MedEsthetics®

THE GUIDE FOR EXCELLENCE IN MEDICAL AESTHETICS

Allured business media

January/February 2026
Volume 22, Number 1
medestheticsmag.com



NMN's Potential in Anti-Aging Health

Plus:

- Wellness in Aesthetics
- GLP-1 Beyond Fat Reduction

MEET THE NEXT-GENERATION PRECISION FRACTIONAL CO_2

ZEMITS

Zemits CarbonFrax Pro: The All-In-One Platform for Face, Body & Intimate Wellness



> *"CarbonFrax Pro finally fixes the biggest limitations of classic CO_2 - heat spikes, uneven density, and single-purpose design."*
>
> Spiral microbeam delivery, true depth control, and the 360° VRL applicator turn it into a universal corrective platform for face, body, and intimate wellness.
>
> **Olha Maikina, MD**
> **- Co-Founder & Product Director, Zemits**

Zemits CarbonFrax Pro is a modern fractional CO_2 system that combines **resurfacing, scar revision, texture repair, soft-tissue refinement, and 360° VRL intimate rejuvenation** in one streamlined platform. It's engineered for laser professionals who want cleaner passes, smoother thermal behavior, and stronger corrective capabilities with full control over depth and density.

The system offers **multiple scan patterns,** Deep / Shallow / Mixed modes, and **precise density adjustment** — giving you the **flexibility to match energy behavior to any zone, skin concern, or downtime target.**

Whether you're performing light fractional refreshers or deeper corrective work, CarbonFrax Pro delivers consistent, predictable output that supports high-value results and fast ROI.

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Engineered for smoother thermal behavior and full CO_2 control
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To match intensity to any zone or downtime target, the system includes **Deep, Shallow, and Mixed modes,** letting you refine penetration depth and thermal behavior with precision.

You also get **full control over coverage and density.** Adjust dot size, spacing, and pattern geometry to build sessions ranging from light fractional refreshers to deeper corrective work.

Seven optimized **fractional scan patterns** —Triangle, Square, Circle, Hexagon, Spiral, Diamond, and Line—help you adapt coverage to delicate facial zones or broader body areas with predictable uniformity.

Three dedicated applicators complete the system:
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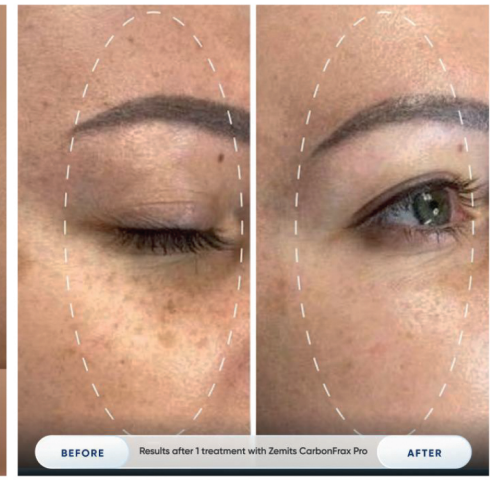
- **COFocus®** — precise soft-tissue refinement
- **CarboVRL® 360°** — uniform intimate wellness applications

What You Can Treat
- Appearance-focused improvements across face, body, and intimate areas.
- Smoother-looking texture
- Refined post-acne scarring
- Visible fine lines
- The appearance of sun damage
- Stretch marks
- Benign lesion concerns
- 360° intimate wellness





High-Ticket Treatments. Zero Consumables. Fast Payback.
CarbonFrax Pro sits firmly in the high-value corrective category, supporting strong pricing and predictable series-based revenue:
- **$800–$2,500 per session** — depending on area and treatment depth.
- **3–4 sessions per package** — typical for resurfacing and scar-focused protocols.
- **$6,400–$8,000 monthly** — generated from just two resurfacing clients per week.
- **2–4 months ROI** — the average payback period reported by most clinics.
- **$0 consumables** — long-lasting optics keep margins consistently high.

Together, these factors create a predictable, high-value revenue stream from day one.
Safety & Build
Stable performance, low maintenance, and clinical confidence.
CarbonFrax Pro features a sealed articulated arm, enclosed beam path, and a stable RF-excited CO_2 source for consistent, predictable energy delivery. Real-time system monitoring and essential safety controls support confident daily use, while the water-free design and long-lasting optics reduce maintenance and eliminate leak risks.
The system meets FDA laser safety requirements, CE medical certification, and ANSI Z136.1 standards, with adjustable parameters that support safer treatment across diverse skin tones.

CarbonFrax Pro is a modern CO_2 platform that gives laser professionals smoother passes, cleaner patterns, and greater control over every session.

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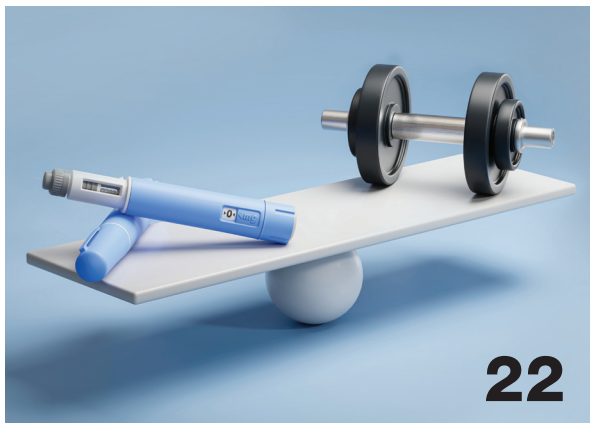

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Preventive Aesthetics and Holistic Medspa Models Lead the Way in 2026

Happy New Year! Let's make 2026 a year defined by smarter strategies, deeper client trust and meaningful, sustainable growth for your practice.

In our January/February issue, we take a closer look at the viral claim that acne-prone, oily skin leads to less wrinkles with age. It's not acne that indicates less wrinkles, though oily skin does offer a protective barrier, but early, consistent intervention is what protects long-term skin health from wrinkles. Early use of retinoids, acids, lasers and sun protection—often initiated to manage acne—acts as decades-long collagen preservation therapy.



This Jan/Feb issue highlights how early intervention, cellular optimization and holistic medspa strategies work together to support long-term skin health.

The return of NMN to the supplement market highlights the growing role of cellular optimization in preventive aesthetics, where energy, metabolism and repair are addressed long before visible decline occurs. As a direct NAD+ precursor, NMN fits naturally into prejuvenation-focused medspa models that blend at-home supplementation with in-office IV therapies to support mitochondrial health and longevity. How will this supplement pair with existing NAD+ therapies, and what does that mean for your practice? Read on to learn more!

Holistic, inside-out medspa models are becoming the foundation of preventive aesthetics, where aesthetic outcomes are inseparable from metabolic, hormonal and emotional health. By integrating injectables and devices with hormone optimization, IV therapy and lifestyle support, practices shift from reactive correction to long-term vitality and alignment. In this issue, we unpack how to market and integrate these services into your medspa, as more patients inquiry about health regimens alongside their aesthetic treatments.

To your continued success in the year ahead,

Jamie O'Toole

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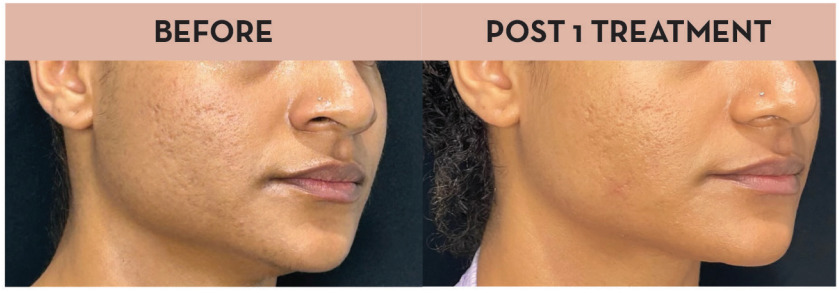
AuraLux™ is where science meets beauty in a system designed for busy, results-driven MedSpas. Deliver consistent, head-turning skin improvements with a fiber laser that is safe, versatile, and built with treatment providers in mind. From pigment correction to rejuvenation and texture refinement, AuraLux™ helps you elevate outcomes without slowing down your workflow.



