serious risks during the gender transition process, such as injection of liquid silicone or other illegal products directly into tissues, often performed in unsanitary conditions by untrained, unqualified providers. Moreover, transgender beauty differs from a regular cis-women aesthetic approach since it involves not only rejuvenation and/or beautification, but rather acquiring feminine or masculine attributes that best align with the patient's self-affirmation."

*Image courtesy of Iván Moreno at Adobe Stock*

The vulnerable situation of transgender individuals and the need for more aesthetic practitioners to provide gender-affirming treatments is apparent when considering the very serious danger they live with stemming from social stigmatization and discrimination. What's more, these dangers can be mitigated with aesthetic treatments for transitioning patients. Dr. Viscomi gives the example, "In Brazil, where the life expectancy of a transgender individual is 35 years of age, half of the age of the general population, mainly due to violence and suicide, medical transitioning assistance has an even more profound impact since it may improve patient's acceptance in the society and result in protection from violence and increase in life expectancy. Thus, it is paramount that health care providers are well trained in caring for that part of the population."

She states, "I continued writing, thinking about the basics. And then, as soon as the pandemic eased up, I called five patients for scientific work. At that point, I had practically all the work written." Thus, it ended up being a blessing in disguise, as the finished study she published in *Clinical, Cosmetic and Investigational Dermatology* (July 2022), detailing her work utilizing minimally invasive procedures for facial feminization in five transgender women and the vital role physicians play in a transgender patient's journey through the transition process, gained worldwide attention. The movement Dr. Viscomi has spent so long championing is finally getting the attention it deserves. The lives, identities and voices of transgender women she has worked so hard to free are now being heard on an international scale.

*"Medical transitioning assistance has a profound impact since it may improve a patient's acceptance in society and result in protection from violence and increase in life expectancy."*

Dr. Viscomi continued her research into providing transitional assistance to transgender patients and the details of translating minimally invasive techniques for facial feminization in cisgender women into techniques that can be utilized for facial feminization of transgender women. During her investigation, she realized this was an issue that deserved more attention, and needed someone who could step up to the plate and make transgender individuals' voices heard. She recalls, "When you study the issue of trans people in-depth, you get the feeling that you need to do something. One thing leads to another because science has this very beautiful thing about enabling inclusion. When you think about improving people's quality of life and solving problems, you understand how much of an impact it can have across the board. I felt safe starting the work because I was protected by the umbrella of science. Then it dawned on me that I, a white cis woman doctor with a well-established practice and privilege, could help amplify these voices."

Just as she gained the support to put this study into action on a larger scale, the pandemic came along and halted Dr. Viscomi's project and mission for a time. However, it did give her the time to fine-tune her approach.

Dr. Viscomi begins by explaining, "A transgender individual is someone who does not identify with his or her biological sex. Trans beauty imposes a unique aesthetic task, since transgender women may seek feminization, but the aesthetic goal may not be achievement of femininity or masculinity itself, but rather acquiring feminine or masculine attributes that best align with the patient's self-affirmation. In order to recognize themselves as women, transgender women go through a transition process, which includes hormonal therapy, psychological support and physical alterations that can be accomplished by surgery or minimally invasive procedures. According to literature data, transgender women often prefer to modify their faces, prior to body alterations."[1]

## MIP & FACIAL FEMINIZATION IN TRANSGENDER WOMEN

These procedures are not new for aesthetic professionals, as aesthetic treatments in general are gender-affirming, even if they are performed on cisgender patients. Minimally invasive treatments to feminize or masculinize a face are commonplace when it comes to cisgender patients, so whether they realize it or not, aesthetic practitioners already



**Minimally invasive procedures for transitioning provide fast, reversible and impactful results.**

know how to do these procedures and have the experience to provide these services for transgender patients. Dr. Viscomi states, "While the literature upon facial remodeling of cis-women with MIP is abundant, the use of MIP for facial remodeling in the scope of the transitioning process of transgender women is still scarce."

