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THE GUIDE FOR EXCELLENCE IN MEDICAL AESTHETICS

Allured business media

September 2025
Volume 21, Number 6
medestheticsmag.com

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OLHA MAIKINA
MD from Europe, Zemits Co-Founder

CLINICAL CASES: THE VISIBLE IMPACT OF HOLISTIC COLD SKIN RECOVERY

Anti-Acne Treatment Protocol



Courtesy of Uni Dang, Licensed Aesthetician, Zemits Expert Provider Dallas, TX



Client: 16 y.o. female

Skin Concerns:
Inflammatory acne, redness, post-inflammatory erythema (cheeks), hormonal breakouts, sensitivity, scarring, congestion

Treatment Frequency:
every 2–6 weeks

Number of treatments performed: 12 sessions

Results:
- Notable improvement in skin clarity
- Reduced breakout frequency,
- Softer texture
- Visible calming of inflammation and erythema

The treatment included bi-weekly sessions combining hydrating enzyme therapy, LED light to calm inflammation, and personalized chemical peels based on skin response. Manual extractions and high frequency were used throughout to address congestion and support clarity. Once the skin barrier had strengthened, **HydroDiamond®** was introduced to gently exfoliate and remove buildup without causing irritation. Each session was completed with cold wellness technology and oxygen mist to soothe the skin, reduce redness, and support recovery.

Glow & Super Hydration Treatment Protocol



Courtesy of Azarel Cervantes



Client: 30 y.o. female

Skin Concerns:
Clogged pores, oily skin, general inflammation

Treatment Frequency:
bi-weekly

Number of treatments performed: 6 sessions

Results:
- Significant reduction in oiliness and congestion
- Skin appeared visibly calmer, clearer, and more balanced
- Client became a consistent monthly visitor

The treatment included a series of sessions with deep exfoliation using the **HydroDiamond®** tip and HydroClear Pro, followed by gentle vacuum and manual extractions to clear pores. Each session incorporated serum infusion to hydrate and replenish the skin, along with cold wellness technology to reduce redness and calm inflammation. The same protocol was performed every two weeks to maintain consistency and support progressive skin improvement.

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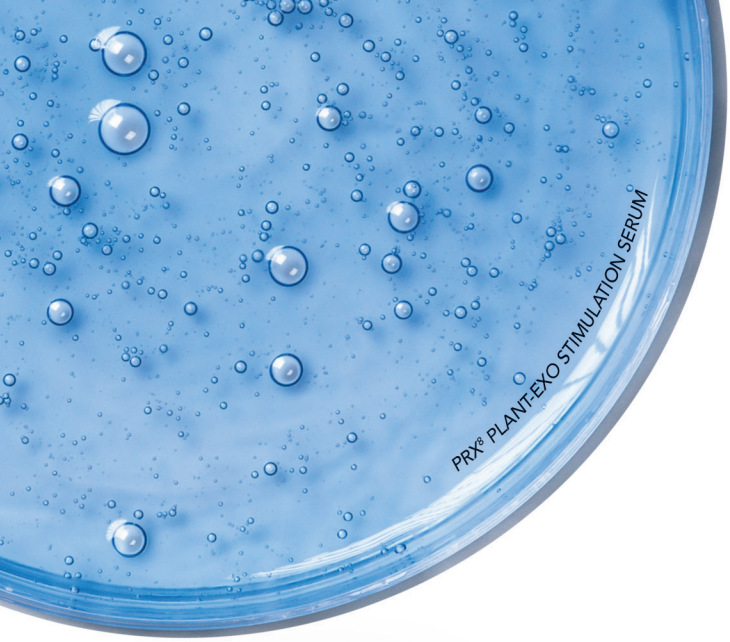

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Lindsay Malachowski, Sarah Bonner, and Ryan Bloch





CONTENTS

September 2025 | Volume 21 | Number 6

RESEARCH

12 John Oliver Exposed a Medspa Crisis
by Jamie O'Toole
Aesthetics Experts Urge Clearer Universal Safety Standards, Law Reform

18 Perfect Is Out, Personal Is In
by Jamie O'Toole
Celebrity Transparency Shaping Aesthetics—But Body Image Pressures Still Linger

26 Neurotoxins Surge, Hyaluronic Fillers Slip
by Jamie O'Toole
GLP-1 and Skincare Usher in a New Chapter

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

8 Business Consult
by Terri Ross
Elevating Aesthetics: Why Ongoing Team Training Is Your Greatest ROI

22 Integrate, Don't Upsell
by Jamie O'Toole
Retail Skincare is Driving Patient Results and Medspa Revenue

30 Inside Treat Medspa's NYC Flagship Location
by Jamie O'Toole
AI Imaging and Brain Science Personalize Beauty at a Cellular Level

43 Spotlight
by Jamie O'Toole
Allergan Aesthetics Seeks FDA Approval to Expand Skinvive by Juvéderm for Neck Rejuvenation

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TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

34 Skincare That Goes Deeper
by Jamie O'Toole
Alleviating Aging from Within

38 Barbie Nose Demand Surges, But So Do Revisions
by Jamie O'Toole
New Approach Prevents Airway Compromise Amid Soaring Demand

40 Details
by Francis Acunzo and Sara Shikhman
Skincare Under Scrutiny: How Estheticians Can Thrive Amid State Supervision Rules

44 Newsmakers
by Jamie O'Toole
Megan Fox Says No to Botox — But What's in Her Serum Might Surprise You

COMPLEMENTARY CARE

46 Product Roundup
Chin, Jawline and Jowls

IN EVERY ISSUE

4 Editor's Eye On The Industry

6 Introductions

47 Aesthetic Insights

48 Advertiser Index

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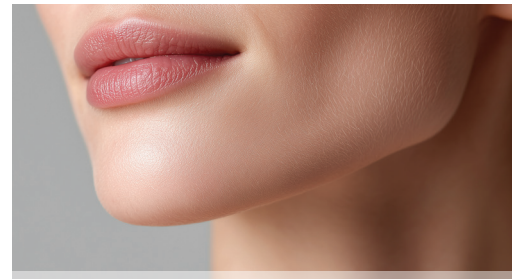
Fall into Aesthetic Innovation: Jowls, Jawline and the Push for Safer, Smarter Beauty



In September's issue, learn about treatments for the chin, jawline and jowls, as well as a new research initiative to develop anti-aging solutions.

Summer went by quickly and fall is finally here! The fall and winter months are usually a time when cosmetic procedures and treatments increase—an opportunity to recover from procedures with considerable downtime and reduced sun exposure that may interfere with recovery.

For MedEsthetics' September issue, we focus on jowls, jawline and chin, spotlighting the FDA's acceptance to move forward with potentially approving Skinvive by Juvéderm for the neck as clinicians increasingly treat the face and neck as one entity. Megan Fox's serum, a Botox alternative she uses, her sister claims, is also explored next to its effectiveness and whether it suffices in place of Botox.

You'll also learn the importance of staff with ongoing training and continued education in the business consult section, and on the note of proper training and education, we also delve into John Oliver's coverage of medspas and how the aesthetics industry may need better regulation and universal laws as diverse expertise comes into play. While estheticians juggle the grey zones of laws, looking for ways to practice beauty safely and earn credentials, we discuss how to navigate appropriately and responsibly. Celebrities, too, are playing a role in patient education and informed discussions around body enhancements.

Flip to the product round-up for treatments that target the jowls, jawline and chin specifically, and read about a new research initiative with Brown University, a goal to uncover the biological shifts in age as women search for empowerment and effective solutions to mitigate the signs of aging.

Happy fall,

Jamie O'Toole

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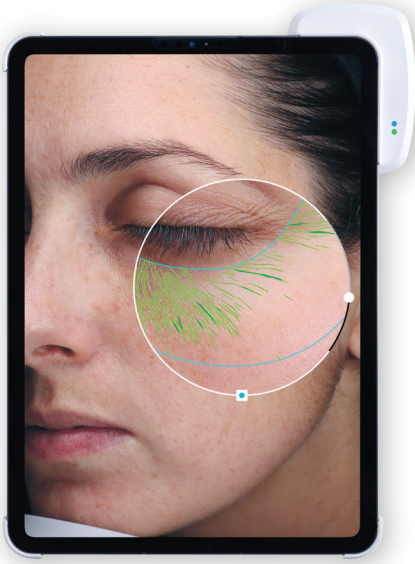
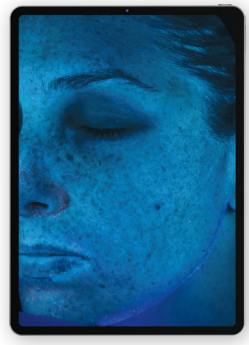


- ☑ Validated, scientifically-proven analysis
- ☑ Tailored AI-generated treatment plans
- ☑ Boost client interaction, satisfaction, and compliance.



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Your actual age

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In June, **Lira Clinical** launched its Health Restorative Hand Treatment, a repairing moisturizer designed to rejuvenate dry, aging hands. Within the topical treatment are lipopeptides, tranexamic acid and niacinamide to treat age spots, rebuild collagen and restore skin elasticity in the hand, with the fact in mind that women, especially, primarily show signs of aging in their hands and neck before anywhere else. Compatible for all skin types, including mature hands and sensitive, youthful skin looking to prevent signs of aging, the treatment helps ease the effects of environmental exposures that present as age spots, fine lines and dehydration.



Rohrer Aesthetics, a manufacturer of energy-based aesthetic technology founded in 2014, recently conducted a clinical study evaluating its PIX:E device. The study evaluated the device's ability to rejuvenate skin and prevent visible signs of aging before they begin using collagen-induction technologies. PIX:E combines FDA-cleared 4MHz radiofrequency microneedling system with fractional and full-field Er:YAG laser resurfacing. Looking at the device's potential to deeply stimulate collagen and facilitate skin rejuvenation in a single session, Rohrer assessed 20 patients. Of those participants, 91% reported improvements in skin tone and texture.



Shed's new product line of medical-grade oral and topical treatments, Hair Solutions Vertical, targets hair thinning and loss for men and women. Within the line are medications directed toward the biological and hormonal processes men and women uniquely experience affecting the hair follicle and growth phase. The product line's oral capsules and topicals work synergistically to target inflammation and stimulate follicles while supporting the natural hair growth cycle.

Images courtesy of the manufacturers; Clockwise from top: Image by deagreezat Christopher Christopher at Adobe Stock

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Elevating Aesthetics: Why Ongoing Team Training Is Your Greatest ROI

Investing in continuous staff development is the key to improving profitability, patient experience and sustainable growth.

In today's hyper-competitive, rapidly evolving medical aesthetics landscape, one fact stands above all: your team—not your technology—is your most valuable asset. With new devices, shifting patient expectations and expanding treatment modalities, the practices that grow and scale sustainably are those that prioritize training and skill development at every level.

As of 2024, the U.S. medspa industry includes more than 11,400 practices, employing over 100,000 people, and generating $17–19 billion in revenue annually[1]. But as more practices open and competition intensifies, the difference between surviving and scaling lies in team performance, and performance begins with training.