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WHY MEDSPAS CHOOSE AURALUX™

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Intuitive Interface that makes staff training simple

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BRING AURALUX TO YOUR MEDSPA AND WATCH YOUR BUSINESS LIGHT UP

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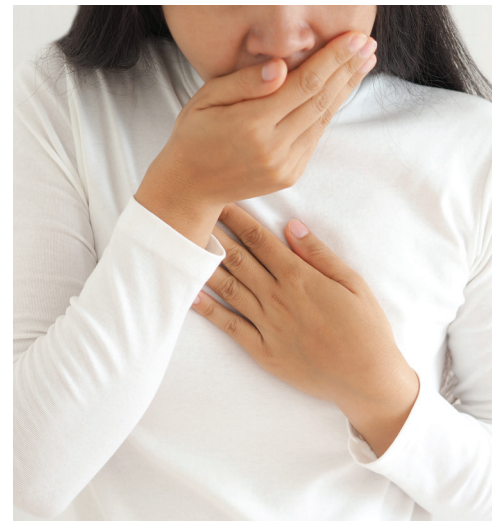
INTRODUCTIONS



The American Med Spa Association (AmSpa) has appointed Adam Reinebach as its new CEO, effective Nov. 20, marking the first leadership change since its 2013 founding by Alex Thiersch. Reinebach, formerly Operating Partner at Beringer Capital and CEO of BridgeTower Media, will guide AmSpa in expanding membership benefits, news and insights, certification programs, research, education and digital experiences. Thiersch will transition to Chairman of the Board, focusing on policy, advocacy and industry growth, while continuing to represent AmSpa through speaking, writing and hosting its podcast.



With U.S. GLP-1 prescriptions expected to exceed 20 million by 2026, concerns about "Ozempic face" and rapid facial aging are rising. Mblue Labs, a University of Maryland biotech spin-out, launched **Fit+Firm Serum**, combining methylene blue, ceramides, vitamin C, peptides and other key ingredients to restore firmness, hydration and skin density. Methylene blue supports mitochondrial health and boosts collagen and elastin, while clinical trials report 91% of users saw deep hydration and 94% noticed improvements in wrinkles and fine lines, helping skin keep pace with rapid weight loss from GLP-1 treatments.



Vanda Pharmaceuticals studied tradipitant, an oral NK-1 receptor antagonist, in 116 adults to address nausea and vomiting from GLP-1 drugs like Wegovy. The trial showed 29.3% of tradipitant-treated participants vomited versus 58.6% on placebo, meeting its primary endpoint. NK-1 antagonists block substance P in the brain's vomiting center, targeting the delayed stomach emptying unique to GLP-1-induced nausea. Vanda plans regulatory approval and a Phase III program in early 2026, aiming to improve adherence to GLP-1 treatments, which see high discontinuation rates due to nausea.

Clockwise from top: Image by Tierney; jaojormami at Adobe Stock; Courtesy of Mblue Labs

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How GLP-1s Are Reshaping Aesthetic Medicine— And Why Matrix™ by Candela Is Meeting the Moment

The rise of GLP-1 medications has created a profound shift in aesthetic medicine. Initially developed for type 2 diabetes, and later approved for chronic weight management, these therapies have transformed patients' cardiometabolic health, and, in parallel, reshaped their aesthetic needs. Matrix™ by Candela is uniquely positioned to address these needs, helping clinicians deliver tailored, natural-looking results for this rapidly growing patient population.

The visible effects of rapid weight loss have created new clinical and business opportunities for aesthetic practices. Patients now seek solutions for facial volume loss, skin laxity and contour changes, prompting many clinics to integrate medical weight management with complementary aesthetic services.

According to Scott Gerrish, DO, the founder of Gerrish MedEsthetics based in Virginia and Arizona, "GLP-1 receptor agonists work by regulating appetite and blood sugar, leading to substantial weight loss. This rapid weight reduction trend has taken the industry by storm, and not surprisingly, many practices have taken advantage of the lucrative demand from patients."

In fact, McKinsey reported that global prescriptions of GLP-1 agonist therapies grew at a remarkable rate of roughly 38% annually between 2022 and 2024[1], with sales forecasted to reach $100 billion by 2030.

Matrix is an all-in-one, FDA-cleared, non-surgical skin renewal platform that activates the body's own collagen response to visibly improve texture, tone and tightness.[2]

In clinical studies for Matrix, the device demonstrated a meaningful improvement in facial wrinkle appearance based on blinded evaluation of treatment photos. Additionally, 94% of study subjects rated their treatment outcomes as 'much improved' or 'very much improved.'[3] The system's ability to support collagen production is ideal for GLP-1 patients, who often experience accelerated changes in skin quality and structure.



Matrix™ by Candela provides a non-surgical, collagen-stimulating solution designed to help practices address evolving patient needs and unlock long-term treatment opportunities.

Images courtesy of Candela

Addressing Facial Volume Loss

"One of the most common concerns among GLP-1 patients is facial volume loss, particularly in the midface and temples, which can create a gaunt or prematurely aged appearance," says Stephanie Philips, NP, founder and co-owner of Aesthetic Element Medical in Weston, Florida. "This can contribute to a tired or prematurely aged appearance, leading to a noticeable rise in patients seeking solutions for post-weight loss results."

Another common issue is the increase in skin laxity among GLP-1 patients. "The Matrix treatment provides an effective solution by stimulating natural collagen and tightening the skin without downtime," Gerrish notes.

With its radiofrequency (RF) microneedling applicator, Matrix pairs ultra-thin microneedles with its signature aesthetic intelligence to read, adapt and display skin impedance in real time. Built with Safety-by-Design and powered by Candela's signature aesthetic intelligence technology, the device adjusts energy delivery for consistent, customized results. This supports safe energy, reducing the risk of over-or under-treatment, while delivering consistent outcomes across skin types. The result is higher patient satisfaction and longer treatment plans as patients go through their weight-loss journey.

Improvement With Skin Tightening

Skin tightening beyond the face alone has emerged as a priority for many GLP-1 patients. Rapid weight loss may reveal areas of loose skin, uneven texture and contour irregularities. "Patients often seek a combination of non-surgical and surgical body contouring treatments," Gerrish says. "Non-invasive options, such as Matrix, are especially appealing because they complement weight loss without the downtime of surgery."

Matrix extends its versatility to body applications as well—specifically for patients who have minimal skin laxity. By promoting skin tightening and textural improvements, it can be used with traditional body contouring methods to enhance outcomes. Offering Matrix treatments for facial and body rejuvenation provides clinicians with a flexible approach to address patients' needs.

Holistic Approach to Aesthetics

The integration of GLP-1 therapies into aesthetics reflects a broader trend toward holistic patient care. Clinics are evolving from focusing solely on cosmetic concerns to supporting patients through a combination of health, wellness and aesthetic goals.

GLP-1 patients are a highly engaged population, often entering aesthetics for the first time through a non-invasive approach. "We've observed that patients are often more willing to explore additional aesthetic services after experiencing weight loss," says Phillips. "This can create opportunities for practices to expand their offerings and build long-term relationships."

The Matrix System: A Strategic Solution

Matrix is more than just a treatment; it is a strategic tool that meets the evolving needs of GLP-1 patients. This all-in-one platform allows clinicians to address multiple skin concerns simultaneously, making it a valuable addition to an aesthetic menu.

Patients benefit from treatments that fit seamlessly into their lifestyles while practices meet their goals to offer differentiated, results-driven services. The combination of GLP-1 therapies and Matrix treatments represents a proactive, forward-thinking approach to medical aesthetics.