For transgender individuals, minimally invasive cosmetic facial feminization and masculinization treatments can go a long way toward relieving their gender dysphoria by creating better harmony between their physical and innermost selves. These treatments can free transgender patients' true faces and identities, helping them transcend the physical form they feel trapped in. Dr. Viscomi explains why minimally invasive procedures for transgender facial feminization are such a vital part of transitioning, saying, "Minimally invasive procedures (MIP) play an important role in the transition process for many reasons: MIP provides fast, reversible and impactful results, with lower risks and downtime, whilst results with hormonal therapy, for example, may take 2 years to fully develop. There is minimal need for psychological assessment, pre-medication or other delays that would routinely be needed before surgery. Especially for patients who are unsure about proceeding with definitive surgery, injectables can serve as a reversible surrogate for what patients can potentially expect from a definite facial surgery. Moreover, for those patients who are not suitable for surgery, MIP may remain the only option. Healthcare providers should be familiar with the needs of the transgender patient population."

## FACIAL FEMINIZATION TECHNIQUES

**1. Comparing Male & Female Facial Structure:** When first approaching facial feminization for transgender patients, taking into account traditional ideas of what characterizes a face as female is an important starting point to understand how the traditionally male facial structure can be feminized depending on the patient. "Generally accepted characteristics of a female face include smooth forehead with some convexity, small narrow nose, arched eyebrows, wider eyes, prominent and full cheekbones, heart-shaped lower face, and full vermilion lips," states Dr. Viscomi.

**2. Feminization of the Forehead/Upper Face:** In comparison to female skull structures, males characteristically have a prominent supraorbital region. The female forehead, on the other hand, is straighter, with a more curved and less pronounced glabella, as well as a less noticeable supraorbital rim. Dr. Viscomi explains that the use of neurotoxin injections can feminize the forehead, eyebrows

*Image courtesy of Matthias Stolt at Adobe Stock*

and periorbital skin, serving to eliminate rhytids and widen the eyes. HA injections can be used to improve forehead convexity, creating a smoother supraorbital-forehead transition. However, she adds the caveat, "Transgender women may require higher doses of neurotoxin in all treatment areas because individuals assigned male at birth tend to have greater muscle mass compared to individuals assigned female."

**3. Feminization of the MidFace:** The female facial structure of the midface area is characterized by more curvilinear and prominent cheekbones with angles that are more subtle than that of males. Dr. Viscomi advises injecting HA laterally on the zygomatic arch and inferolateral to the lateral canthus to minimize the greater angles typical of male cheekbones and achieve the approximate female apex. She adds that for transgender women, "The volume of HA required to achieve the desirable results is greater than compared to the amount needed for a cis female of the same age."

However, using a biostimulator injection in the malar in addition to HA can provide immediate correction, which is enhanced as the body's natural collagen is stimulated over time and new tissue forms, resulting in long-term accumulation of new collagen. This increases structural support of the feminization in the mid-third and reduces the volume of HA needed.

**4. Feminization of the Lower Face:** The difference in structure between the male and female lower face is a particularly important one when it comes to feminizing a transgender woman's overall facial structure, as a male jawline is distinctly more square and prominent than the accepted ideal of the more heart-shaped female jawline. Thus, emphasizing the more pointed chin and softer angles of the female jawline, and decreasing the wider, square jawline typical of the male facial structure is important for facial feminization. When it comes to feminizing the jawline in transgender women, Dr. Viscomi advises, "In Western cultures, the ideal width of the female chin is approximately the same width as the intercanthal distance and special care must be taken not to masculinize a female face by making the chin too wide."

Injecting HA filler into the supraperiosteal can help project the chin, while neurotoxin injections in the masseter will gradually decrease the prominence of the muscles around the jawline and help achieve the more heart-shaped contour desired in a feminized face. To feminize the lips using HA filler, Dr. Viscomi explains that, "an optimal lip contour, comprising a well-defined upper and lower vermilion border, cupids bow, and a J-shaped curve," is desirable.

**5. Skin Quality:** Modifying facial structure is not the only important element of facial feminization for transgender women. Dr. Viscomi points out that skin quality is equally as important to feminization, and can make a distinct difference in the gender perception of an individual. She states, "Skin quality significantly influences perception of age, attractiveness, health and youth. Good skin quality is defined as healthy, undamaged and youthful in appearance."