Trained Teams Drive Profitability

At Terri Ross Consulting, we've worked with hundreds of aesthetic practices worldwide. One consistent pattern has emerged. The most profitable, efficient and scalable

Image by Koto Amatsukami at Adobe Stock

practices all invest heavily in their people. Training is not a "nice to have." It's a critical driver of:

- Higher consultation conversion rates
- Improved patient satisfaction and retention
- Better treatment outcomes
- Maximized revenue per provider hour
- Increased team accountability and reduced turnover

According to our internal benchmarks, a trained provider can increase consultation-to-treatment conversion rates by 20–30%, equating to $200,000–$400,000 in additional annual revenue per provider, depending on case mix and hourly productivity.



Why Training Is the Smartest Investment You'll Ever Make

Even the best branding or latest laser can't compensate for a team that isn't confident, consistent or skilled in communication and conversion. If your front desk stumbles on the phone, your PCC struggles with financial conversations, and if your providers aren't presenting full treatment plans, you're leaking revenue daily. Staff training leads to:

Higher Conversion& Retention

Every missed lead, fumbled phone call or rushed consultation costs money. Industry averages show consult-to-treatment conversion rates hover around 45–50%. However, with proper scripting, a Cosmetic Interest Questionnaire (CIQ), and a structured treatment plan template, practices can boost conversions;to 65–75%.

The 2024 AmSpa report[1] also shows that 73% of patients are repeat visitors, up from 65% in 2021. This upward trend is no accident. It's the result of systems that keep patients engaged, followed up with and offered appropriate ongoing care.

Enhanced Patient Experience

When patients feel heard, educated and guided, trust builds, and trust converts. About 42% of new patients come from word-of-mouth referrals, making every touchpoint critical to future revenue[1]. A well-trained team enhances these interactions, increasing immediate bookings and long-term loyalty.

Revenue Per Hour Optimization

One of the most underutilized performance measures is revenue per hour. Across the U.S., the average patient spend per visit is $514–$590[1], yet many providers average



Scaling doesn't mean working harder. It means working smarter, and smarter starts with systematized training that allows others to operate at a high level without constant oversight.

well below their capacity due to inconsistent treatment planning or under-selling ancillary products and services.

In our programs, we consistently help providers increase revenue/hour by 25–50% by training them to:

- Present complete treatment plans
- Offer bundled services or skincare packages
- Use pre-consult tools like before-and-after photos and pricing transparency

Even a $100/hour improvement, for example, can mean an additional $16,000/month in revenue for a full-time injector.



You Can't Scale What You Haven't Systematized

According to AmSpa, 81% of practices are single-location and often owner-operated. Many owners are still performing treatments, managing staff, running marketing and burning out.

Image by StockLab; Koto Amatsukami at Adobe Stock

Scaling doesn't mean working harder. It means working smarter, and smarter starts with systematized training that allows others to operate at a high level without constant oversight. You can't scale what you can't systematize. And you can't systematize without a foundation of education. A well-trained team allows for:

- Increased patient capacity without reducing quality
- Elevated leadership where owners can focus on growth
- Replicable success, especially for multi-location growth or franchising



Five Components of a High-Performance Training Culture

The best practices don't train with a one-and-done effort. They create cultures of continuous learning and performance. Here's how we recommend structuring that foundation:

Robust Onboarding

Your onboarding process should not just cover systems. It should communicate expectations. Be sure it includes:

- Brand values and voice
- Patient flow and the journey roadmap
- Clinical protocols
- Sales and consultation scripts
- Shadowing, role-play, and assessments

This shortens the ramp-up period and allows new hires to integrate into your culture.

Ongoing Sales & Clinical Training

Best-in-class teams train monthly. This includes:

- Hands-on clinical refreshers (in partnership with manufacturers)
- Consultation scripting, pricing transparency and objection handling
- Retail and cross-selling education
- Skincare protocol training aligned with services

We recommend keeping training short, role-based and tied to KPIs.

Regular Coaching & Feedback Loops

Training without coaching becomes passive. Create feedback loops, such as:

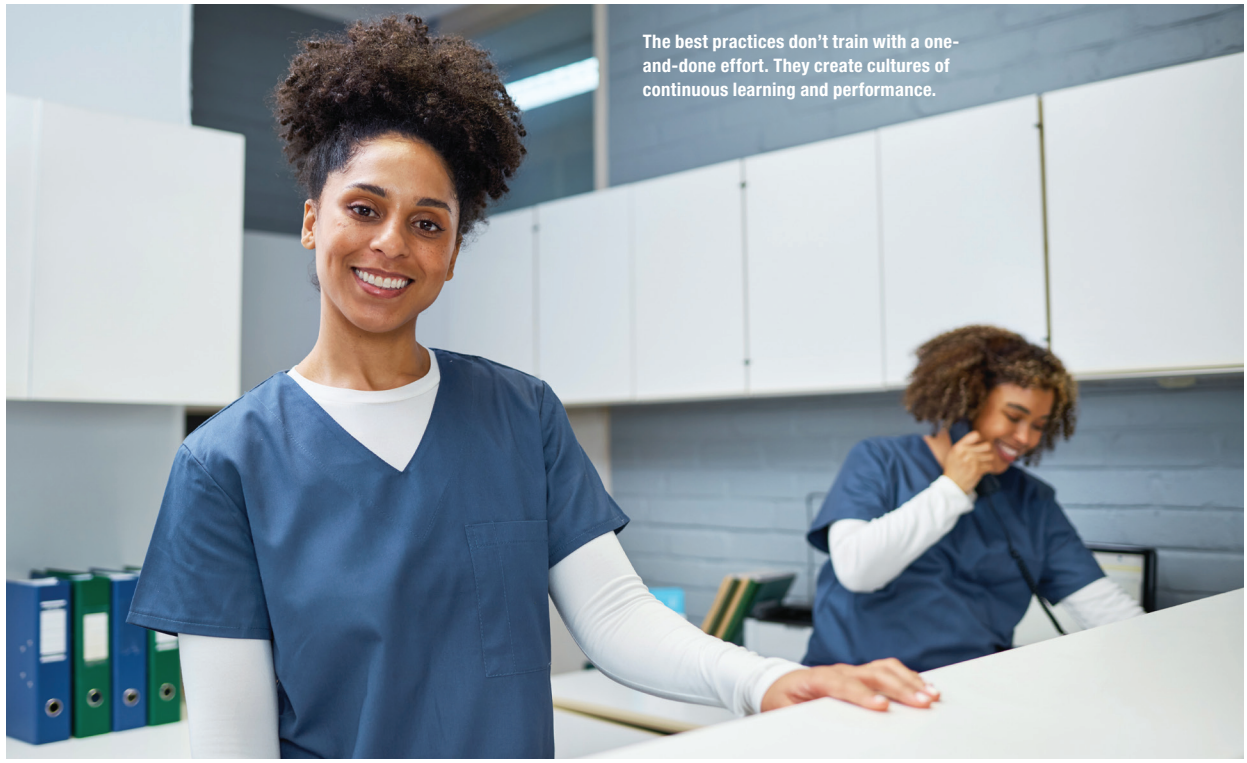
- Monthly 1:1s with team leads
- Performance reviews tied to objective KPIs
- Peer recognition and win sharing

This builds accountability and celebrates growth.

Role-Based Growth Plans

Each team member should have a development roadmap. For example:

- Front Desk: Increase call-to-book ratio from 60% to 80%



The best practices don't train with a one-and-done effort. They create cultures of continuous learning and performance.

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- PCC: Raise average treatment plan value by 15%
- RN/PA: Master new service like RF microneedling

When training is tied to real goals, engagement soars.

KPI-Driven Accountability

You can't improve what you don't measure. Key KPIs include:

- Conversion Rates (lead-to-consult, consult-to-treatment)
- Revenue Per Hour (per provider)
- Skincare or Retail Attach Rate
- Patient Retention %
- Pre-booking Rate

Only 68% of practices track monthly patient volume, and just 61% track average spend per visit [1]. This is a huge, missed opportunity for performance management.

Overcoming the 3 Most Common Training Objections

I often hear pushback out in the field when I'm speaking or training practices, like:

"What if I train them and they leave?"

My response is always, "What if you don't, and they stay?" Staff without clear expectations, growth opportunities or performance feedback are more likely to underperform and quit.

"We're too busy to train."

Then you'll always be too busy to grow. Practices that schedule two hours per month for focused training see significantly higher staff confidence and productivity.

"Training is expensive."

No, untrained staff is expensive. Just one missed treatment plan per week can cost $3,000–$5,000/month. Not to mention the cost of turnover, dissatisfied patients or underperforming team members.

Implementing Training

If you're not ready to build a full training department, here are some tips to get started:

- Use your team meetings for 10-minute micro-trainings
- Leverage manufacturer reps for hands-on demos and refreshers
- Assign peer mentors for shadowing and onboarding
- Use a shared drive or platform for training videos, SOPs and scripts
- Schedule monthly KPI reviews and tie them to training needs

The key is consistency, not perfection.



Best-in-class teams train monthly. This includes hands-on clinical refreshers.

Elevate Your Team, Elevate Your Practice

The med spa industry is forecasted to grow another 8–10% annually through 2026[1], but the gap between revenue and profitability is widening. According to AmSpa, the average profit margin in 2023 was 38%, but many practices fall below that due to inefficiency, underperforming staff and lack of standardization.



If you want to scale with intention, protect your margins and prepare your practice for expansion or exit, investing in your team is non-negotiable. Your people are your sustainable competitive advantage. Technology will change. Marketing trends will shift. But a high-performing, well-trained team will always be the key to long-term growth. ME

REFERENCES:

1. https://americanmedspa.org/resources/med-spa-statistics



Terri Ross a world-renowned, strategic practice growth consultant, author, international speaker, Podcast Host of "In Touch With Terri" and high-performance sales coach for both medical aesthetic practices and Fortune 500 medical aesthetic companies. She is the Founder and CEO of Terri Ross Consulting and the Co-Founder of The Aesthetic Success.

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John Oliver Exposed a MEDSPA CRISIS—

Aesthetics Experts Urge Clearer Universal Safety Standards, Law Reform

By Jamie O'Toole

Comedian John Oliver recently centered an episode of *Last Week Tonight* on medspas. Behind the laughs of how easy it can be for these establishments to allow a few bad apples to facilitate careful procedures, it sounded an alarm for patients and practitioners, begging the question: are the current state by state regulations enough to keep patients safe in an area of medicine where beauty and medical practices cross paths? Estheticians, law professionals and surgeons agree there should be clearer universal standards for compliance and safety as society sees this area of medicine–still in its infancy, advancing and populating more and more.



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In many cases, the medical director isn't involved in care, doesn't supervise treatment protocols and isn't available to assist when complications arise.

While Oliver's coverage was a generalization, highlighting careless casualties that certainly infiltrate the industry, it points to a real concern. There are many medspas doing things the right way—professional, patient-centered and safe—but unfortunately, at the same time there are many that do not. Within the blurry line between beauty and medical practice in aesthetics, two very different grades of care, there are professionals that vary in titles and require different training and thresholds to practice intense treatments like microneedling, injectables and lasers, but current laws lack consistency and clarity to uphold the safety and extent of their diverse roles.