Shaping the Future of Medical Aesthetics

GLP-1 medications are fundamentally changing patient expectations, treatment demand and the business framework of aesthetic medicine. Practices that address the metabolic and aesthetic implications of weight loss can deliver more proactive, personalized care.

"GLP-1 therapies are changing the landscape. Matrix allows us to meet patients where they are, helping them look as good as they feel while supporting their weight loss journey," says Phillips. "Practices that embrace this synergy are well-positioned for growth, patient satisfaction and long-term success."

By integrating the Matrix treatment into their practices, providers can offer patients tailored, minimally invasive options to address the aesthetic effects of rapid weight loss.

REFERENCES

1. McKinsey & Company. Global GLP-1 agonist prescriptions and sales growth, 2022–2024.
2. FDA clearance for the new indication is based on retrospective study data from 32 subjects receiving full-face treatments with the Matrix Pro applicator for facial wrinkle reduction.
3. Candela Medical. Candela announces FDA clearance of new indication for Matrix multi-application radiofrequency skin platform.

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Why Modern Medspas Are Adding Wellness—and How to Effectively Integrate and Market These Programs

Modern medspa clients want more than beauty—they seek energy, balance and wellness, and practices that integrate aesthetics with whole-person care are leading the way.

Today's aesthetic clients are seeking much more than smoother skin or fewer wrinkles—they desire increased energy, restorative sleep, emotional equilibrium and a harmonious connection between their external appearance and internal well-being. Industry trends reveal that medspas flourish when they combine aesthetic services with comprehensive wellness and preventative care, meeting the growing demand for personalized, results-oriented solutions.

A truly holistic model seamlessly integrates aesthetic treatments—like injectables, cosmetic lasers and regenerative skin therapies—with metabolic and hormonal optimization. When hormone replacement therapy is paired with IV nutrient support and GLP-1 prescriptions, all under careful medical supervision, clients benefit from a comprehensive "inside-out" program. This positions your practice as essential, elevating the medspa experience far beyond surface-level beauty.

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Staff Training & Multidisciplinary Collaboration

Successfully integrating wellness services requires more than simply expanding your menu—it calls for a dedicated and strategic approach. Rather than "testing the waters," invest in recruiting and training a team equipped to deliver safe, effective care. With thoughtful planning, you can confidently broaden your services, knowing your staff will support the transition.

It is essential to employ providers whose scopes of practice align with your state's regulatory requirements for each service. Comprehensive medical protocols, meticulous documentation and physician oversight are critical for safe implementation. If your practice lacks necessary expertise, consider partnering with medical professionals experienced in wellness, hormone therapy and IV treatments.

A robust inside-out medspa typically features a medical director skilled in aesthetic medicine and wellness programming, a nursing team trained in IV therapy, a nurse practitioner specializing in hormone replacement and medical weight loss and an aesthetics team of nurses and aestheticians delivering core treatments. Above all, these professionals must collaborate seamlessly to integrate all services into truly personalized inside-out regimens for every client.

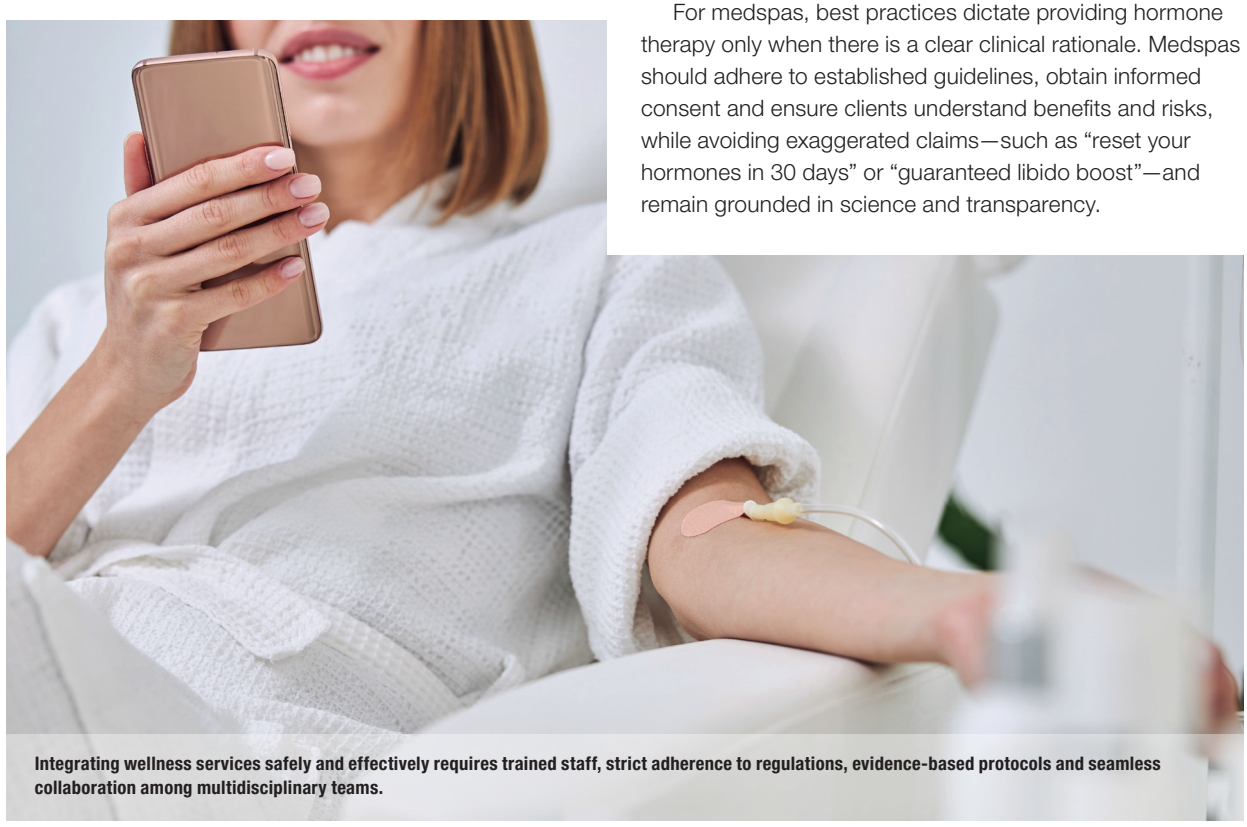
Safety-First: Hormone Therapy and IV Drips

Although hormone therapy and IV drips are increasingly popular, their allure can sometimes overshadow the importance of safety and evidence-based practice. Agencies like the FDA are refining guidelines to support appropriate use of hormone therapies—for suitable patients, not indiscriminate cosmetic applications.

There is rising concern about non-evidence-based private hormone tests and aggressive, expensive "tailored" treatments with questionable clinical value. Social media has fueled demand for testosterone and other hormones among individuals without true deficiencies, increasing the risk of adverse effects.

Terrell Swanson, MD, FAWM of New Beauty Company in St. Johns, Florida states the following, "For hormones, we implemented pellets. We do not market this, mainly because of marketing cost vs ROI. We do draw labs in-house. Our main challenge is conveying why optimal levels are more desirable than normal levels, and that most physicians, especially those covered by health insurance, will not provide coverage beyond normal levels. Women have the perception that their Gynecologists are better off to manage this, but they don't necessarily have knowledge of reaching optimal levels, and again, insurance will not cover if someone's hormones are normal."

For medspas, best practices dictate providing hormone therapy only when there is a clear clinical rationale. Medspas should adhere to established guidelines, obtain informed consent and ensure clients understand benefits and risks, while avoiding exaggerated claims—such as "reset your hormones in 30 days" or "guaranteed libido boost"—and remain grounded in science and transparency.



Integrating wellness services safely and effectively requires trained staff, strict adherence to regulations, evidence-based protocols and seamless collaboration among multidisciplinary teams.