When it comes to improving skin quality, the four main attributes that comprise this are the evenness of skin tone and skin surface, skin firmness and skin glow. The differences in hormones and hormone levels of females and males have a major influence on skin quality. Dr. Viscomi explains that while, "Testosterone may yield a denser collagen network, the skin becomes thicker with more visible pores and higher secretion of sebum and sweat." Minimally invasive treatments are also useful for improving skin quality in facial feminization. Neurotoxin injections can be used, "in the malar area and forehead, leading to pore size and sebaceous activity minimization," says Dr. Viscomi, adding that using highly diluted forms of biostimulator injections can also be used to stimulate tissue remodeling over time and improve skin quality.



**Skin quality is important for feminization and the gender perception of a transgender woman.**

*Image courtesy of Tsaikaoe at Adobe Stock*




**Anatomically, all humans are born and die androgynous, whether cisgender or transgender, male or female.**

## CHALLENGES & REVELATIONS: WE ARE BORN & DIE ANDROGYNOUS

One of the most interesting aspects of Dr. Viscomi's work with feminization of transgender women is the realization that came about when she began working with older transgender women, as the aging process makes facial feminization more challenging because it brings with it a masculinization process. This holds true for cisgender women as well as transgender women. Due to the hormonal changes that occur throughout our lives, we are all born androgynous and as we age, we once again gradually return to that androgynous state.

Dr. Viscomi explains, "Anatomically, the human body is born and dies androgynous. This project has brought me a lot of reflection, in the most different parameters. It gave me tools to better understand the aging process of cis women, for example. This completely changed my approach to aging in general. Binarism is a thing about the hormonal phase of the human being. It is a matter of human anatomy being androgynous in two very important phases, the pre-pubertal phase and the post-menopausal phase. This changed my approach to aging and my cis female patients became much more beautiful after I started treating trans patients, because I understood a lot about the anatomy of the face. I understood anatomy from a perspective of beauty that really opened my eyes."

In the end, all women, whether cisgender or transgender, can benefit from facial feminization as we age, as the hormonal changes that occur during menopause gradually masculinize our faces. Therefore, to feel and appear more like our younger selves, facial feminization is paramount to once again seeing our feminine selves looking back at us in the mirror. As Dr. Viscomi so eloquently puts it, "In the end, all these treatments are about us recognizing ourselves in the mirror, both for trans women and cis women who are aging. It's a matter of us seeing ourselves."

## FREEING THE TRANS WOMAN WITHIN

As these revelations about the aging process and its effect on facial feminization demonstrate, the various details of treatment plans for transgender patients to aid in their transition process are dependent on the individual being treated. Dr. Viscomi advises, "Clinicians should be aware that there are different steps to be taken in the transition process, and that the needs and expectations may vary at each stage. For instance, changes in facial structure, soft tissue distribution and skin quality vary if a patient has not yet started hormone therapy compared to the patient who has been on hormone therapy for many years. Thus, the treatment plan should be tailored for each patient's needs and transitioning phase."

The most important thing to keep in mind when tailoring a feminization treatment plan for transgender women is to maintain respect for and enhance their individual beauty rather than change them into cisgender women. Like most women desiring aesthetic treatments, they don't want to look like someone other than themselves in the end, but instead to have their individual beauty enhanced and feminized so they see the person they have always felt they were inside reflected in the mirror. "The idea is not to transform them into cis women but to perform feminization according to the patient and highlight trans beauty. They have more masculine features that I don't like to take away, that's what makes them beautiful. The minimally invasive, reversible procedure allows the person to try other techniques, try themselves in the mirror and recognize themselves," says Dr. Viscomi. ME

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**Rebecca Lane** is the managing editor of *MedEsthetics*.

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**DETAILS** BY JOHNNY FRANCO, M.D., SARAH VIEBROCK, R.N., BSN, JENNA LYNNE HENNIG, R.N., AND GILBERT SAENZ, P.A.



# The Power of Structural Sandwiching for Ultimate Collagen Stimulation

How structural sandwiching is revolutionizing total body rejuvenation in aesthetics.