The Illusion of Oversight: How Medspa Medical Directors Often Fall Short

"A medical director should be the person overseeing the day-to-day medical operations of a medspa," says plastic surgeon Johnny Franco, MD. "This means ensuring that treatments are safe, providers are properly trained and any complications are handled promptly and effectively."

The term medical director, he's noticed, has been loosely applied, however. In many cases, the medical director isn't involved in care, doesn't supervise treatment protocols and isn't available to assist when complications arise, as Oliver mentioned, and when medical directors are involved, they rarely possess training in aesthetic medicine specifically, Franco adds, making them unqualified to guide others in lower ranking. Licensed master esthetician, Susanne Schmaling, agrees, pointing to the fact that the requirement for medical supervision is often used as a legal loophole rather than an actual safety structure.

"We need accessible collaboration models that are based on expertise, oversight and transparency—not just financial arrangements," Schmaling says.

Supervision in states ranges from hands-on clinical engagement to a licensing arrangement where a physician's name appears on paperwork with little to no involvement, their title serving as a mere passage for other professionals to run a medspa. This inconsistency makes medical accountability elusive in many states, says Sara Shikhman, managing partner at Lengea Law, a healthcare law firm for medspas.

No Checks, Few Balances: Lax Oversight and Vague Laws Enable Medspa Mismanagement

In many states, non-physicians can own the business portion of a medspa, typically via an MSO model. Shikhman says the states that follow the corporate practice of medicine doctrine—including California, Texas, New York and New Jersey, however, prohibit non-physicians from owning or controlling the clinical side of the practice. Instead, they must form a business services agreement with a physician-owned professional corporation, she explains.

Texas, she says, presents an ideal example of regulation and oversight to manage what professionals are allowed to do under their scope of training. Texas has enacted a Medical Practice Act and Texas Administrative Code. While it does not mandate onsite supervision, it establishes that physicians may only delegate to licensed professionals and must ensure that adequate training, protocols and follow-up systems are in place. A physician must ensure that proper protocols and oversight are in place, but may supervise from a distance, as long as they are available for consultation.

Florida, on the other hand, presents a concerning model, she adds. Despite legal requirements for supervision, the lack of detail on what supervision entails allows for minimal involvement, opening the door to delegation of complex procedures with limited medical oversight, she explains.

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"There are also additional requirements for supervision in Florida if the procedures being done are 'primarily dermatologic,' but there is no definition of this in the law," Shikhman says. "This vagueness has led to situations where a physician might oversee a hundred medspas without setting foot in them, raising significant concerns about safety and compliance."

Though inspections by health authorities for medspas exist, they do not occur as regularly as they should, Shikhman has noticed. A lot of times inspections are based on anonymous and incorrect reports of competitors of the business rather than routine check ins, she adds. Many medspas go years without any regulatory scrutiny, and this has allowed non-compliant practices to proliferate, especially because there is no pre-opening inspection for medspas in most states either.

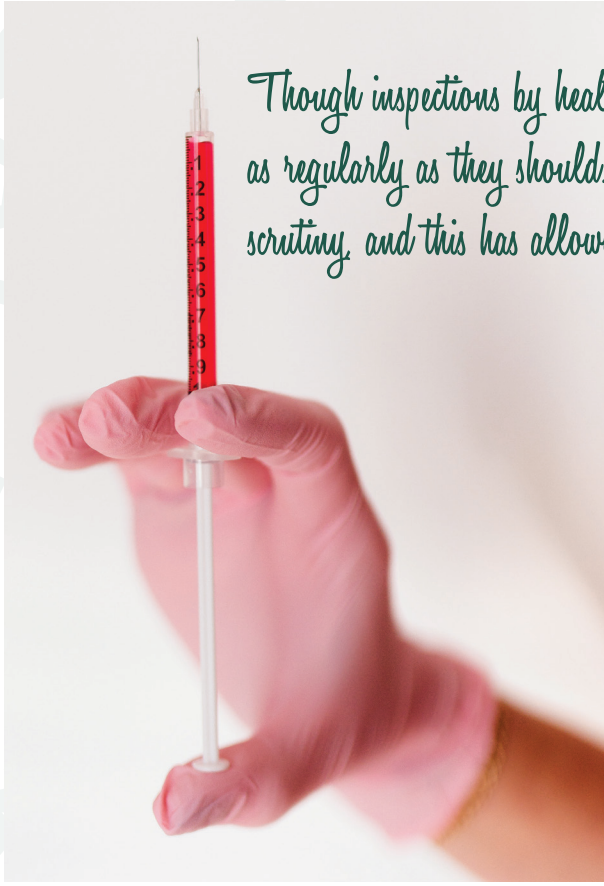
"These [pre-opening and regular] inspections should assess licensure of providers; scope of practice compliance; inventory integrity; documentation of supervision and delegation and patient consent and safety protocols," she says, similar to the standards restaurants comply to.

From Training to Tracking: A Call for Uniform Oversight in Medspa Practices

Universal baseline training for those who work under supervision should also be in place next to universal ownership and supervision compliance, such as minimum clinical hours under direct supervision; physician-signed credential verification for each injectable or device; annual competency evaluations; and formal documentation retained by the practice, Shikhman recommends.

Proper, hands-on training, certification and real-world experience should be evaluated before providers can independently treat patients, Franco says. Oversight should be more than checking boxes, however–it should include direct involvement and mentorship from the physician, he adds.

Oliver also touched on the fact that sketchy websites producing unapproved injectables and other medical devices exist, allowing individuals who are not trained and do not hold a license to obtain these products to administer them. Shikhman suggests a national supply chain tracking system, akin to pharmaceutical tracking systems, that should be mandated by the state. Every injectable product should have a verifiable lot number, authorized distributor and record of purchase, she adds.



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Though inspections by health authorities for medspas exist, they do not occur as regularly as they should. Many medspas go years without any regulatory scrutiny, and this has allowed non-compliant practices to proliferate.

Before You Book: Key Questions Every Patient Should Ask at a Medspa

A national medspa registry should be established as well, Shikhman says, listing supervising physicians, injector credentials, product sourcing details and any board violations or sanctions that patients can access to distinguish trustworthy medspas.

Patients should ask a series of questions before undergoing any treatment in a medspa, according to Franco, Schmaling and Shikhman:

- Who will perform the procedure and what is their license?
- How many times have they performed this treatment?
- Where did they train and who is supervising them?
- Are the products used FDA-approved and sourced from U.S. distributors? What happens if there's a complication?
- Is this treatment on or off label and what does that mean for the patient?



Patients should ask if the devices being used are FDA-cleared or FDA-approved, depending on the type of device, and also request to see the product packaging to confirm authenticity.

- Who is your medical director?
- Are you licensed in this state?
- What device are you using, and is it FDA-cleared?
- Are you insured?
- Who is overseeing your practice, if applicable?

The level of involvement by a physician should correlate with the risk and invasiveness of the treatments offered. For example, laser treatments and injectables require much more supervision than facials or massages, Franco says, and the medical director shouldn't just be "on call" or several hours away, as Oliver highlighted.

"Unfortunately, most patients don't understand the difference," Franco says. "In today's world, social media influencers often seem more trustworthy than experienced medical professionals, [causing] a lot of confusion around titles, certifications and qualifications—and it's easy to see how patients can be misled."

Oliver also highlighted FDA-cleared vs FDA-approved, insinuating FDA-cleared may be more prone to error because it hasn't reached approval. However, Juliana Ucchino Koval, chief operating officer at PDO Max, says FDA-cleared rather than FDA-approved doesn't mean it's less safe. It simply reflects its device classification and level of invasiveness, determined by the FDA, that would require more extensive review.

Class II, or FDA-cleared, devices still undergo extensive safety and efficacy testing. The PDO threads at PDO max, she says, underwent comprehensive safety and tensile strength testing to become clear. Clinical trials are generally not required if a predicate device already exists, she adds.

Class III, or FDA-approved devices, due to their higher risk profile, require more extensive clinical trials and in-depth safety data to demonstrate efficacy and safety, Koval explains. Each manufacturer for these kinds of devices must submit a Pre-Market Approval application, even if similar products are already available. This includes clinical trials guided by FDA specifications provided during pre-submission meetings.

Patients should look for products that are FDA-cleared or FDA-approved, depending on the device class. "As long as a product is cleared or approved, patients can feel confident in its safety," she says.

Patients, however, should ask if the devices being used are FDA-cleared or FDA-approved, depending on the type of device, and also request to see the product packaging to confirm authenticity and avoid counterfeit products before undergoing the treatment, Koval says.

The real challenge is how to implement oversight in a way that's efficient, fair and doesn't overly burden small businesses that are genuinely trying to do things the right way, Franco says, as there is a population of estheticians who specialize in these treatments, though they do not possess a medical certification and instead complete proper training.

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> "I believe supervision is necessary for prescription-level or invasive procedures, but for many non-ablative, cosmetic treatments, supervision should not be required if the esthetician holds verified advanced training and ideally state licensure."

Estheticians Are Here to Stay: They Want a Future with Clear Standards, Advanced Licensure, Defined Roles

"Hiring qualified providers in the aesthetic space is incredibly challenging—whether it's for a medspa injector or an associate surgeon," Franco says. "There should absolutely be meaningful qualifications and standards in place regarding training."

Some estheticians receive advanced education and still face scope restrictions based on outdated laws, however[1]. Schmaling says there needs to be clear scope definitions at the state level, a pathway for advanced licensure and hiring practices that prioritize education and competency, ensuring estheticians reach those meaningful qualifications to be hired or trusted, without pushing them out. For example, an esthetician who is extensively trained on laser use would need a separate certification before they can use other devices offered at a medspa, she adds.

"I believe supervision is necessary for prescription-level or invasive procedures, but for many non-ablative, cosmetic treatments, supervision should not be required if the esthetician holds verified advanced training and ideally state licensure," Schmaling says.

Supervision mandated according to the state, she adds, should include a treatment-specific delegation protocol, defined oversight responsibilities, real-time consult availability and required medical malpractice insurance requirement by the supervising practitioner to avoid inconsistency and confusion without compromising patient safety. Before performing procedures and facilitating modalities under supervision, estheticians should be required to obtain hands-on training, ongoing CE focusing on device risk level and anatomy, competency-based evaluations and not just hours, she explains.

As there's a possibility these treatments and procedures could become facilitated only by medical practitioners as states search for legal pathways that promise safety and ethics, Schmaling suggests a framework that allows estheticians to populate medspas: a second-tier license for advanced esthetics, treatment categories defined by risk, certification frameworks aligned with accreditation standards and publicly accessible scope-of-practice charts for consumers and employers.

"Estheticians are not the problem; we are part of the solution," she says. "But only if we are allowed to work within a system that recognizes our training, respects our role and gives us a clear path forward."

Medical Aesthetics: A Young Industry at the Crossroads of Beauty and Regulation

Rooted in beauty, aesthetics is a different genre of medicine, and still a recent field of practice. In the 1970s, doctors began using lasers for medical purposes, but cosmetic plastic surgery became a sensation in the 1980s and 1990s. It wasn't until FDA approval in 2002, however, that truly marked the beginning of medical aesthetics as an industry[2].