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Marketing Longevity& Self-Alignment (Not Quick Fixes)

Clients are becoming increasingly "skintellectual"—they research ingredients, protocols and value long-term benefits over short-lived results. The industry is shifting toward regenerative and preventative aesthetics, with wellness-driven medspas seeing robust demand, even in uncertain economic times.

Reframe your narrative. Move away from promises like "eliminate wrinkles this weekend," and instead highlight how your services support skin, hormones and metabolism—helping clients feel and look aligned with their best selves for years to come. Position your offerings as tools for longevity, healthy aging and internal balance—promoting stable energy, mood, sleep and self-alignment, so clients can say, "I finally look how I feel at my best."

Messaging Strategies That Reinforce This

Educational content: Focus on informative, science-backed messaging rather than fear-based hype. Consider blog posts or reels like "Why your skin reflects your sleep, stress and hormones," "What an evidence-based IV program looks like" or "Hormone therapy myths vs. what current science actually says."

Host Q&As with clinicians and aestheticians so clients see your multidisciplinary approach.

Program-Based Offers: Shift from one-off deals to comprehensive programs, such as an "Inside-Out Rejuvenation: 6-Month Program," which includes:

- Customized skincare plan
- Hormone and energy evaluation where appropriate
- Nutrition and behavior coaching
- Optional IV support

This naturally emphasizes long-term journeys over quick fixes.

Lastly, testimonials are invaluable for conveying your message—far beyond what's visible in the mirror.

Encourage clients, after obtaining proper consent, to share stories such as: "I used to feel exhausted by mid-afternoon, but now I have energy throughout the day," "Both my skin and my sleep have improved" or "This was the first time someone helped me connect my acne with my stress and hormone levels."

These authentic narratives illustrate your commitment to whole-person transformation, not just aesthetic enhancement.

The language you use shapes client expectations. Choose your words thoughtfully in all marketing materials and communications. Opt for phrases like "Evidence-informed," "Medically supervised," "Long-term vitality" and "Root-cause exploration." Avoid language such as "cure," "reverse aging," "guaranteed" or the direct promotion of prescription drugs, which are often regulated or prohibited in public advertising.



Modern clients prioritize long-term health and whole-person results over quick cosmetic fixes, so medspas should focus on educational content, program-based offerings and authentic storytelling.

If you're a traditional medspa looking to evolve, clarify your guiding philosophy. Are you "aesthetic-first with wellness support" or a "wellness clinic with aesthetics"? This distinction will inform decisions about hiring, space design and branding.

When medspas thoughtfully combine aesthetics with medically supervised weight loss, hormone therapy, IV drips and longevity services, they transcend the label of "injectable boutiques" and emerge as modern health and beauty destinations.

Success lies in blending aesthetic expertise with medical rigor and genuine, whole-person storytelling. Master this approach, and clients will return not just for touch-ups—they'll stay because you help them feel like the most vibrant, aligned version of themselves. ME



Francis X. Acunzo is the CEO of Acara Partners, a leading business consulting firm for the aesthetic medical industry; Strategic Advisor to Princeton Medspa Partners, an aesthetic industry consolidation group and is a member of the MedEsthetics Editorial Advisory Board.

Francis launched the very first medspa almost 30 years ago through the merger of his Boston-based spa company and a leading Laser company. Francis was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award along with Acara Partners receiving the Best in Industry Practice Management award in 2023. He is also the recipient of the AmSpa Lifetime Legacy award given in 2025.

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Red Hair Genetics Unlock New Hope for Chronic Wound Healing

Millions worldwide are affected by chronic wounds that often resist healing due to persistent inflammation. Groundbreaking research recently published in *PNAS* reveals the role of the Melanocortin 1 Receptor (MC1R) gene — known for its link to red hair and fair skin — in regulating inflammation and promoting tissue repair. By activating MC1R with a topical drug, researchers demonstrated significant improvements in wound healing, offering a promising new therapeutic approach, ScienceAlert reported.

ROLE OF MC1R IN WOUND HEALING

Found in various skin cells, including immune cells, keratinocytes, fibroblasts and others, MC1R helps to regulate inflammation and repair damaged tissue, co-author Jenna Cash explained in ScienceAlert.

In chronic wounds, this pathway is disrupted, leading to prolonged inflammation and stalled healing. As such, researchers sought to uncover how MC1R dysfunction contributes to these issues.

CHRONIC WOUND MODEL

According to the open access PNAS article, the study used an innovative, reproducible and humane mouse model designed to mimic the characteristics of human chronic wounds. This model incorporated advanced age and oxidative stress — two key factors in chronic wound pathology. By creating slow-healing, inflammation-rich ulcers, researchers were able to replicate the persistent, non-healing nature of chronic wounds seen in humans. This allowed for precise testing of MC1R-targeted therapies under realistic conditions.

When a topical drug activating MC1R was applied, healing improved significantly, with:

- reduced inflammation,
- enhanced blood vessel growth and
- faster re-epithelialization.

The drug also decreased the presence of neutrophil extracellular traps (NETs) that exacerbate inflammation and limited the arrival of new inflammatory cells, per Cash. Even in healthy wounds, MC1R activation boosted blood flow, improved lymphatic drainage and reduced scarring, she added.

PROMISING THERAPEUTIC BREAKTHROUGH

These findings pave the way for innovative treatments, such as MC1R-targeted ointments or gels, that could transform chronic wound care. With millions affected globally and healthcare systems burdened by the costs, this research offers hope for patients and providers alike.



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FDA Reinstates NMN for Supplements:

Medspas Eye Synergy with NAD+ Therapy and GLP-1 Symptom Relief

The FDA's reversal on NMN has reopened the door to a potent NAD+ precursor, sparking renewed interest in how it may influence energy, aging and medspa therapies.

By Jamie O'Toole

In 2022, the FDA decided to revoke Nicotinamide Mononucleotide (NMN) from being marketed as a dietary supplement, declaring it needed to first undergo investigation as a new drug. On Sept. 29, three years later, however, the FDA amended its decision and ruled the drug as lawful to use in dietary supplements. Because this is a direct precursor, compared to other NAD+ precursors that must first be converted to NMN inside the cell to become NAD+, patients could see these supplements paired with the medical-grade NAD+ therapies they receive at medspas, and potentially alongside GLP-1 use.

Therapies medspas currently offer for optimization of NAD+ include nasal spray application, IV infusion and injectables. These coenzymes are shown to decrease with age and lead to age-related diseases—essential to convert food into energy and support cellular repair, DNA maintenance and overall metabolism. Many patients, including younger adults, are interested in boosting energy, cellular repair and longevity, making these treatments appealing as part of a proactive wellness trend occurring in medspas.



As a direct precursor to NAD+, NMN may help support energy levels, metabolism and cellular repair more efficiently than other supplements.

Evaluating NMN's Biological Role, Benefits and Unresolved Concerns

Prior to NMN being accepted in dietary supplements, the main precursor for NAD+ in the supplement market was nicotinamide riboside (NR). NR and NMN differ in their structure but also how they enter cells, and while NR is effective in NAD+ optimization, NR is converted to NMN by NR kinase (NRK)[1]. So, while NR must be converted, NMN is the closest precursor to NAD+ in the current supplement market. There is no record of the FDA conducting clinical trials for NMN, but several studies were managed by independent researchers over the years, looking at its potential efficacy.

NMN and NR are thought to efficiently increase NAD+ levels compared to vitamin B3 derivative NAD+ precursors, such as nicotinamide (NAM) and nicotinic acid (NA). Studies note that NMN improves cardiac function, whereas NR improves mitochondrial function in muscle, liver and brown adipose tissue[2]. Looking at its role in cardiac health, results from a 2021 study show that NMN increases muscle insulin sensitivity, insulin signaling and remodeling in postmenopausal women with prediabetes, who were overweight or obese[3].