**The "Weight Loss Revolution"** has prompted a shift in how aesthetic practitioners approach facial and body rejuvenation. As individuals undergo transformational weight loss journeys, the demand for tailored solutions addressing skin laxity, volume loss and overall rejuvenation has surged. This unique population seeks non-surgical methods to comprehensively tighten, sculpt and shape their bodies. The evolution of total body rejuvenation integrates collagen-stimulating agents and energy devices, enhancing the synergy of these technologies.

## Biostimulants in Aesthetics

Biostimulants in aesthetics refer to substances or techniques that stimulate the body's natural processes for skin enhancement. These often promote collagen production, improve skin elasticity and reduce signs of aging.

**INJECTABLE BIOSTIMULANTS:**

**1. Poly-L-Lactic Acid (PLLA):**

- Encourages collagen synthesis and is found in biostimulant injectables

*Image courtesy of Galaxy_love_design at Adobe Stock*

- Results are gradual, with fibroblasts stimulated over weeks to months.

**2. Calcium Hydroxylapatite (CaHA):**

- Found in biostimulant fillers, it acts as a scaffold in the skin.
- Stimulates fibroblasts, creating Type I and Type III collagen as well as elastin

**3. Platelet-Rich Plasma (PRP):**

- Involves processing a small blood sample to concentrate platelets for skin rejuvenation
- Rich in growth factors, stimulating collagen and elastin production

**ENERGY DEVICES:**

**1. Radiofrequency (RF) Devices:**

- Monopolar RF penetrates deep for skin tightening.
- Bipolar RF targets shallower layers.
- Fractional RF combines with micro-needling for skin resurfacing.

**2. Ultrasound Devices:**

- Ultherapy utilizes focused ultrasound for non-surgical lifting and tightening of facial tissue.
- HIFU targets deep tissues for skin tightening.

**3. Microneedling Devices:**

- DermaPen creates micro-injuries for collagen induction.
- RF Microneedling combines microneedling with radiofrequency for enhanced results.

## Plastic Surgery Paradigm Shift - Combination Treatments

Combining biostimulants with advanced skin tightening procedures is instrumental in post-weight loss body contouring. This synergy addresses sagging skin, enhances contours and contributes to rejuvenation, aligning with the transformed physique.

In the changing world of aesthetics, a new frontier of personalized and integrative approaches, tailored treatments, combined modalities and leveraging of biostimulants is here. The hottest trend revolves around maximizing collagen stimulation and skin rejuvenation treatments. The combination of biostimulants and skin tightening has created a shift in the plastic surgery paradigm of how we used to think about the use of classic fillers. In the past, we would use fillers for volume and energy devices for skin tightening. The products were used as isolated treatments, which have now evolved into synergistic treatments where the fillers/biostimulants can now be used to augment skin tightening treatments rather than as volumizing agents alone.

Structural sandwiching is a concept that we have developed at our practice to leverage the concept of the synergistic effect of biostimulants and skin tightening devices. Skin tightening devices, such as RF Microneedling, stimulate collagen superficially while the PLLA or CaHa is injected at a deeper level. The concept behind this treatment method is that the skin is being stimulated above and below the skin. The skin is "sandwiched" between stimulating agents.

This structural sandwich concept can be used in a variety of areas, such as the face, neck, buttocks and thighs. The treatments typically involve the use of RF Microneedling and simultaneous biostimulant injections such as PLLA or Hyperdilute CaHa. A series of treatments are performed roughly six to eight weeks apart. It is important to conceptualize that the biostimulating "fillers," such as PLLA or CaHa, are used for their biostimulating properties, not as a classic filler. Thus, much less volume of the product is used over the treated areas.



*Image courtesy of Tatiana Foxy at Adobe Stock*

**Combining biostimulants with advanced skin tightening procedures for post-weight loss body contouring.**



## Structural Sandwiching & the Lower Extremities

The lower extremities have always been a challenging area to treat, with limited options available in the past, even from a surgical standpoint. Historically, thigh lifts and circumferential body lifts were employed and were particularly effective for massive weight loss patients. However, for those involved in the "Weight Loss Revolution," shedding 15 to 30 or 40 pounds, with mild to moderate skin laxity, the options were limited.