Every day, devices and regimens advance in complexity, affecting professionals who hold a multitude of titles, but who also all play a role in medspas. It's clear that as aesthetics continue to progress, safety needs to be evaluated to uphold the a strict standard of medical care, as hospitals and clinics do. Estheticians, surgeons and law professionals all agree there needs to be advancements in laws and compliance to ensure no casualties happen like the ones Oliver discussed, without taking away careers individuals worked hard to achieve.

"As a plastic surgeon, even after completing my training in 2011, I'm still learning every day," Franco says. "With limited experience, providers often don't even know what warning signs to look for—or what complications are possible; that's dangerous."

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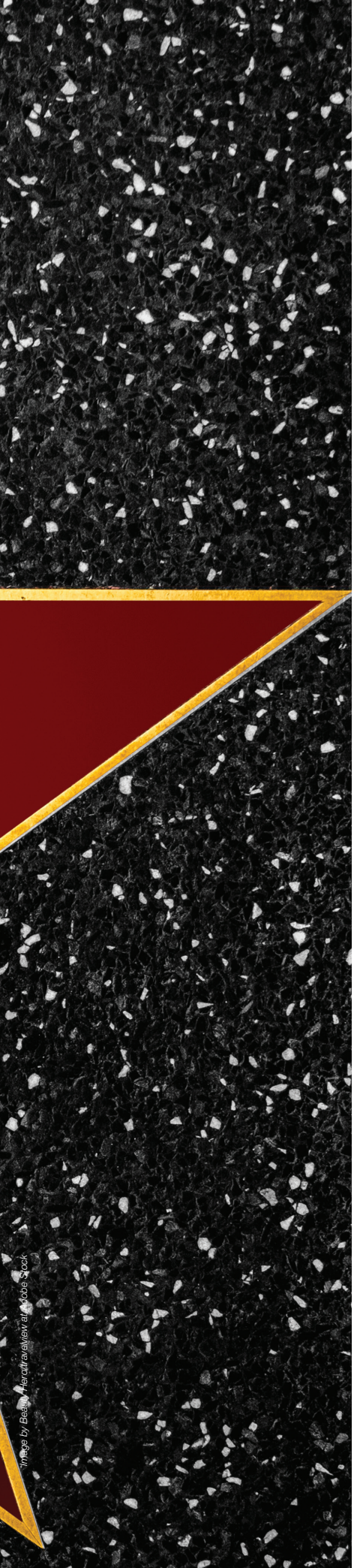

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PERFECT IS OUT, PERSONAL IS IN:

Celebrity Transparency Shaping Aesthetics—But Body Image Pressures Still Linger

By Jamie O'Toole

Khloe Kardashian, Kylie Jenner, Megan Fox, and other celebrities are now openly discussing their cosmetic treatments, breaking the long-held taboo around transparency in beauty. Their influence has helped normalize aesthetic procedures, shaping consumer decisions.

How Celebs Are Embracing Transparency and Personalized Aesthetic Plans in the Age of Tailored Transformation

"In the past, celebrities were often very quiet about what they had—or hadn't—done," says Johnny Franco, MD, FACS. "They'd credit their looks to clean eating, good sleep and sunscreen, when in reality, there were often a number of treatments involved behind the scenes."

Jonny Betteridge, MD recently posted an Instagram Reel speculating the cosmetic work Kardashian underwent. Kardashian cleared it up, casually breaking down her key to staying youthful and radiant in the comment section. She said she's received a nose job and laser hair removal, as well as Botox and Sculptra to rejuvenate the area where her face tumor was removed in her cheek.

In the past, she confesses she used filler but not over the last few years. She does regularly receive salmon sperm facials, integrating peptides, vitamins and daily skin care to slow down aging and delay the interference of surgery. To further stimulate collagen, she tightens the skin using Sofwave and improves its texture with collagen baby threads underneath her chin and neck.

"In 2025 there are many other things we can do before surgery but when it's time, and if I choose to, I know some great doctors," Kardashian wrote in her comment.

Franco credits this recent flaunting of treatments, that was once more secretive, to the introduction of GLP-1 medications. Transformations suddenly became accessible, empowering and personalized. It introduced control over the way many wish to present themselves.

"People—including Oprah—started opening up about their experiences and the use of new GLP-1 medications to help them along the way," Franco says. "Now we're seeing that same openness roll into aesthetic treatments."



Unfiltered Fame Meets Aesthetic Reality in a Culture Rethinking Beauty, Influence and Self-Investment

Celebrities shape style, beauty and social trends, even aiding mass health decisions with their advocacy. About 76% of U.S. adults, however, say the media promotes an unattainable body image for women[1]. The uptick in candid conversations centered around cosmetic procedures and setting the record straight on social media is allowing viewers to realize that most transformations they see take time, intention and expert support—not just great genes and fortune, like many once believed.



About 76% of U.S. adults say the media promotes an unattainable body image for women.

These conversations communicate that natural bodies do exist, that these bodies patients admire are investments and not entirely unattainable. It's no longer shameful to have cosmetic work done or exclusive either–it's within reach of the masses, especially as the aesthetics industry expands, thanks to celebrity endorsements.

Viewers have begun to equate a better body to the right investment, as studies show social media platforms like Instagram significantly influence motivations for aesthetic surgery. Recent findings show 70% of young adult women and 60% of young adult men report dissatisfaction with their bodies, leading to their increased interest in surgical interventions[2].

From left: Image by Marta/Drobot Dean at Adobe Stock;



With the to introduction GLP-1 medications, transformations suddenly became accessible and personalized.

Franco says celebrity transparency has sparked thoughtful discussion in practices and medspas, whether individuals do decide to fund the body they desire, or accept that the bodies they see on social media aren't entirely natural, and so it's okay for them to own or enhance their natural physique. Those discussions, motivated by inspirational images, have allowed surgeons like Franco to create a personalized treatment plan that works for the individual, especially as these celebrities credit the fact that they have a network of the right providers behind them, he says.

A Wharton study[3] looked at the psychology of celebrity endorsements, highlighting that people are more likely to choose products that are endorsed by a celebrity rather than a non-celebrity—a powerful, but sometimes dangerous persuasion.

Celebrities might be starting to realize that, from a body image standpoint, it's not great to hide the things they've done, Franco says. Though they're an elite group of people and secrecy has made them stand out, leaving people wondering how they look so "perfect," influencers and celebrities are now praised for their relatable content.

"This shift has definitely changed our role as surgeons," Franco says. "Patients are coming in expecting more education and long-term planning, and that's a good thing; It allows us to work together to build a treatment plan that's tailored to their goals and timeline—something that makes sense for them personally, not just based on a one-size-fits-all approach."

Celebrity Influence vs. Informed Choice: Navigating Beauty Trends with Responsibility

Anil Shah, MD says celebrity endorsements always need to be taken in context, however. While Megan Fox and other public figures may claim to use Biotulin[4], it's unlikely that this is the only product or procedure they rely on, especially if they are being paid to promote. Discussing a treatment or beauty secret creates a perceived benefit, but it's not proof of effectiveness on its own, he says.

"Our job is no longer just performing the treatment—it's helping patients navigate the journey with clarity, honesty and realistic planning," Franco says. "The more we normalize that it's a journey, not a quick fix, the more empowered patients are to make informed, confident decisions for themselves."

It's important to note, while celebrities' transparency has led to acceptance and less judgment around undergoing cosmetic procedures, even inviting more informed discussions in aesthetic offices, ethical concerns remain around unrealistic beauty standards, highlighting the need for healthier body image promotion on social media as body dissatisfaction still lingers[2]. ME

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INTEGRATE, DON'T UPSELL: Retail Skincare is Driving Patient Results and Medspa Revenue

By Jamie O'Toole

While some medspas may position skincare as an optional add-on at checkout, perceiving these products as a lower-ticket item with less immediate return, recent reports indicate that skincare adds up to 45% more revenue to skin rejuvenation visits and is often the only reason patients are now visiting aesthetic practices. One-and-done, high-impact treatments may be big-ticket items, but more patients are looking to invest in proactive care and protection post-op. Skincare experts advise clinicians to strategically integrate skincare into visit workflows through package bundles and education in consultations to streamline after-care and pre-care in the onset of successful treatment results.

Image by plaassc at Adobe Stock



Skincare, experts say, should be integrated into treatment plans, not treated as an optional upsell.

Guidepoint Qsight data[1] reports that skincare sales generate an additional $160–$170 per visit for regenerative treatments like neurotoxins, micorneedling and filler. Though $160 looks less than investments like filler, which starts at $1,384 and energy-based devices at $976, retail skincare can add 30–45% of total visit revenue, especially as this data also shows many patients are coming in solely for skincare[1].

Skincare has become not only a valuable asset to patients' results, but also an opportunity for medspas and practices to use at its advantage. Skincare is emerging as its own category with standalone value but also shows signs of being integrated into treatment planning, says Erika Sheyn, SVP of aesthetics at Guidepoint Qsight.

"The way patients are purchasing suggests it's moving beyond the role of an optional add-on, especially as we see a growing willingness to invest in regenerative skincare offerings," she says.

Closing the Skincare Gap: Why Post-Treatment Care Is Essential—Not Optional

There is still hesitation among patients to invest in skincare in addition to high-impact treatments that they believe might mend their concerns immediately—a shortcut to on-going skincare. Independent practices often deal with juggling multiple suppliers and platforms just to stock retail skincare, Praveen Ramineni, CEO of Portrait says. That friction alone is enough to keep retail on the back burner, he adds.

Ramineni and his counterpart, Patrick Blake, MD, FAAD, board-certified dermatologist and co-founder of Portrait, say skincare should be a non-negotiable for the after-care of treatments like neurotoxins and microneedling to nurture results and extend outcomes between visits, instead of a checkout decision.

"Skincare is still too often viewed as a separate discussion when it should be part of the continuum of care," Blake says. "A patient's investment doesn't end when they leave the chair—it extends to how they care for their skin in the days and weeks after treatment."

Bridging that gap between treatment and skincare not only improves outcomes, he says, but also reinforces trust and long-term loyalty.

While esthetician Trina Renea hasn't seen a decline in the skincare market as the owner of Facial Bungalow and Esthetic Concierge, the question is whether patients are buying from providers in-office or elsewhere. Due to the price of these treatment investments and the idea that energy-based devices and fillers will address concerns instantly—patients tend to skip the skincare step or use what they already have.

Skincare Misinformation Is Undermining Results: The Post-Treatment Education Gap

With the rise in online influencers, esthetician Terri Wojak says viral skincare trends, and easily accessible products flood patients with options and leads to miseducation. The products they use could sensitize the skin or interrupt the healing process for aesthetic treatments specifically. She often hears patients say "I already have stuff at home" or "I only have the budget for a treatment."

"They don't understand that post-treatment skin has different needs, and some products could be potentially irritating," Wojak says.

In 2025, people are highly skeptical of product ingredients, and instead of buying products next to the

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There is still hesitation among patients to invest in skincare in addition to high-impact treatments that they believe might mend their concerns immediately.

promise of minimally invasive treatments, they're resorting to low-risk beef tallow and castor oil, Blake says. Practitioners and dermatologists, he adds, have to take the time to inform decisions, especially since recommended skincare on social media might not be compatible with diverse skin types after aesthetic procedures.