Rodent studies indicate that NMN can effectively enhance NAD + synthesis in peripheral tissues and organs, including the brain, blood vessels, skeletal muscle, adipose tissue, pancreas, heart, liver, kidneys and eyes[4]. However, NMN still lacks sufficient clinical evidence, a 2024 study notes, and its effects may be harmful in certain contexts—such as potentially promoting tumor angiogenesis or counteracting antineoplastic drugs by restoring NAD+ levels—highlighting the need for deeper investigation, especially in cancer patients[5].

Who Can Benefit from NMN—and When Medical Therapies Are Still Needed

Alexander Zuriarrain, MD, FACS, the founder of Hydrology Wellness in Miami and Zuri Plastic Surgery says now that NMN is once again lawful for use in dietary supplements, he anticipates incorporating it more broadly, particularly as an accessible, at-home option to complement in-office NAD+ IV therapy. While IV remains the fastest and most reliable way to elevate NAD+ levels in his practice, he says NMN offers a gentler, daily approach for people who may not need or want medical treatment, and simply want more energy.

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NMN can be used alongside in-office NAD+ therapies, offering a gentler, at-home option to help maintain metabolic support between treatments.

"In some cases, NMN may serve as a bridge between lifestyle measures and more intensive medical therapies," he says. "It's not a replacement for IV therapy, but it does add a valuable tool to our toolkit."

NMN working alongside IV, or on its own, will not be suitable for everyone at the wellness clinic. Ideal candidates, Zuriarrain says, would be individuals in their 30s to 60s who want to support longevity, mitochondrial health, metabolism, cognitive performance or exercise recovery. Medical therapies, such as NAD+ IV therapy, B-complex injections, peptide therapy or prescription metabolic medications, would be the route someone should take if they're experiencing:

- Severe or persistent fatigue
- Insulin resistance or prediabetes
- Neurological symptoms
- Rapid aging markers
- Chronic inflammatory states
- Plateaued weight loss despite lifestyle optimization

Considering NMN's implication on insulin and obesity management, the newly approved supplement could potentially help with the side effects of GLP-1, including muscle mass loss by improving mitochondrial efficiency and also accommodating the decrease in energy that follows suppressed appetite in GLP-1 users. Zuriarrain says in addition, NMN may assist with GLP-1 use by stabilizing blood sugar as body weight decreases and also improving recovery from exercise during weight loss.

"While more research is needed, combining NMN with GLP-1 therapy could enhance metabolic resilience and overall well-being," he adds.

How to Use NMN Safely: Dosing, Oversight and Essential Quality Checks

Amy Lee, MD is Chief Medical Officer at bluSONIL, a longevity, wellness and regenerative aesthetics studio. The clinic offers NMN in oral form for patients to use at home, while implementing NAD+ in forms of injections and infusion, like Zuriarrain and his clinic. She says standard doses start at 250 mg daily. The maximum dose studies have used is about 1250 mg, but as mentioned earlier, more research is needed to assess optimal dosing for various conditions and long-term use.

Despite why an individual might inquire about NMN at a medspa, Lee and Zuriarrain say although it is ruled lawful in supplements, nutrition regimens that consider dosage, reasoning and goals should be guided by professionals. Zuriarrain says, "Legality does not guarantee quality. The supplement industry varies widely in purity, sourcing and manufacturing standard, and some products may contain very little active ingredient or be contaminated with unwanted byproducts."

He points out five safeguards that physicians and consumers should look for when choosing an NMN supplement:

- cGMP-certified manufacturing facilities
- Third-party testing for purity and potency (NSF, Informed Choice, USP or equivalent)
- Stability testing confirming that NMN remains active throughout shelf life
- Transparent labeling of the exact form of NMN used
- Absence of fillers or unnecessary additives

Foundational Habits Matter More Than Any Single NAD+ Booster

As NAD+ optimization becomes an area of interest for individuals looking for anti-aging solutions, it's important to remember that optimizing the NAD+ coenzyme is not a fix-all. "I wish people understood that NAD+ optimization isn't about a single supplement, it's about the entire ecosystem of metabolic health. Sleep, stress, alcohol intake, exercise, micronutrient status and protein intake all influence NAD+ production far more dramatically than people realize. NMN can amplify healthy habits, but it cannot compensate for missing fundamentals," Zuriarrain says. ME

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

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5 TRENDS RESHAPING MEDSPAS RIGHT NOW

From changing patient priorities to powerful new revenue models, here's what every medspa owner needs to know next.

By Skya Jones

While the winds of change are always blowing to some degree or another in an industry as dynamic as medical aesthetics, they're whipping especially hard right now. Consumer priorities are evolving, economic pressures are intensifying and technological advances are actively reshaping how medspas attract, serve and retain patients.

Medspa owners and operators must not only be aware of these shifts, but ready to adjust how they do business accordingly. With that in mind, here are five of the most significant trends transforming the medspa industry right now and what you should do to ensure your business stays in step.



Patients are increasingly gravitating toward services they believe will deliver authentic, lasting results.

Whole-body wellness takes center stage

We are in the midst of an industry-redefining paradigm shift. The days of patients chasing temporary, purely aesthetic treatments are not-so-slowly but surely giving way to a new era of whole-body wellness. Patients don't just want quick fixes; they want effective treatment and a sustainable path to whole-body wellness. They don't just want volume and lift; they want skin longevity, immune support and treatments that rejuvenate their body and skin from within.

With this shift comes a change in the types of treatments in which they're most actively interested. From regenerative treatments grounded in biologics, to treatments that stimulate from within, such as RF microneedling, to collagen-stimulating injectables like Sculptra, patients are increasingly gravitating toward services they believe will deliver authentic, lasting results.

As an industry, we have to meet patients where they are, and that not only means ensuring these increasingly popular services are available at your medspa, but also rethinking how we talk about and position our services. We need to emphasize restoration and prevention, and position our businesses—and the industry as a whole—as being centered on whole-body wellness.

Frustration with insurance fuels cash pay models

I think we can all agree we're pretty much fed up with insurance and the "will they, won't they" game so many medspa businesses and patients have to play. As traditional medical insurance continues to lag in covering most common medspa treatments, medspas are increasingly finding more freedom and flexibility (and fewer headaches) by embracing the transparency and simplicity of cash-pay models, often supported by alternative financing options such as Buy Now, Pay Later (or BNPL).

Most patients don't mind either; they don't enjoy complex billing questions and confusion over coverage any more than you do. So don't be afraid to lean more proactively into cash-pay models and get creative about alternative paths (including and especially the next item on our list of trends) to making high-ticket treatment items more accessible.

Skyrocketing demand for memberships

Given the growing desire from patients to stay consistent with their wellness and skincare regimens, memberships have emerged as a primary driver of growth and retention for medspas. Patients love the convenience, consistency and savings; medspas benefit from predictable cash flow and lasting client relationships.

In fact, memberships have already become a centerpiece for many of the industry's top-performing medspas. According to Boulevard data, top-performing membership programs now generate 72% of business revenue for self-care businesses. Members have an 88% higher client retention rate than non-members, book three times as many appointments annually and spend 72% more retail.

If you haven't done so already, the time to build a high-performing membership program is right now. Every program will look a little different, of course. Some may be centered on exclusive pricing, others on special perks or access to new services. What matters isn't what the program entails but that it provides real value to the member. Focus on creating strong alignment between your core services and the things that matter most to your patients.



Membership programs are becoming a top growth driver, boosting client retention and recurring revenue.

Clockwise from top: Image by David Lpeopleimages.com; olga at Adobe Stock

Growth of high-margin, low-staff-demand services

Another downstream effect of clients focusing more on holistic health and sustainability is an increasing interest in high-margin, low-staff-demand services. At the behest of their patients, many medspas are offering services such as contrast therapy, cold plunges, infrared saunas and other recovery treatments that don't require the skilled hands of licensed medical professionals.