Filler, while offering some benefits, requires a substantial amount of product in the lower body, making it cost-prohibitive. Skin tightening treatments showed promise, but didn't always yield results that left patients ecstatic. In the current era of the "Weight Loss Revolution," younger patients are more responsive to biostimulant products and treatments like ultrasound energy, radiofrequency microneedling and other energy-based devices for skin tightening.

This shift has given rise to a synergistic approach, a term we've coined as the "structural sandwich" for lower extremity treatments. The concept behind this approach is to maximize collagen stimulation, leading to the most significant improvement in skin tone in these challenging-to-treat areas.

As the "Weight Loss Revolution" unfolds, these innovative approaches are paving the way for unique aesthetic outcomes. The coined term "structural sandwich" describes the combination of injectable biostimulants with advanced skin tightening procedures. The innovative combinations are poised to revolutionize lower extremity care. This revolutionary concept maximizes collagen stimulation, offering hope for substantial improvements in skin tone in a traditionally difficult-to-treat area. Welcome to the transformative era of lower extremity aesthetics!

## Structural Synergy in Aesthetics

Biostimulants, energy devices, ultrasound treatments and weight loss medications are set to revolutionize patient care. As patients utilize medications like Semaglutide and Tirzepatide, there's anticipation for a significant influx, each with unique concerns. Combination treatments offer versatile solutions, extending to various body areas and presenting new opportunities and challenges in the ever-evolving field of aesthetic medicine.

Advancements in biostimulants, skin tightening and non-surgical toning devices are transforming patient outcomes. Treating skin laxity and these other challenging areas is now more accessible, particularly for those undergoing significant weight loss. This convergence in aesthetic medicine represents a paradigm shift, enhancing patient outcomes and creating an exciting chapter in the transformative journey of aesthetics. Welcome to structural synergy! ME




**Johnny Franco, M.D.,** is a board-certified plastic surgeon and owner of Austin Plastic Surgeon with an impressive history of publications, presentations and accolades, including the Merck Index Award and the Walter S. Haven Prize. He is an active member of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, the American Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons and the Austin Society of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeons. He is currently Clinical Faculty at The University of Texas Dell Medical School. He also is a reviewer for the Aesthetic Journal and Annals of Plastic Surgery, where he reviews articles for publication from other plastic surgeons worldwide.



**Sarah Viebrock, R.N, BSN,** is a cosmetic nurse injector specializing in aesthetics at Austin Plastic Surgeon. She received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of Texas at Austin in 2012 and is currently in graduate school for a Master of Science in Nursing to receive her Family Nurse Practitioner degree from the University of Texas at Arlington.



**Jenna Lynn Hennig, R.N.,** is a registered nurse at Austin Plastic Surgeon. Jenna graduated with her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Texas State University in 2019. Jenna specializes in facial balancing, cellulite reduction, combination treatments, sweat reduction, fat reduction, and biostimulating treatments for anti-aging and skin tightening.



**Gilbert Saenz, P.A.,** is a board-certified physicians assistant, specializing in facial rejuvenation at Austin Plastic Surgeon.


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# Innovative Ingredients & Devices

The skin care industry runs on a neverending cycle of new products and breakthrough innovations. Within medical aesthetics, research and clinical data reveal new ways to improve skin health and enhance well-being. These skin care topicals and aesthetic devices are on the cutting edge of trends and innovations within aesthetic medicine.



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## CLEARSTEM ACNE LAB TEST TO UNCOVER CONSUMERS' UNIQUE CAUSES OF ACNE



Clearstem Skincare, a clean beauty-focused brand, announced its telehealth debut with the launch of its Clearstem Acne Lab Test. Per the company, the test will introduce a "new era" of skin care by identifying consumers' unique root cause(s) of acne and providing a personalized treatment plan. Created in collaboration with Emily Morrow, an integrative and nutritional therapy practitioner and blood chemistry expert, and Rupa Health, the Clearstem Acne Lab Test analyzes blood samples for 80+ acne markers, such as blood urea nitrogen, creatinine and mean corpuscular volume, which according to the brand, contribute to the body's root causes of acne. Customers receive personalized results detailing a path to healthier skin, such as product, dietary and lifestyle recommendations.