When Skincare Comes With the Treatment: A Seamless Path to Better Results

"Here's the most innovative way to integrate retail without feeling pushy: Bundle products into your procedure cost," Renea says. "When patients receive products as part of their treatment, it feels like a thoughtful gift rather than an upsell."

Since they're already investing significantly in the procedure, patients are naturally motivated to follow through with the aftercare, she explains. The real issue isn't market demand—it's focus and execution, and most practices chase high-ticket treatments while overlooking retail because staff don't have time to explain "low-ticket" items, Renea adds.

"Patients buy skincare products every month or two; That $167 becomes $2,004 per year, per patient, [and] that's more than most single treatments bring in," she says. "Your neurotoxin patients come every 3-4 months, filler patients annually and laser patients occasionally—but skincare? That's monthly recurring revenue that keeps flowing."

Blake says most providers already know which products complement their treatments, and education starts in the chair. While there's a challenge to push skincare because they assume patients won't follow through due to preconceived notions or misinformation, many practitioners can relieve some of that uncertainty around whether products will actually work or not through education that starts at the consultation, framing skincare as part of the main treatment and the necessity that it is.

In Wojak's experience, most patients do not fully understand the importance of post-care products in their treatment outcomes. While they may follow instructions initially, the "why" behind the regimen is often lost unless it is clearly explained. Many view skincare as cosmetic rather than therapeutic, she says.

"Patients are more understanding when we take the time to explain how post-care products reduce inflammation, support the skin barrier, prevent infections and PIH, and extend the benefits of the treatment itself," Wojak says. "Without a thorough explanation, patients may skip steps, use the wrong products, or stop care too soon, potentially compromising their results."

Positioning Skincare as a Core Part of Care, Not a Side Note

Time can be a major barrier, especially for medical aesthetic providers. In fast-paced offices, it can be challenging to have the time to thoroughly explain the importance of the products recommended. All staff, including the receptionist, should be trained on the products used in the practice, Wojak says, to reiterate the importance of using the right support products to get the most from their treatment.

The most effective strategy for integrating skincare retail is simple, Renea says: Focus on the patient's journey. Start with pre-care products that prepare the skin for better treatment results—exfoliating and hydrating products that enhance procedures. Then, offer post-care kits with healing and hydrating products, along with clear instructions, she explains.

With margins being high in medspas, the upfront cost of high-quality skincare for smaller practices comes down to affordability and promise of return, Ramineni says, but skincare should act as a strategic part of the business and not just an afterthought. The best practices don't save the skincare conversation for checkout—they start during the consultation and carry it through every touchpoint, he adds.

"The goal is to position skincare as part of the care plan, not a checkout upsell," Ramineni says. "It builds trust, drives repeat purchases, creates loyalty with longer-lasting outcomes and ultimately adds meaningful revenue without adding chair time." ME

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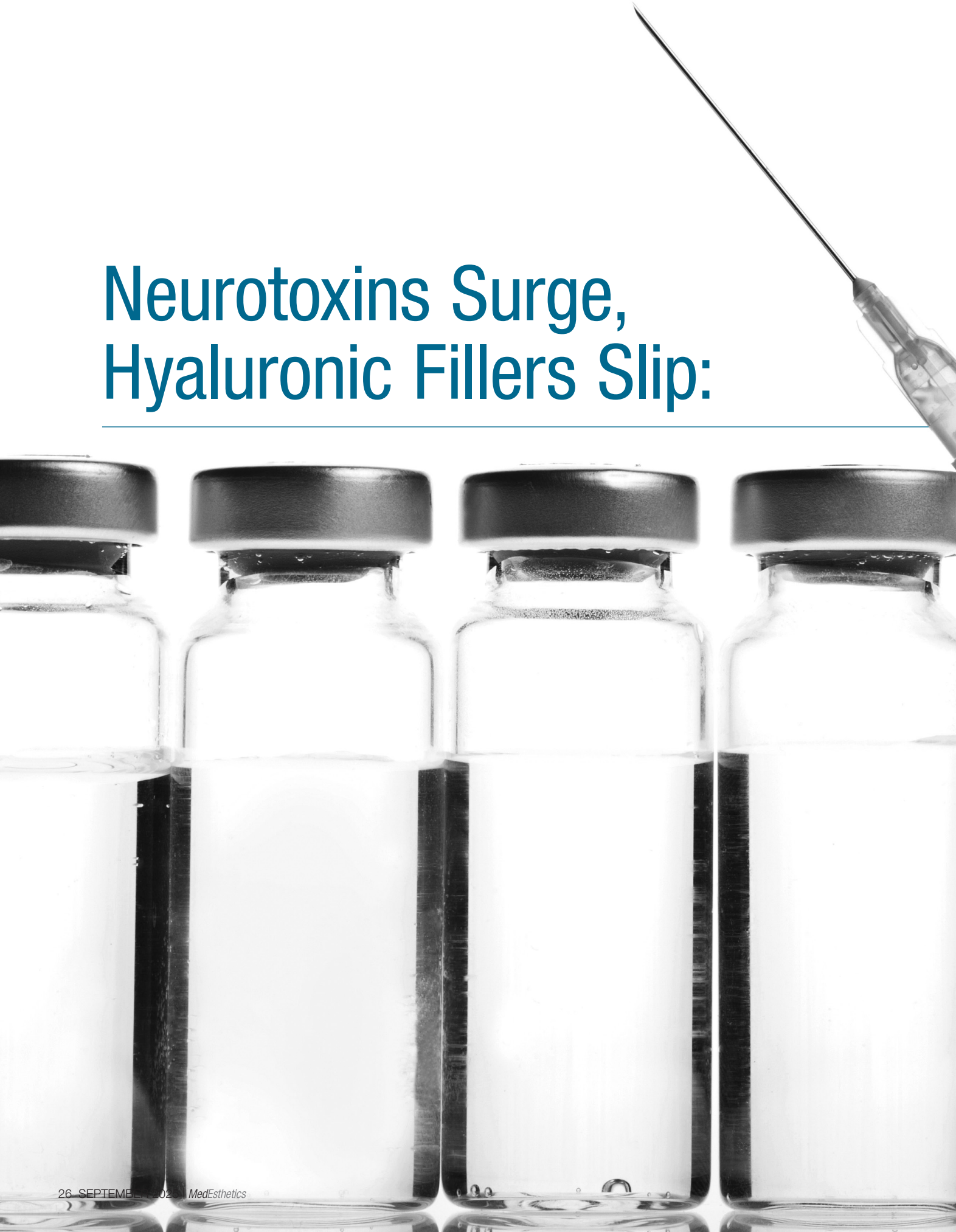
Neurotoxins Surge, Hyaluronic Fillers Slip:



GLP-1 and Skincare Usher in a New Chapter

By Jamie O'Toole



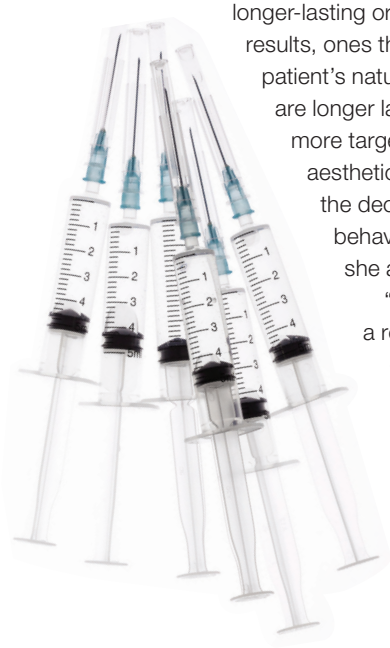
Guidepoint Qsight released its purchasing trends report, and it reflected an increase in GLP-1 medications at offices and practices, specifically in conjunction with other procedures like body contouring. Filler, it appears, is increasingly paired with neurotoxins and not the other way around; Instead, hyaluronic acid filler is seeing a decline in offices. Meanwhile, skincare packaged into treatment plans becomes a smart strategy for medspas to integrate.



About 50% of all dermal filler visits also include a neurotoxin procedure, while only 13% of neurotoxin visits include dermal filler procedures"— decline from 21% in 2017.

About 50% of all dermal filler visits also include a neurotoxin procedure, while only 13% of neurotoxin visits include dermal filler procedures—a decline from 21% in 2017[1]. Hyaluronic acid fillers, in particular, are seeing the most decline among patients and make up the majority of dermal filler procedures.

Erika Sheyn, SVP of aesthetics at Qsight says patient spending on biostimulatory fillers, however, is increasing. This shift may signify a preference toward longer-lasting or more natural-looking results, ones that work compatibly with a patient's natural skin type. Since these are longer lasting and filler is typically more targeted based on specific aesthetic goals, this could explain the decline while neurotoxin behavior remains unchanged, she adds.



"Neurotoxins have become a routine part of aesthetic care and are often the first treatment patients try," Sheyn says. "They're used preventatively and maintained regularly, which contributes to their higher frequency as standalone visits."

The report highlights GLP-1's aptitude for being paired well with other procedures, a succession to the medication being primarily sought out exclusively in aesthetic practices and driving revenue as a stand-alone previously[2]. It has sustained its demand, as 15% of all visits at medical aesthetic practices offering GLP-1 involved the purchase of GLP-1 medication in 2024, but now, about 10% of body contouring visits now include a GLP-1 purchase, up from just 2% in 2022[1].

"As patient goals shift toward long-term transformation, many are turning to weight management as a foundation for their aesthetic journey," Sheyn says.

Practices, she adds, have an opportunity to position GLP-1 alongside treatments like body contouring or skin tightening to address metabolic and physical changes into a cohesive plan. Practices also have the opportunity to bundle skincare into treatments, as data shows patients are visiting aesthetic offices solely for medical-grade skincare.

In visits involving chemical peels, microneedling or hydradermabrasion, skincare can add an additional 30–45% to the total revenue[1]. These services naturally pair with skincare for post-treatment recovery and maintenance between treatments.

With 50% of skincare sales occurring without a procedure[1], skincare is increasingly seen as part of the treatment journey, not just a retail item, she says—indicating a shift toward the need for practices and medspas to incorporate regimens into the overarching treatment plans rather than an add-on.

"This points to an expanded role for practices, not just as treatment centers, but as trusted sources for ongoing skin health strategies," Sheyn says. ME

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The founders of Treat Medspa: COO Lindsay Malachowski, Sarah Bonner, the chief growth officer and CEO Ryan Bloch.



Courtesy of Treat Medspa

INSIDE TREAT MEDSPA'S NYC FLAGSHIP LOCATION:

AI Imaging and Brain Science Personalize Beauty at a Cellular Level

By Jamie O'Toole

Treat Medspa opened its flagship location in Manhattan, New York on July 1. Its treatments, personalized using AI-led 3D imaging face and neck assessment technology, will integrate wellness therapies that target neurological factors affected by stress, diet, weight and other lifestyle elements. Its on-staff neurologist curates treatment plans customized to patients' unique medical needs to enhance beauty on an intrinsic, holistic level, reflected externally.