This shift is win-win for patients and the industry. Patients see them as a perfect complement to their more complex regenerative treatments. Meanwhile, once any upfront OpEx expenditures are accounted for, the low-staff-demand nature of them creates a strong profit margin for businesses. Unlike other services, cold plunges and infrared saunas require no formal medical training to operate, nor do they require you to stock up on inventory.

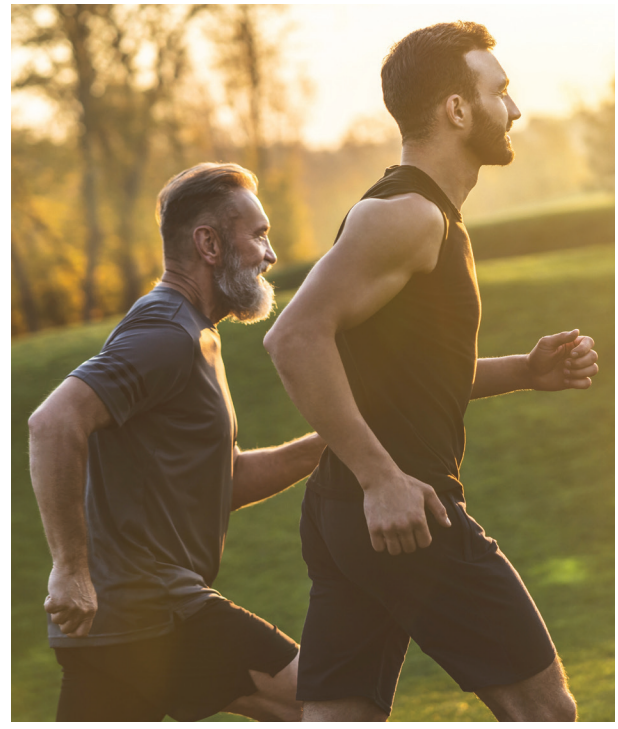
All of which means it's time to evaluate your treatment mix and identify how and where to fit in these low-staff-demand services. Your patients want them, and your bottom line will appreciate them.

Burgeoning interest in sexual health and men's health treatments

If you haven't noticed, it's no longer just women making the medspa part of their wellness routine. Men now represent a burgeoning area of growth. In recent years, men have become more open and proactive than ever about investing in self-care. They're increasingly looking to medspas for treatments that boost their sexual health and vitality, as well as aesthetic treatments, such as PRP hair restoration, laser hair removal and body contouring.



Cold plunges and infrared saunas require no formal medical training to operate. Patients want them, and your bottom line will appreciate them.



Demand for men's wellness and sexual health treatments is opening up exciting new avenues for growth.

It's time to get more inclusive with your branding, more targeted with your marketing and more purposeful about adding services and creating packages designed specifically to help male patients meet their wellness goals. The reward for doing so? A more diverse clientele and a healthier, more resilient revenue base.

The Wellness Throughline

Ultimately, the common throughline cutting across every trend right now is the evolution from quick-fix aesthetics to long-term, sustainable wellness. Success in this landscape requires aligning with these shifting patient motivations. By embracing whole-body wellness, simplifying financial access, building strong membership programs and expanding inclusively, medspas can position themselves to thrive in the next era of aesthetics. ME



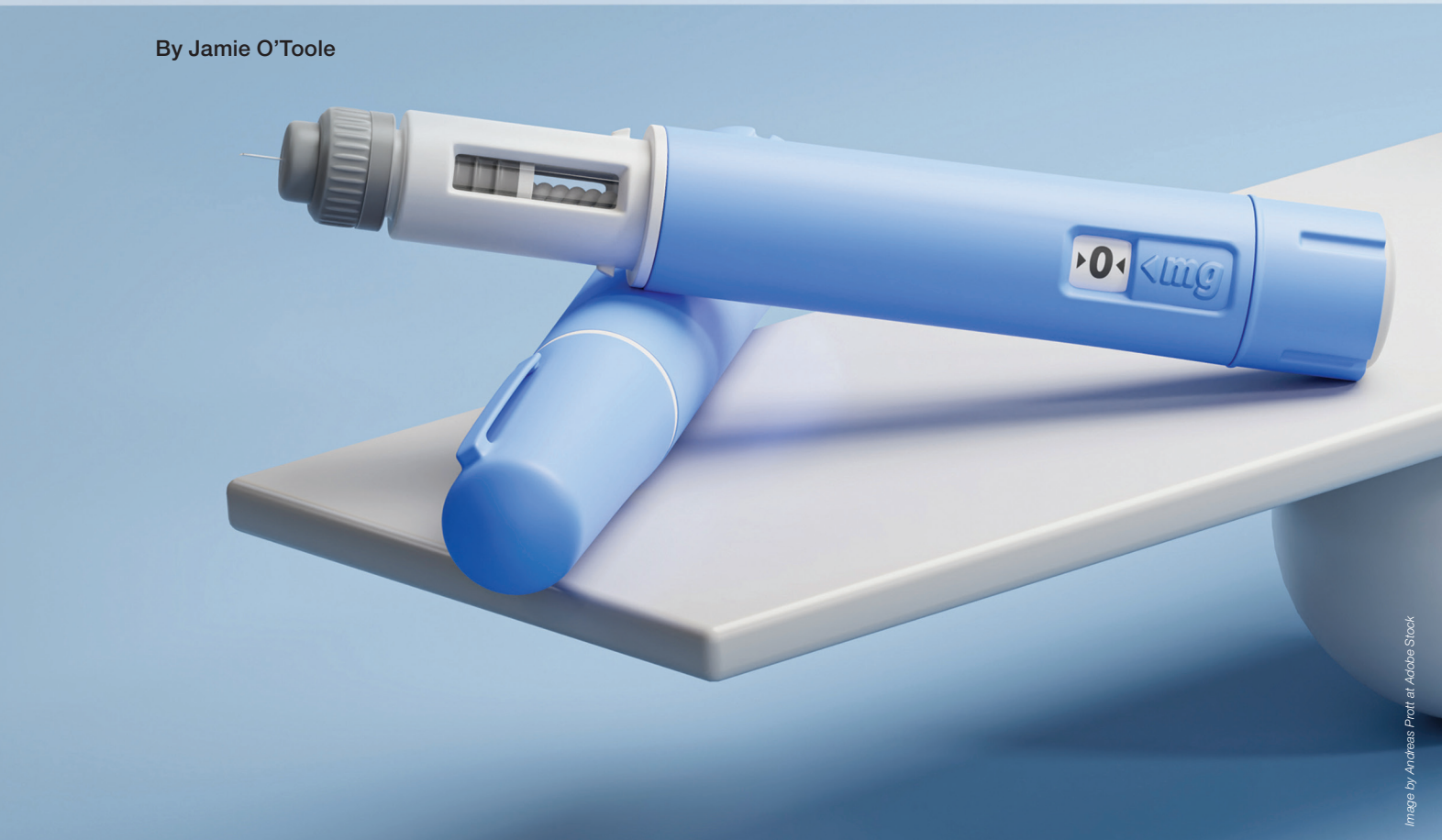
Skya Jones is MedSpa Education Manager and in-house aesthetics expert at Boulevard, where she works directly with the company's staff and MedSpa customers to help design memorable client experiences. Jones has more than seven years of experience in the beauty industry with a specific focus on medical esthetics and more than five years of experience in MedSpa leadership and management. Before joining Boulevard, Jones was a department head for Bobbi Bullock Medical Esthetics and hand-picked as a National Trainer for the Allergan Medical Institute. As a certified nurse assistant, her career spans both clinical and business operations and includes stints as a manager at VitaNovu and a beauty advisor for Kohl's.