## AAD UPDATES GUIDELINES FOR MANAGEMENT OF ADULTS WITH ATOPIC DERMATITIS

New guidelines for the management of adults with atopic dermatitis using phototherapy and systemic therapies were published in the Journal of the *American Academy of Dermatology* (JAAD), The new update is the first since the 2014 recommendations for atopic dermatitis management in patients who do not respond to topical therapies. After a comprehensive review, researchers strongly recommended the use of dupilumab, tralokinumab, baricitinib, abrocitinib and upadacitinib; conditionally recommended phototherapy, cyclosporine, methotrexate, azathioprine and mycophenolate and did not recommend systemic corticosteroids. The updated AAD Guidelines stated that all atopic dermatitis clinical trials should include core outcome measures from the Harmonizing Outcomes Measures for Eczema (HOME) group.

## MEDSPA SURVEYS INDICATE A NEED FOR INCREASED REGULATION ON COSMETIC MEDICAL PROCEDURES

Recent studies published in *Dermatologic Surgery* reviewed safety protocools present in medspas and the puclib's perception of medspas compared to physician's offices when it comes to safety and cosmetic procedures. The studies highlighed the need for increased regulation on cosmetic medical procedures. Safety initiatives like the American Society for Dermatologic Surgery Association's (ASDSA) "Medical Spa Safety Act" adresses patient safety and proper oversight of care in medical spas. For optimal patient safety, ASDSA supports medical spa treatments based on patient outcomes and quality care, as well as appropriate on-site physician supervision, oversight and training.

## TURN BIOTECHNOLOGIES REVEALS POSITIVE PROGRESS OF TRN-001 SKIN CELL REJUVENATION THERAPY



Turn Biotechnologies has announced that the company received positive feedback during an FDA Initial Targeted Engagement for Regulatory Advice on CBER products meeting to review progress and plans for its therapeutic treatment to rejuvenate skin cells. TRN-001 was developed using Turn Bio's proprietary ERA technology, an mRNA-based platform designed to restore youthful function to cells. The therapy is delivered using the company's eTurna lipid particle carrier system, designed to effectively deliver and target drugs to specific tissues in the body. The FDA meeting focused on the path forward for TRN-001, which would be the first treatment to repair damaged skin at the cellular level, aiming to improve its integrity and reduce inflammation and cell senescence.

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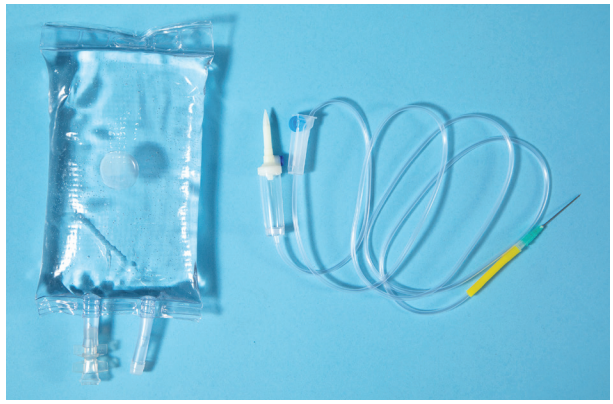
## NEW MED SPA FEDERAL BUSINESS REQUIREMENTS; IV THERAPY GUIDELINES



The medical aesthetics industry is constantly evolving, from ingredients and treatments to business and medical regulations. Most recently, the industry has focused on Intravenous (IV) Therapy, analyzing its benefits and risks and discovering ways to make the process safer and more effective. In some cases, there has been a need to clarify that IV therapy is a medical procedure that must be performed by informed and experienced professionals. On the business side of medicine, there is a new law going into effect in 2024 that will affect most small business owners, enacted in an effort by the federal government to deter financial crimes, specifically money laundering and tax fraud.

## NEW YORK STRUGGLES TO PASS LEGISLATION TO REGULATE LASER HAIR REMOVAL

New York is the only state in the United States that does not regulate laser hair removal. There is no board overseeing the businesses and no experience or training is required to perform the treatment. Without proper regulations, patients face a multitude of increased safety risks. Despite trying for several years, no New York State Legislature has been able to gain enough support to amend the situation. All other states treat laser hair removal as a practice of medicine. Most of those states don't have a specific law regarding LHR; instead, the treatment is included automatically within the practice of medicine definition, according to AmSpa.