The founders of Treat include COO Lindsay Malachowski, the former COO of Skinney Medspa, and Sarah Bonner, who will lead market strategy, partnership development and client acquisition as chief growth officer. The third founder, CEO Ryan Bloch, oversees the strategic vision and operations.



Treat Medspa opened its flagship location on July 1. Its treatments, personalized using AI-led 3D imaging face and neck assessment technology, will integrate wellness therapies that target neurological factors.

Next-Gen Imaging Tech Gives Medspa Clients a Hyper-Real Look at Their Skin—And a Personalized Path Forward

The AI-led 3D imaging assessment the medspa will use for patient diagnosis and customized regimens is Aura Reality, created by the Swiss reality technology manufacturer, Hexago. Aura Reality can examine facial structures, skin condition and volumetric changes using 13 high-resolution cameras, per a June 16 press release. The camera capabilities will capture a photo-realistic digital "twin" of a client's face and neck, Bonner says.

The technology uses the same precision measurement as Formula 1, imaging typically used in motor racing to guide car design changes, ensure accuracy in manufacturing and provide trackside support for adjustments in speed and agility.

"What's most valuable is that Aura creates a shared visual language for us with every client, allowing us to make precise treatment recommendations and empowering the client to make more informed decisions," she says.

Over time, clients at Treat will be able to monitor the improvement in their skin with this imaging, looking at their pores, sun damage decline, redness or other skin conditions up close to see how their skin reacts and changes, inviting conversation around potentially altering treatment or adding to it accordingly, rather than a one-and-done dramatic transformation, Bonner adds.

Per the release, the treatments clients can undergo at Treat include custom facials, injectables, energy-based treatments, bodysculpting with CoolSculpting Elite, Emsculpt NEO and Sofwave. Professional-grade skincare products will also be in-house.

Treat's On-Staff Neurologist Targets Aging at the Cellular Source for Aesthetic and Cognitive Vitality

The neurologist onsite, Fiona Gupta, MD, will assist with these transformations that often start internally at a cellular level, particularly aiding patients interested in weight management and gut health supported through supplements, NAD+, IV drips and GLP-1 prescriptions. The decision to integrate a neurologist into a medspa setting at Treat was inspired by the aesthetic industry's natural shift toward overall longevity and vitality.

A neurologist, Malachowski says, will enhance wellness at its source, as aging fundamentally begins within neurological processes, especially concerning the appearance of the skin and body, explains Gupta, board-certified neurologist and medical advisor at Treat.

"The nervous system regulates collagen production through neurotransmitters, controls inflammatory responses that accelerate aging and manage the stress hormones that break down our skin barrier," Gupta says.

She explains her role as bridging the gap between aesthetic solutions and longevity, administering bio-stimulants like NAD+, or Nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide. NAD+ is a coenzyme involved in several biological functions, including cellular bioenergetics, DNA repair to slow signs of aging, metabolic homeostasis, genomic stability, mitochondrial biogenesis and cell survival [1].

"When we optimize NAD+ levels, we're supporting the cellular powerhouses that fuel cognitive performance," she says. "Clients often report improved mental clarity, better memory and enhanced focus alongside the aesthetic benefits."

Images courtesy of Treat Medspa

Treat's Holistic Programs Blend Neurology, Nutrition, and Stress Management for Radiant Aging

She will also curate weight management programs according to the patient's medical history and unique goals. GLP-1 prescriptions, one of the weight management options offered at Treat, have neurological effects beyond weight management, she explains. Its neuroprotective properties have been shown to improve cognitive function by enhancing insulin sensitivity in the brain.

The programs focusing on gut functions at Treat will remove toxins, rebalance gut biomes and repair gut lining to assist clients with maintaining a lifetime of a healthy gut, as the gut and the brain interact to influence how a person feels on the inside and outside.

To create these unique treatment plans, Gupta will conduct an extensive health background assessment for every client, helping her understand their wellness goals, certain behaviors and also risk factors to help balance neurological function that, in turn, maintain more youthful appearances, she says.

Diet will be one marker she examines. Nutrition affects how the skin and body present, as processed foods and refined sugars will take a toll on aging features, whereas whole foods will enhance complexion and aid a healthy aging process. To address skin factors affected by diet, Treat will use skin-targeted supplements and ingestibles, such as Vida Glow, a collagen supplement. Clients will use these supplements, determined by Gupta, in conjunction with in-office treatments and at-home routines to support overall skin health.

Addressing stress' impact on the skin, Gupta recommends specific stress reduction techniques, including optimizing sleep through targeted interventions. Poor sleep, a result of stress, disrupts growth hormone production and impairs the brain waste clearance system, she explains. These stressors have a direct impact on physical appearance and show up in ways like weight gain and skin fatigue. Lymphatic drainage will facilitate "brain waste clearance" while improving stress' effect on facial appearance for clients.

"The goal is to optimize the neurological factors that drive aging, not just treat the visible signs," she states.



Aura Reality can examine facial structures, skin condition and volumetric changes using 13 high-resolution cameras.

Are Medspas Evolving Into Medical Hubs Targeting the Neurological and Cellular Roots of Aging?

Aura Reality will aid in tracking physical progress of these neurological treatments on the skin, and Gupta will track energy levels, sleep quality, mood and cognitive function through validated questionnaires to follow its progression intrinsically. Hormone levels, and where possible, cellular health indicators, will also help monitor the advancement of patients' health and whether to adjust treatment plans along the way.

The aesthetics space has seen a particular focus on embedding treatments with wellness supported by tailored treatments targeting vitality at a cellular degree, and Gupta expects the next 10 years to further this expansion as medical doctors, like herself, integrate their practice offerings in the accessible spaces of medspas—ultimately welcoming more consumers into the fold of medical longevity and aesthetics.

"Traditional aesthetics practices typically focus on treating symptoms at the surface level but fail to address the source; they miss the command center altogether," Gupta says. "At Treat, we address these factors as primary aesthetic concerns, not secondary issues." ME

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SKINCARE THAT GOES DEEPER:

Alleviating Aging from Within

By Jamie O'Toole



Image by Drobot Dean at Adobe Stock; Courtesy of Deirdre Conlar Photography/Brown University

RoC Skincare has begun its Empowered Aging initiative, a project joined by Brown University's Center on the Biology of Aging, enabling students to further their education and study the skin at a cellular level, looking at how aging affects the body's tissues. Throughout this effort, RoC will use these students' discoveries to develop skincare solutions that support vitality and longevity at a biological degree, while also continuing its partnership with the SeekHer Foundation to educate and empower a community of women who face many changes with age. This initiative was inspired by a recent study indicating that the way women feel on the inside does not align with the way their skin presents.



Professor John Sedivy works with Alberto Caligiana in the Sedivy Lab in the Center on the Biology of Aging.

The RoC Skincare Longevity Research Fund was created on May 21, and Brown University Center on the Biology of Aging will begin supporting this research over the next five years. Working alongside and mentoring Brown's research team of students, acting as a third-party, will be RoC's Longevity Council. The council consists of five members who practice dermatology, medicine and biotechnology related to longevity in aging, and also the director of Brown's center on the Biology of Aging, professor John Sedivy, PhD.

The research at Brown, funded by RoC, will support scientific studies exploring the biological processes of aging, how it affects the tissues throughout the body and identify mechanisms that can extend healthy life. Based on the findings throughout the next five years, RoC will create skincare interventions that alleviate the negative aspects of aging at a cellular level, rather than mitigating the appearance of aging, says Hillary Hutcheson, CMO at RoC.

"RoC is helping to advance research that challenges existing knowledge and explores big, often unexplored questions in the field of aging," says Hutcheson. "This could involve investigating factors that contribute to why individuals age at different rates, identifying new biomarkers of aging or understanding how environmental and lifestyle factors interact with and influence our biology."

RoC conducted its Perksy Study of U.S. consumers in April 2025, and the data revealed 70% of women report feeling younger than their actual age, and 81% of women feel like the appearance of their skin impacts how they feel emotionally. This fund, inspired by these data points, sets out to provide women with clinically proven skincare that supports health and appearance, but also the effects of aging on their mental well-being.

"It is evident that fundamental aging mechanisms affect many tissues in our bodies, and are coordinated by extensive cross-talk between the brain and other tissues," says Sedivy. "The Geroscience community at large, which includes Brown University, believes that interventions that benefit healthy aging throughout our tissues are within reach."

In previous years, RoC's campaign, called the Look Forward Project, highlighted the benefits of incorporating solutions that optimize longevity in the skin. The Empowered Aging initiative builds on the project, offering additional functional, educational and emotional resources to support women's inner and outer vitality, per a May 21 press release. It is also a continuation of RoC's women's mental health advocacy partnership with the SeekHer Foundation–a community of over 40,000 women.

In tandum with this fund and development of new skincare, RoC will produce an Empowered Aging Guide–a comprehensive resource focused on inner and outer vitality, age empowerment, optimism, hope and making a positive impact, Hutcheson says, that will reach the SeekHer Circle online community. The foundation will also receive monthly reflection prompts and four virtual events facilitated by licensed mental health professionals, for deeper engagement and peer support.

"We're continuing this commitment to empowering women through the aging process through expert-backed education, clinically-proven skincare formulas, new research on perceptions about aging and community efforts that provide real women with tangible support," Hutcheson adds.

With this fund, she says, RoC expands upon its legacy that started over 65 years ago as a pharmacy in Paris with a pivotal research achievement discovering stabilized retinol. The Longevity Council will guide the future of RoC's innovation, and shape the brand's long-term vision for empowered aging, she adds.

"Brown University has particular expertise in the area of cellular senescence," Sedivy says. "This research is within the core portfolio of the Brown Center on the Biology of Aging, and its support will enhance the quality and value of this research; it will [also] be used to support the training of students and junior researchers in the center, promoting their careers and retention in aging research." ME

Jamie O'Toole is the associate managing editor of *MedEsthetics.*

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BARBIE NOSE DEMAND SURGES, BUT SO DO REVISIONS:

New Approach Prevents Airway Compromise Amid Soaring Demand

By Jamie O'Toole

Barbie nose is a relatively new trend in rhinoplasty, but it's received quite the buzz on social media as of late. Plastic Surgeon Anil Shah, MD, who authored the book *Nosecentric*, a guide designed to educate patients and young practitioners on the art and science of rhinoplasty, has reported a recent uptick in requests for this look at his practice, particularly for young women. Despite popularity, this kind of procedure often leads to revisions due to disregard for natural anatomy. Advanced technology and a new technique involving expanding the nasal cavity while keeping the structure narrow, however, are aiding some success.



One of the biggest challenges and reasons why this particular trend can lead to revisions is creating the desired "Barbie" curve while avoiding over-projection.

Surge in Revision Rhinoplasties Highlights Challenges of Cosmetic Perfection

The 2024 annual survey of the American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery[1] showed rhinoplasties, facelifts and blepharoplasties as the top three surgical procedures in 2024, with rhinoplasty continuing to be the most frequently requested surgery, consistent with the last five years.

About 80% of AAFPRS members, however, report that more than 10% of patients seeking these rhinoplasties are seeking revisions of previous surgeries[1]. Mark Hamilton, MD, FACS, chair, public information committee at AAFPRS says rhinoplasty is the most challenging cosmetic procedure–its inherent complexity leading to a high revision rate[2], especially for extreme rhinoplasties like Barbie nose that do not age well with time.