Clockwise from top: Image by eelstock1; Michele Ursi at Adobe Stock

THE NEW FRONTIER OF GLP-1:
Lean People Are Using It for Longevity, Cellular Optimization—
NOT WEIGHT LOSS

GLP-1 medications are evolving from weight-loss tools to precision longevity therapies, now used by lean individuals to optimize metabolism, cardiovascular health and cellular function.

By Jamie O'Toole



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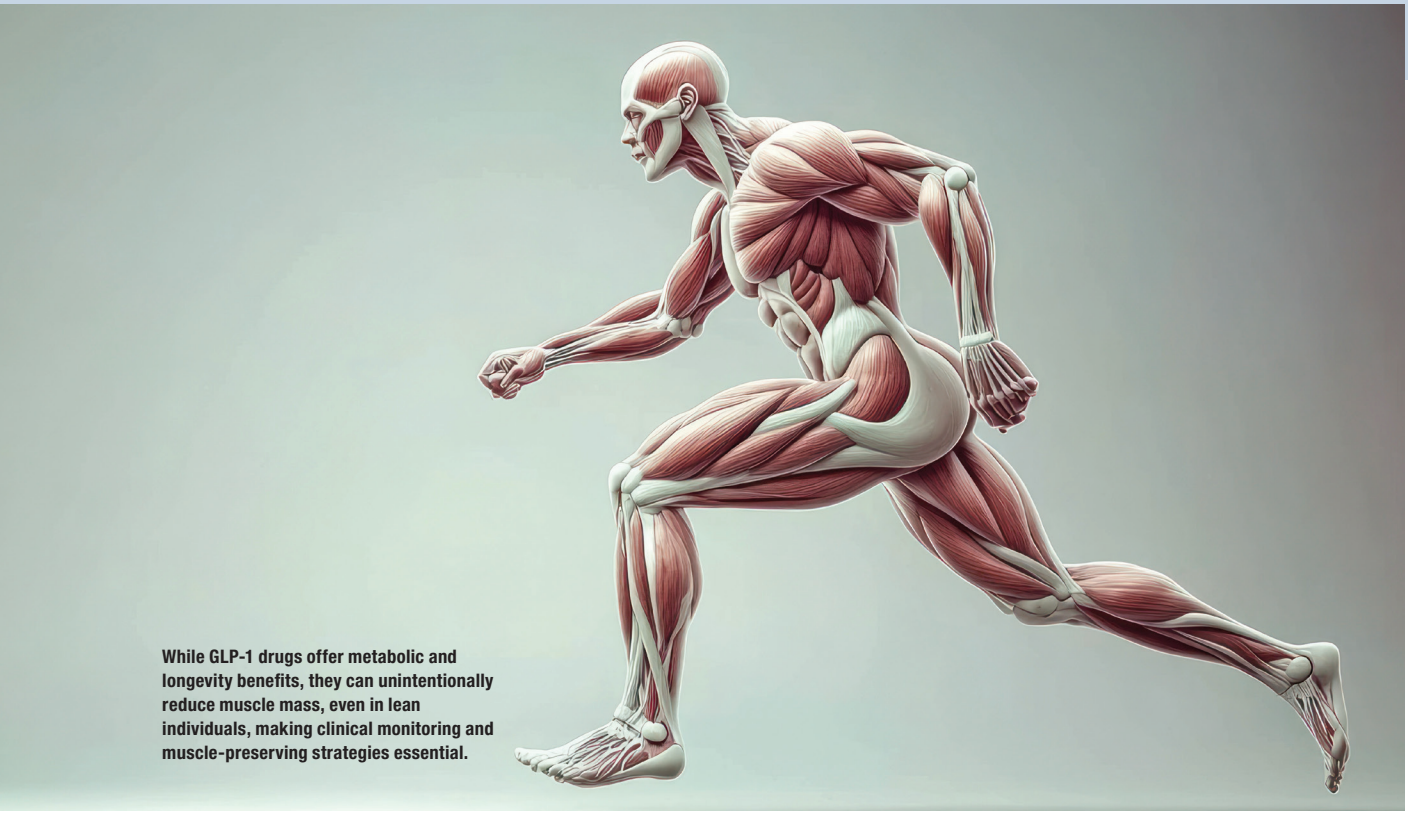
GLP-1 has long been associated with weight loss— at least since it was discovered that it had implications beyond diabetes management and migrated into aesthetic practices. However, the drug is now being used by lean individuals, or patients who've never been overweight in their life. Unlike how obese individuals may use this drug as a prelude to cosmetic procedures, many individuals are finding that GLP-1 has longevity benefits for cardiovascular, kidney and liver optimization. For this preventive cellular health biohack, aesthetic physicians are conducting ongoing monitoring, since muscle loss is not the intended outcome with use, but a common symptom that recent studies indicate needs further clinical investigation.



While GLP-1 drugs offer metabolic and longevity benefits, they can unintentionally reduce muscle mass, even in lean individuals, making clinical monitoring and muscle-preserving strategies essential.



GLP-1's Expanding Role in Cardiovascular Health, Longevity and Metabolic Optimization

Evidence affirms the benefits of GLP-1, exceeding the needs of diabetic individuals, with particular reductions in cardiovascular events and mortality. In a 2023 trial conducted by Cleveland Clinic, patients treated with semaglutide lost about 9.4% of their body weight, but also experienced improvements in factors related to cardiovascular disease. Michael Lincoff, MD, who led the study, found that semaglutide reduced the risk of non-fatal stroke by 20%, likely due to GLP-1's effects on weight loss and decreased ectopic fat deposition[1].

Long-term use of GLP-1 agonists has been shown to reduce blood pressure as well, along with lowered cholesterol levels and fatty acid synthesis in the liver[2]. As GLP-1 is continuing to see more therapeutic effects beyond obesity management, it calls for continued research on their clinical advantages. Similar to how people take omega-3 to prevent heart disease and other health issues that may arise with age, GLP-1 may become a preventive measure for many people, considering its aspects.

As individuals reap these benefits, however, management from health professionals looks different than their protocol for obese patients. When monitoring overweight individuals, doctors typically track side effects and help prevent weight regain through continued use of the medication, proper diet and exercise to ensure muscle mass is not lost. Muscle mass decline is a concern for fit patients taking it as well due to appetite suppression—potentially more because weight loss is not the initial goal for them but is an effect and could lead to sarcopenia.

In an August 2025 study conducted by the University of Utah, researchers found that Ozempic-induced weight loss decreased lean mass by about 10%. As mice lost weight in the study, some muscles shrank slightly, but not enough to explain the full loss of lean mass, and others stayed the same size[3]. The senior author on the study urged that clinical trials should check for changes in muscle strength not just for Ozempic but also future weight-loss drugs[3].

How a Beverly Hills Rejuvenation Center Uses GLP-1 to Support Longevity in Fit Individuals

Arvind Chakravarthy, MD, MBA has used GLP-1 for its implication on fatty liver reversal, visceral fat reduction and improved insulin sensitivity, even in those with a normal BMI but abnormal biomarkers. "I've been prescribing GLP-1 receptor agonists since 2019, beginning in metabolic care, and evolving toward advanced longevity and body-composition optimization," he says.

Image by paulus at Adobe Stock





Aesthetic clinics are pairing GLP-1 with nutrition, hormone tracking and resistance training to maintain structure and prevent muscle mass decline.

"In my view, the 'fit but not metabolically flexible' individual has become the new clinical frontier."

Chakravarthy is chief longevity officer for the Beverly Hills Rejuvenation Center and board-certified ER physician practicing regenerative and metabolic medicine. As he tracks GLP-1 for its metabolic benefits in already lean individuals, he says clinical boundaries remain critical. In patients with BMI less than 23 or body fat less than 15%, use should be anchored to biomarkers and not cosmetic intent, even in aesthetic settings that blend medical practice with beauty.

"This isn't about chasing weight; it's about tuning the internal environment for cellular longevity," he says.