## EVENTS

**January 11-14,** ODAC Dermatology, Aesthetic & Surgical Conference, Signia by Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek, Orlando, Florida, Contact: info@orlandoderm.org, orlandoderm.org

**February 8-11**, South Beach Symposium, Loews Miami Beach Hotel, Miami, Florida, Contact: info@livderm.org, 561.893.8625, livderm.org

**February 22–24**, AMWC Americas, Miami Beach Convention Center, Miami, Florida, Contact: 866.985.3123, amwcamericas.com

**February 22-24**, AACS 2024 40th Annual Scientific Meeting, Hilton New Orleans Riverside, New Orleans, Louisiana, Contact: info@cosmeticsurgery.org, 312.981.6760, cosmeticsurgery.org



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Tony Scianna
Associate Editor

# For the Boys: Skin Care for Men

Top skin care products for men from our resident *MedEsthetics* man, Associate Editor, Tony Scianna

Although women are the primary demographic for the skin care industry, there is a significant market for men as well. More men are using skin care products for self care and anti-aging benefits. Entire lines are now dedicated to men's products, with claims they are specifically formulated for men's skin. That might be a good way to get men started on a skin care regimen, but my favorite products tend to be gender-neutral, even if the scent can sometimes be more feminine. In fact, I tend to avoid skin care geared towards men because they often smell like cologne. As a young man still in the infant stages of my skin care education, these are some of my favorite products I've come across that have effective and innovative ingredients while also holding curb appeal for men.

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**TiZO's Gentle Amino Gel Cleanser** is proof that this brand is great for more than just sunscreen. This cleanser contains a nourishing blend of 11 amino acids formulated in a clear, gentle gel that hydrates and soothes as it cleanses. The gel feels great on the skin and a little goes a long way. My face always feels refreshed and hydrated, ready for the rest of my routine. The cleanser is also pH balanced, allowing you to skip a toner if you want. ***tizoskin.com***




**BAK Day Care Oil** uses probiotics to balance the skin microbiome and improve skin health to make the skin calmer, softer and stronger. I love this face oil for how it makes my skin feel soft and even toned. Use with other products that contain probiotics and are free of preservatives. I like to use BAK's probiotic cleanser before the day care oil to get the most out of the two products. Be sure to follow up with a microbiome balancing, preservative-free moisturizer! ***bakskincare.com***




**Naderma's NAD+ (Nicotinamide Adenine Dinucleotide) Daily Moisturizing Cream** contains probiotics, antioxidants and snail mucin. NAD+ is an organic coenzyme found within cells that is responsible for cell energy and DNA repair and transcription. The cream also contains neutral pH vitamin C to balance uneven skin tone and plump skin for enhanced radiance. But the true star ingredient here is snail secretion filtrate. Snail mucin is incredibly hydrating and has regenerative benefits, with anti-inflammatory and antibacterial properties to help soothe skin. ***naderma.com***




**SkinMedica's HA-5 Rejuvenating Hydrator Serum** is a favorite of mine for its instant hydration. It contains a proprietary mix of 5 types of hyaluronic acid (HA) that decrease the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles, including sodium hyaluronate, nano HA, cross-linked HA, uncross-linked HA and Time Release HA (SkinMedica proprietary ingredient for sustained release of hyaluronic acid). The instant hydration from a great hyaluronic acid serum is one way to convert any doubter to take up a skin care routine and keeps me coming back to this serum twice daily. Wet your finger with cold water before applying to activate the HA, allowing for quicker and more effective absorption. ***skinmedica.com***

# MedEsthetics

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EDITORIAL

**Editor in Chief** Katie Anderson | 1-630-344-6077/kanderson@allured.com
**Content Director** Jeb Gleason-Allured | 1-630-344-6069/jallured@allured.com
**Managing Editor** Rebecca Lane | 1-630-344-6074/rlane@allured.com
**Associate/News Editor** Tony Scianna | 1-630-344-6070/tscianna@allured.com