"These more extreme rhinoplasties create structures that often do not wear well with time," he says. "On the table before and after glamour shots as seen on social media may be dramatic and enticing, but they do not reflect real results that can only be seen after complete healing and years of contractile forces."

Shah has seen many revision requests for the Barbie nose specifically, mainly among patients who went overseas and underwent this procedure without proper information and fully understanding what they were signing up for. These patients experience difficulty recognizing themselves after such a dramatic change and report feeling disconnected from their own appearance.

More female patients, he adds, have become more concerned about achieving this smaller look to their nose and less about how dramatically it might differ from their natural anatomy, leading to undesirable results and the need for revisions.

"Some patients come in seeking absolute perfection, which doesn't exist," Shah says. "Many patients bring in a filtered, angled reference image, [so] I always remind patients that inspiration photos are often unrealistic or show just one flattering angle, [and] when they see full, unedited images of those same people, they sometimes feel differently."

Over-Projection and Airway Narrowing: New Rhinoplasty Approach Aims to Preserve Breathing While Achieving Barbie Nose Look

One of the biggest challenges and reasons why this particular trend can lead to revisions is creating the desired "Barbie" curve while avoiding over-projection, Shah says. In an attempt to create a delicate curve,



Clockwise from top: Image by Rabiza Anatolii, Guys Who Shoot at Adobe Stock

some surgeons push the nose out too far, initially pleasing in the operating room, but sometimes appearing unnatural or exaggerated in real life.

Another major concern for undergoing a Barbie nose, he adds, is breathing. As noses become smaller and narrower, the airway can become compromised, but Shah practices a technique that diverts from the traditional rhinoplasty method of narrowing the nose by cutting and pushing the nasal bones inward using a chisel.

"While this makes the nose look smaller, it often narrows the airway too, which can lead to breathing issues," he explains.

As technology has helped advance techniques to stay true to the patient's unique frame, 3-D imaging provides a visual of how this style would actually look on a patient's face and allow them to understand how certain aesthetic elements can preserve individuality.

Because traditional chisels don't offer the level of precision modern rhinoplasty requires, Shah says that's where ultrasonic tools come in. Ultrasonic instrumentation allows surgeons to sculpt with much greater accuracy, creating smoother contours and reducing the chance of residual irregularities and potential revisions.

"These types of extreme and trendy noses are only temporarily "in style," and once the fad has passed, the patient will be left with a nose that is no longer aesthetically pleasing."

Instead of pushing the bones inward, his technique that he writes about in the Aesthetic Surgery Journal[3] increases the size of the pyriform aperture by removing a small piece of bone from the inner part of the nose to shape a narrower, more refined bridge on the outside, while widening the airway inside.

"Imagine sculpting a hallway wall: I'm making the outside sleeker, but I'm also carving out space on the inside so the hallway feels bigger—not more cramped," he explains.

How Advanced Tech and Custom Planning Can Reduce Revisions

To make this technique possible, as well as adjusting a desired look to fit the individual's unique nose and avoid these mishaps, Shah depends on technology to visualize end results for him and the patient, and make corrections without the need for revision, including 3-D Imaging and ultrasonic tools.

For Barbie nose procedures specifically, Shah spends more time personalizing surgical plans to ensure it enhances a patient's identity rather than erases it, as this kind of procedure is very distinct and dramatic. In consultations, the priority is to design a nose that harmonizes with the patient's unique facial features and not always replicating the exact reference photo.

Shah advises patients interested in achieving a Babrie nose to choose a surgeon whose results they consistently admire, not just a single post or photo, and one who understands facial anatomy to design a nose tailored to your unique features.

Hamilton warns that these types of extreme and trendy noses are only temporarily "in style," and once the fad has passed, the patient might be left with a nose that is no longer aesthetically pleasing.

"It is important when selecting a rhinoplasty surgeon to find someone with a special focus on this most complex of all cosmetic surgeries," he says. "Experience is also important–it takes years for rhinoplasty surgeons to perfect their technique and become proficient." ME

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DETAILS BY FRANCIS ACUNZO, CEO OF ACARA PARTNERS AND SARA SHIKHMAN, MANAGING PARTNER AT LENGEA LAW



Skincare Under Scrutiny: How Estheticians Can Thrive Amid State Supervision Rules

In today's booming aesthetics industry, estheticians stand at the intersection of beauty, wellness and regulation. With demand soaring for advanced services like microneedling and laser resurfacing, many professionals find themselves navigating a confusing maze of state supervision laws, medical oversight requirements and evolving consumer expectations.

While estheticians are trained to transform skin and boost confidence, running a compliant, profitable business often requires decoding legal gray areas—especially in high-regulation states like New York and California. This article outlines how to stay compliant without compromising creativity, professionalism or profitability.

The Compliance Conundrum: What Laws Really Say (and Don't Say)

Regulations governing estheticians vary widely by state, particularly in procedures that border on "medical." For example:

- California law strictly limits estheticians to services that do not penetrate the dermis—meaning procedures like microneedling, injectables and medium-depth peels are

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reserved for licensed medical professionals.

- New York takes a similarly cautious approach. Estheticians may not use tools that "affect the living layers of the skin" without physician supervision, and laser services must be performed under the oversight of a licensed medical practitioner. Unlike in many other states, laser hair removal is not considered a medical procedure in New York.
- In Texas, microneedling is considered a medical procedure if needles are longer than 0.25 mm.
- In Florida, estheticians can operate certain devices if they are "FDA-approved for esthetic use" and the practice has a medical director—though exact supervision terms are not clearly defined.

This regulatory patchwork forces estheticians and spa owners to not only understand their scope of practice but also to document protocols that ensure legal and clinical protection.

The Cost of Missteps

Failing to comply doesn't just invite fines or cease-and-desist orders. It can:

- Jeopardize insurance coverage
- Trigger complaints to the state licensing board
- Lead to shutdowns or civil lawsuits, especially if harm is alleged
- Invalidate patient consent forms if a treatment is performed outside scope

That's why a proactive legal and business strategy is just as vital as great technique.

Smart Strategies for Staying Compliant (and Thriving)

Here's how forward-thinking practices are navigating this complex terrain while building a reputation for integrity, safety and professionalism:

1. Know Your State's Line in the Sand

Every state defines the scope of practice differently, and these definitions can shift as boards reinterpret existing laws or new legislation is passed. That's why it's critical to work with a qualified healthcare attorney and business consultant who understands the nuances of medical aesthetics in your jurisdiction. Don't assume that a treatment legally offered in one state is safe to replicate in another—especially when it comes to procedures like RF microneedling, dermaplaning with blades or the use of prescription-grade peels.

Too often, estheticians rely on equipment vendors or online forums for legal advice, which can lead to misinformation and risk. Instead, establish a routine system for checking regulatory updates, especially if you offer services near the edge of your license's scope. A small investment in legal guidance upfront can prevent costly penalties and reputation damage down the line.



If your business offers treatments that may fall under the medical domain(e.g., injectables, PRP, semaglutide, PDO threads), a medical director should be actively engaged in the oversight and delegation of services.

2. Use a Medical Director Strategically

A medical director is not just a box to check—they're a strategic partner in ensuring legal and clinical safety. If your business offers treatments that may fall under the medical domain (e.g., injectables, PRP, semaglutide, PDO threads), your medical director should be actively engaged in the oversight and delegation of services. This includes:

- Drafting clear written agreements that define which procedures can be delegated, and to whom.
- Ensuring all providers are appropriately credentialed, trained and supervised.
- Conducting or overseeing good faith exams and approving treatment protocols in line with your state's standards.

Practices that treat their medical director as a true collaborator—rather than a figurehead—build stronger legal protection and clinical excellence. This partnership also enhances client trust, especially when medical staff are visible and involved in care decisions.

3. Document Everything

In regulatory and legal matters, if it isn't documented, it didn't happen. High-performing practices create detailed standard operating procedures (SOPs) for every service

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Documentation isn't just a compliance tool—it's a trust-building mechanism for clients and staff alike.

involving physician oversight. These SOPs should define:

- Who performs each service, under what supervision, and with what training
- Steps for pre-treatment evaluations, including screening for contraindications
- Documentation of informed consent
- Post-procedure follow-up protocols and how adverse events are tracked and escalated

Digital charting systems and AI-powered tools can make documentation easier and more reliable, helping you build a defensible record in case of audits, inspections or disputes. Documentation isn't just a compliance tool—it's a trust-building mechanism for clients and staff alike.

4. Educate and Elevate

Compliance isn't a one-time conversation—it's an ongoing culture. Regular staff training on laws, scope of practice, ethics and safety protocols ensures your team operates with confidence and consistency. Consider incorporating short legal updates into staff meetings or offering quarterly refreshers with a legal or regulatory expert.

At the same time, use your commitment to compliance as a marketing differentiator. Clients are increasingly savvy and ask tough questions about safety, credentials and legitimacy. Highlight your protocols, certifications and oversight structure in your branding and consultations. A well-educated team and an informed client base create a safer and more loyal environment for everyone.

5. Push for Clarity

While individual compliance is key, systemic clarity is the ultimate goal. Many regulations—like what constitutes "immediate supervision" or the line between cosmetic and medical devices—remain vague or inconsistently enforced. Join or support state and national aesthetic associations that advocate for standardized, clear and fair regulations.

Participating in this dialogue not only positions your practice as a thought leader, but it also contributes to shaping the future of the industry. Regulators often welcome practitioner input when crafting or revising rules, especially when it's framed around public safety and professional accountability.

Innovation Within Boundaries: Reframing Compliance as Creative Constraint

When viewed through a different lens, regulation isn't just restriction—it's structure. Some of the most successful estheticians innovate within clear boundaries. For example:

- Launching product lines based on common client skin issues
- Offering pre- and post-procedure prep for patients under physician care
- Developing "hybrid" memberships that include supervised treatments and esthetic services

The Bottom Line

Today's esthetician is more than a skincare expert—they're a wellness advocate, a marketing guru and entrepreneur. By embracing regulatory realities instead of resisting them, estheticians can build practices that are not only legally sound but also deeply respected, trusted and profitable. ME



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Allergan Aesthetics Seeks FDA Approval to Expand Skinvive by Juvéderm for Neck Rejuvenation

Allergan Aesthetics submitted a supplemental premarket approval application (PMA) for the use of Skinvive by Juvéderm for the neck, a hyaluronic acid intradermal microdroplet injection originally approved by the FDA in 2023 for smoothness of the cheeks. The application was accepted by the FDA for review in June, and if approved, the injectable will be used for the appearance of neck lines.

The neck typically shows visible signs of aging before the face due to the thinness of the skin in this area, less oil production and skincare neglect. Patients frequently express esthetic concerns and seek approaches to rejuvenation in this region as a result[1].

Though these regions differ in thickness and aging patterns, studies show that inventions of non-invasive and minimally invasive treatments are addressing the face and neck as a unified esthetic unit, as clinicians have moved away from focused treatments on isolated "problem areas" [1]. The potential approval of this injection further reflects the shift toward harmonizing treatments across these regions.

"While patients in my practice seem to show more concern for traditional facial aesthetic areas like the forehead and between or around the eyes, they are becoming increasingly aware of neck concerns, including fine lines and dry or dull skin," says Jeanine Downie, MD.

If approved, Skinvive could offer a minimally invasive solution to reduce neck lines and improve neck appearance, she adds, as the modified hyaluronic acid in Skinvive is designed to improve smoothness and hydrate from within for smooth texture and a radiant glow, without changing neck shape or volume.

Per a June 30 press release, the PMA submission was supported by data from a multicenter, evaluator-blinded, randomized controlled study evaluating the safety and effectiveness of Skinvive in adults with moderate to severe horizontal neck lines. Nearly 90% of patients treated with the injectable reported improvement in neck appearance at month one, the release states.

For the FDA to approve a PMA, it requires a four-step review process, and if an application does not meet a minimum threshold of acceptability, FDA will refuse to file the application for substantive review. The four step process includes administrative and limited scientific review by FDA staff; in-depth scientific, regulatory and Quality System review by FDA personnel; review and recommendation by the appropriate advisory committee; final deliberations, documentation and notification of the FDA decision[2].

"Skinvive by Juvéderm could complement other existing neck treatment options and be used alongside external modalities such as microneedling as part of a multi-modal approach to address patient's neck concerns," Downie says. ME

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Jamie O'Toole is the associate managing editor of *MedEsthetics.*

Image courtesy of Allergan Aesthetics



Megan Fox Says No to Botox— But What's in Her Serum Might Surprise You

In a recent interview with Royale, Kristi Branim Fox revealed that her sister, actress Megan Fox, hasn't undergone face treatments as many fans of hers speculate. Fox says her sister instead uses a serum called Biotulin Supreme Skin Gel. Described as an organic alternative to Botox created in Germany, it's needle-free, and its plant-based ingredients gently relax facial muscles and smooth out fine lines with the naturally occurring numbing effect of spilanthol.

While the actress has been open about procedures she's undergone in the past, like breast augmentation, she has stood firmly on the fact that she hasn't used Botox injections, even notoriously posting photos on Facebook in 2011 titled "Things You Can't Do With Your Face When You Have Botox" to shut down the rumors. The ingredient in this serum, spilanthol, is able to accomplish the look of tightened, rejuvenated skin for a shorter period of time than Botox injections by modulating sensory nerve activity.

Fast-Acting but Short-Lived: Spilanthol as a Non-Invasive Alternative to Botox

Anil Shah, MD, who administers injectables like Botox, says spilanthol is an alkylamide compound, a class of fatty acid amides derived from acmella oleracea–well-known for its anti-wrinkle activity[1]. The compound has a pungent taste accompanied by tingling and numbness to tongue and lips[2],

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and is known medicinally for its anti-bacterial properties for the skin and body. This reaction, Shah says, reduces nerve excitability, distinct from botulinum toxin, or Botox.

"[Botulinum toxin] acts at the neuromuscular junction by preventing the release of acetylcholine," he says. "Spilanthol's mechanism is more superficial and limited to dermal nerve endings and perhaps very superficial muscle tone, mediated in part through TRPV1 receptors involved in nociception and local muscular tension."

Acting as a topical, spilanthol stimulates the nerves to create a numbing, anesthetic sensation within minutes, whereas Botox requires injection and takes about three to seven days to take full effect. Spilanthol's effects typically wear off within one to two hours, while Botox can last three to four months, and that is the main difference, Shah says.

Given that spilanthol and Botox vary in depth of action and duration of benefits, though presenting similar results, preference of invasiveness and effort of maintenance, depending on the severity of wrinkles, will range by patient.

"The efficacy is vastly different, depending how severe wrinkles are and how long a patient desires the tightness to last," he says. "It really depends on patient expectations."

Between Botox Appointments or Instead of Them: The Emerging Role of Spilanthol in Preventive Aesthetics

For someone wanting a smoother forehead or meaningful reduction in facial lines, Botox remains the gold standard, Shah says, but the two could work powerfully in conjunction, he adds.

Spilanthol, as Fox's face displays, does achieve the soft look younger people, who are interested in preventive treatments, desire, especially given the fact that Fox has taken the precautionary steps through nutrition and skin care to alleviate the potential of unwanted wrinkles, and is only 39 years old. Spilanthol can reduce wrinkles by around 15-20%, while Botox routinely produces 70-90% wrinkle reduction depending on the injection site and dose, Shah explains.

Spilanthol shows promise for being used between Botox treatments, keeping the treatment intact until patients can schedule another appointment, and it can also work in the areas where Botox is less effective or carries a higher risk, such as the midface or around the mouth.

There are many patients as well who do not desire a 'overfiller look' and simply decide to put plant-derived, holistic medicine on their face for a natural softening, avoiding the cost and maintenance of Botox. Spilanthol presents an impressive safety profile over Botox: There is no evidence of systemic absorption or long-term adverse effects. Unlike botulinum toxin, which can lead to the development of neutralizing antibodies in rare cases, spilanthol has shown no evidence of resistance or tachyphylaxis.

"Its safety profile is excellent, especially for short-term or occasional use," Shah says. "It does not deliver the same level of muscular relaxation or wrinkle reduction as Botox, but it may offer a bridge for patients who are hesitant about injectables."

The topical solution works particularly for younger patients. For mature patients with well-established lines, the results are likely to be minimal, Shah says. Topically applied spilanthol typically produces effects that last from 30 minutes up to two hours, depending on skin absorption and individual physiology.

Not a Neurotoxin: Why Calling Spilanthol'Natural Botox' Can Be Misleading

Coining this ingredient as "natural or vegan Botox" can be misleading, however, Shah argues. The phrase is catchy, but it can be deceptive if interpreted too literally. It's important to clarify that the effects of spilanthol are milder and much shorter-lived, derived from a natural plant, but it is neither a neurotoxin nor structurally related to botulinum toxin, he explains.

"If this approach allows patients to reduce their injection frequency from four times a year to two, the value is significant in terms of cost, convenience and patient satisfaction," Shah says. ME



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Described as an organic alternative to Botox created in Germany, Fox's serum is needle-free, and its plant-based ingredients gently relax facial muscles and smooth out fine lines.

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TOP DERMS AGREE: THESE SKIN CARE INGREDIENTS WORK BEST

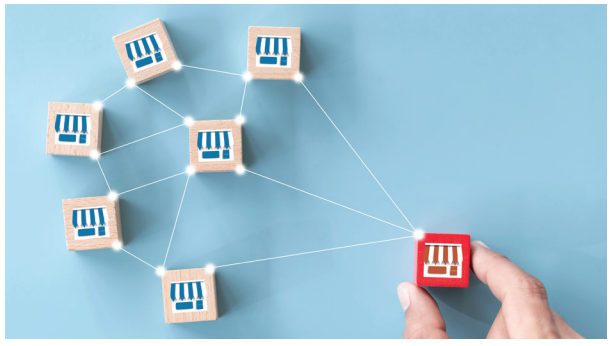


Consumers overwhelmed by skin care options can now look to science for clarity. A new national study led by Northwestern Medicine identifies the most effective skin care ingredients for common concerns like wrinkles, acne, dark spots and more — based on expert consensus from leading dermatologists across 43 institutions.

According to the article abstract, among the top-ranked ingredients were:

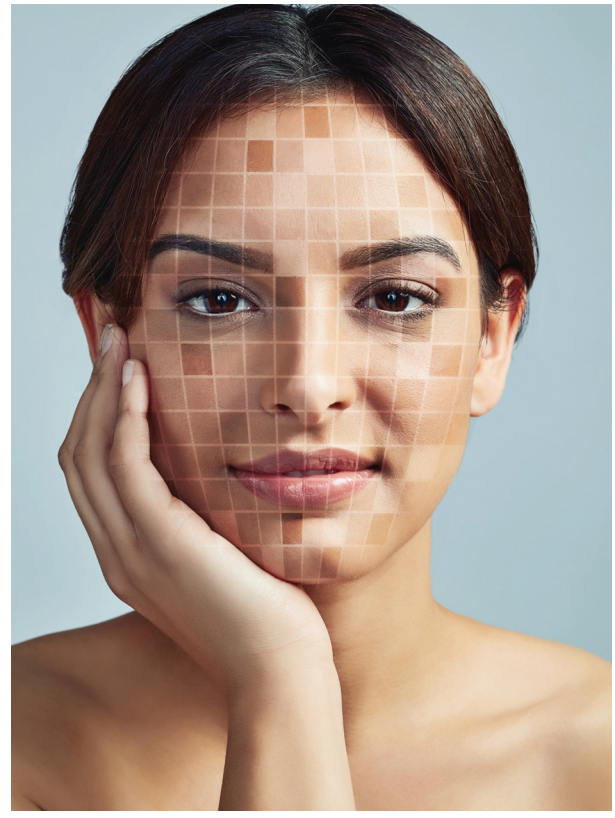
- Azelaic acid, for acne and dark spots;
- Benzoyl peroxide, for acne and oily skin;
- Glycolic acid, for acne and dark spots;
- Mineral sunscreen for fine lines, wrinkles and redness;
- Niacinamide for redness and dark spots;
- Retinoids for signs of aging, acne, dark spots, etc.;
- Salicylic acid for acne and oily skin; and
- Vitamin C, for signs of aging and dark spots.

SUBSCRIPTION SKINCARE AND TECH-ENABLED WELLNESS FUEL GROWTH IN FACIAL STUDIOS, LED BY GLO30'S FRANCHISE BOOM



Following an investment in the franchise firm Fransmart, GLO30 has seen significant growth–its number of locations reaching 18 across nine states since 2023. GLO30 reported a 120% surge in growth, per a May 2025 Kline + Company study. While franchising has extended its services, the skincare studio's packages and membership subscriptions model treat wellness as a recurring ritual rather than a destination for one-and-done luxurious treatments, generating consistent foot traffic. Standalone facial studios and medical spas experience upticks due to membership programs as well, along with the rise of tech-enabled treatments.

AS REPORTS HIGHLIGHT GROWING DEMAND FOR PERSONALIZATION, ALMA UNVEILS AI-DRIVEN UNIVERSKIN SKIN CARE SYSTEM



Almahas launched Universkin—an AI-assisted medical skincare line, designed to meet physician and patient needs for personalized solutions with its ability to recommend the use of 18 bioactives. The Universkin can capture a facial image, analyze the skin and generate a personalized formulation for approval—selected from 487,678 combinations and nearly 12 million outcomes. Within a minute, using its analysis, AI recommends products tailored to the patient's skin profile and concerns.

This launch follows a recent shift reported in the aesthetics industry: A demand for personalized products. A Mintel report concluded that 62% of U.S. beauty and personal care buyers are interested in hyper-personalized products, and 28% are willing to pay extra for them.

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AD INDEX

Aerolase Laser Skin Health C1
aerolase.com

Canfield Imaging Systems..... 5
canfieldsci.com

Environ Skin Care... ..... C3
dermaconcepts.com

Induction Therapies 1
collagenpin.com

Nutrafol..... 7
nutrafol.com

Young Pharmaceuticals, Inc...... C4
youngpharm.com

Zemits..... C2
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