SOCIAL MEDIA

**Social Media Specialist** Crystal Dentis | 1-630-344-1821/cdentis@allured.com

ADVERTISING SALES

**Business Development Manager** Barbara Carreon | 1-630-344-6066/bcarreon@allured.com
**Advertising Production Manager** Kasia Smialkowski | 1-630-344-6025/ksmialkowski@allured.com
**Advertising Production/ Business Intelligence Specialist** Ethan Grisham | 1-630-344-6068/egrisham@allured.com

AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

**Marketing Specialist** Sam Attebery | 1-630-344-6027/sattebery@allured.com
**Customer Service** 1-847-559-7557/customerservice@nailpro.com

DESIGN

**Assistant Design Manager** James Fergus
**Graphic Designer** Laura Fenwick
**Digital Production Specialist** Kyle Torain

CORPORATE

**Partner & CEO** George Fox
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1-630-653-2155 • fax 1-630-653-2192
336 Gundersen Drive, Suite D
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# How Florida's BBL Surgery Bill Benefits Patients & Surgeons

The finale of our two-part series on Florida's BBL law.

**In *MedEsthetics*' November/December issue**, we detailed Florida's House Bill 1471, which requires surgeons to get specific education and training on Brazilian Butt Lifts (BBLs) and use ultrasound guidance during BBL procedures.

The law has been praised by industry experts for its increased awareness of the safest ways to perform what is considered one of the most dangerous cosmetic surgeries. One consideration, however, is whether lawmakers are ethically qualified to exercise mandates on board-certified physicians.

Alex Sobel, D.O., FAACS, president of the American Academy of Cosmetic Surgery, believes the bill actually protects a physician's right to practice because the bill is directly connected to education and training.

"Anybody in any trade deserves the right to commercial free speech and the enjoyment of the practice of their trade," Sobel said. "What is wonderful about (House Bill 1471) is that anyone who has the appropriate education, training and experience can do this procedure. That makes a lot of sense to me."

Another element pointed out by Sobel is the perception of being board-certified. In his view, the term has incorrectly been considered the standard bearer of competency for modern medicine in the United States for almost a century.

"That certification doesn't certify competency," Sobel said. "If you're a board-certified cosmetic surgeon, you know how to do cosmetic surgery, but that doesn't mean that you're competent in BBL if you haven't trained specifically in BBL. You might have answered the test questions right, but you're not safe to treat that patient."



S. Alexander Earle, M.D., double board-certified plastic surgeon and founder of Pure Plastic Surgery in Miami, has been using ultrasound technology in BBL procedures since 2019. He also supports the ethical nature of the new bill, claiming the Florida mandate was a necessity.

"It would have been ideal for the surgical industry to have self-regulated years ago when the mortality rate for BBLs continued to increase, and for doctors to have taken honest assessments of their surgical abilities and patient requirements regarding the BBL procedure," Earle said. "What we have now is years of BBL poor outcomes in certain centers going unchecked and the state telling doctors the time allotted to fix it ourselves is up."

Dr. Earle is currently the president of the World Association of Gluteal Surgeons (WAGS), which offers training and certain requirements to receive a "WAGS Seal of Safety for Ultrasound Guided Gluteal Fat Transfer" (UGGFT).

The certification requires applicants review BBL articles and pass an online written exam, take a WAGS Safe UGGFT video course, attend a WAGST Live Safe UGGFT workshop at an approved training center and submit a video of themselves performing a safe UGGFT procedure as taught in the course. This certification is one way a surgeon can reassure patients they are competent and experienced with BBLs.

Overall, Florida's House Bill 1471 is another positive step in medical aesthetics towards increased patient safety with the best interests of both doctors and patients in mind.

"The BBL procedure is considered the most dangerous plastic surgery procedure in the world, and it doesn't have to be with transparency, proper technology and training," Dr. Earle said. "I have performed nearly 2,000 ultrasound guided BBLs with very low complications rates and no mortality. It is a procedure that can be very safe in the right hands when combining ultrasound imaging technology with experience." ME



**Tony Scianna** is the associate editor of *MedEsthetics.*

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