When gearing up to prescribe GLP-1 for fit individuals, the primary concerns he monitors actively through a person's use is muscle catabolism and mitochondrial fatigue, as the drug suppresses appetite, which could exacerbate lack of nutrition. These two factors tend to happen when muscle tissue breaks down into smaller components, such as amino acids for energy production.

Five Pillars of Care for Safe GLP-1 Use: Tracking Nutrition, Hormones and Biological Age in Fit Individuals

Gut microbiome dysbiosis and nutrient malabsorption are also a concern, he says, and dysbiosis can occur when there is an imbalance of the gut's microbial community; beneficial bacteria are reduced, harmful bacteria overgrow or the overall diversity of microorganisms decreases. It is caused by a poor diet. Consequently, nutrient malabsorption happens when the body has trouble absorbing nutrients from food in the digestive tract, which can lead to malnutrition.

Prolonged use raises the concern for hormonal suppression, neurotransmitter adaptation and receptor desensitization, he adds. The main risk in lean users using GLP-1, besides malnutrition and hormonal regulation issues, is sarcopenia, Chakravarthy says, the progressive loss of muscle mass.

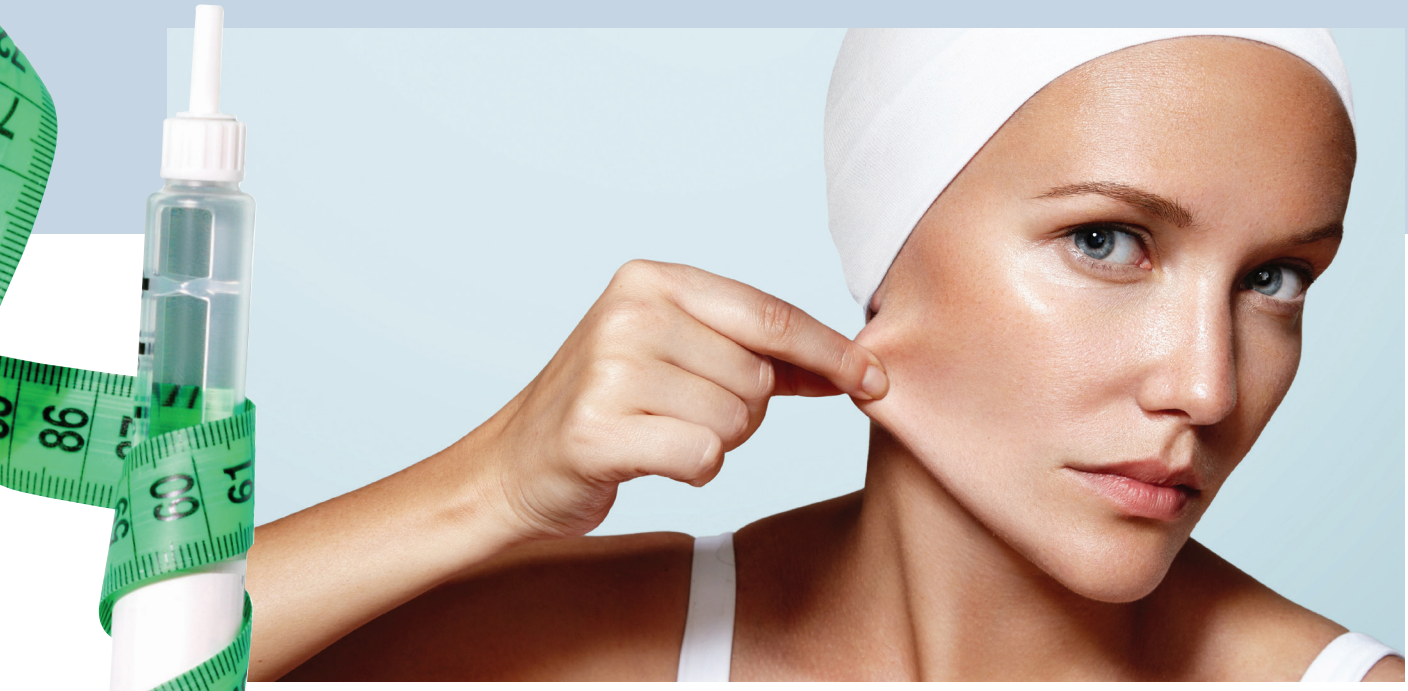
"When people use GLP-1s who are already fit, they are very likely going to lose the thing that made them look physically strong in the first place: volume; not fat, per se, but structure," says Kiara DeWitt, RN, BSN, CPN, the founder and CEO of Injectco.

To track these components, including hormone levels, protein and nutrition intake, as well as sleep patterns to ensure these risks do not occur in fit individuals taking GLP-1, Chakravarthy's rejuvenation center scans body composition and measures testosterone, estradiol, IGF-1 and thyroid panels. The center also monitors fasting insulin levels and albumin. C-reactive protein and mitochondrial markers to calculate biological age, not chronological age, are also monitored.

In fact, Chakravarthy implemented five pillars of care at the center that uniquely monitor GLP-1 users who are not necessarily using it for diabetes or weight loss.

1. **Lifestyle Foundations** (nutrition; sleep; exercise; stress management)
2. **Gut & Liver Health** (detoxification and microbiome balance)
3. **Hormonal Optimization** (thyroid; adrenal; sex hormones)
4. **Regenerative & Peptide Therapies** (cellular repair and optimization with cell factor and peptides)
5. **Testing & Iteration** (continuous biomarker tracking and personalization)

From left: Image by goodluz; Lana Pletukhova at Adobe Stock



Appetite suppression and slowed gastric emptying in GLP-1 users can make it hard to hit the recommended daily 1.6g protein intake.

Plastic surgery offices follow checkmarks unique to fit individuals, too. Daniel Maman, MD, board-certified plastic surgeon and founder of Maman Plastic Surgery, says tracking protein intake and adequate calories is important in his practice when it comes to GLP-1 use, and notes emerging clinical guidance stressing that pairing GLP-1s with high-protein diet and consistent resistance training preserves muscle and bone.

This is especially important, as appetite suppression and slowed gastric emptying can make it hard to hit the recommended 1.6g protein and adequate calories—risking hair shedding, dull skin, fatigue and slower wound healing, aside from muscle loss, Maman says.

Layered Solutions: Managing the Cosmetic Consequences of GLP-1 Therapy in Fit Patients

Maman tracks protein intake, as well as creatine use, if appropriate and structured resistance training up to four times a week. He says if these individuals pursue cosmetic treatments after use, as many do to restore volume, weight should be stabilized around 3–6 months before body-contouring.

DeWitt, who prescribes GLP-1 at Injecto, has found just as overweight individuals seek restoration of volume and sculpting treatments to finish and complete the weight loss, individuals who were already fit experience similar affects, like ozempic face: deflation in the cheeks, temples receding and the body's muscles looking deflated.

"This is where the aesthetic side needs to make some noise," she says. "Sculpted does not equal depleted, but those lines get crossed quickly when someone chases that hyper-lean aesthetic with chemicals."

She notes that while improving internal numbers is the goal, losing external symmetry can be the result. Jawline refinement, buccal fat removal, neck lift, even non-surgical thread lifts all come into play for individuals seeking aesthetics after GLP-1 to "finish the job," whether they were previously overweight or fit. It becomes an orbit, however, she says.

"The reality is GLP-1s for an already lean body come with aesthetic consequences that can be hard to surgically unwind cleanly. You are now in a layering game; add filler, add collagen stimulators, add lift and then hope it looks natural, and for those that are actually going in looking for that sculpted aesthetic, what's lost is often more than what you had before you started," DeWitt says.

Chakravarthy adds, "I'd like to see industry guidelines align with the Five Pillars—moving from disease treatment toward functional optimization. Used wisely, GLP-1s can help extend not just lifespan, but healthspan—when anchored to muscle, mitochondria and measurable data." ME

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

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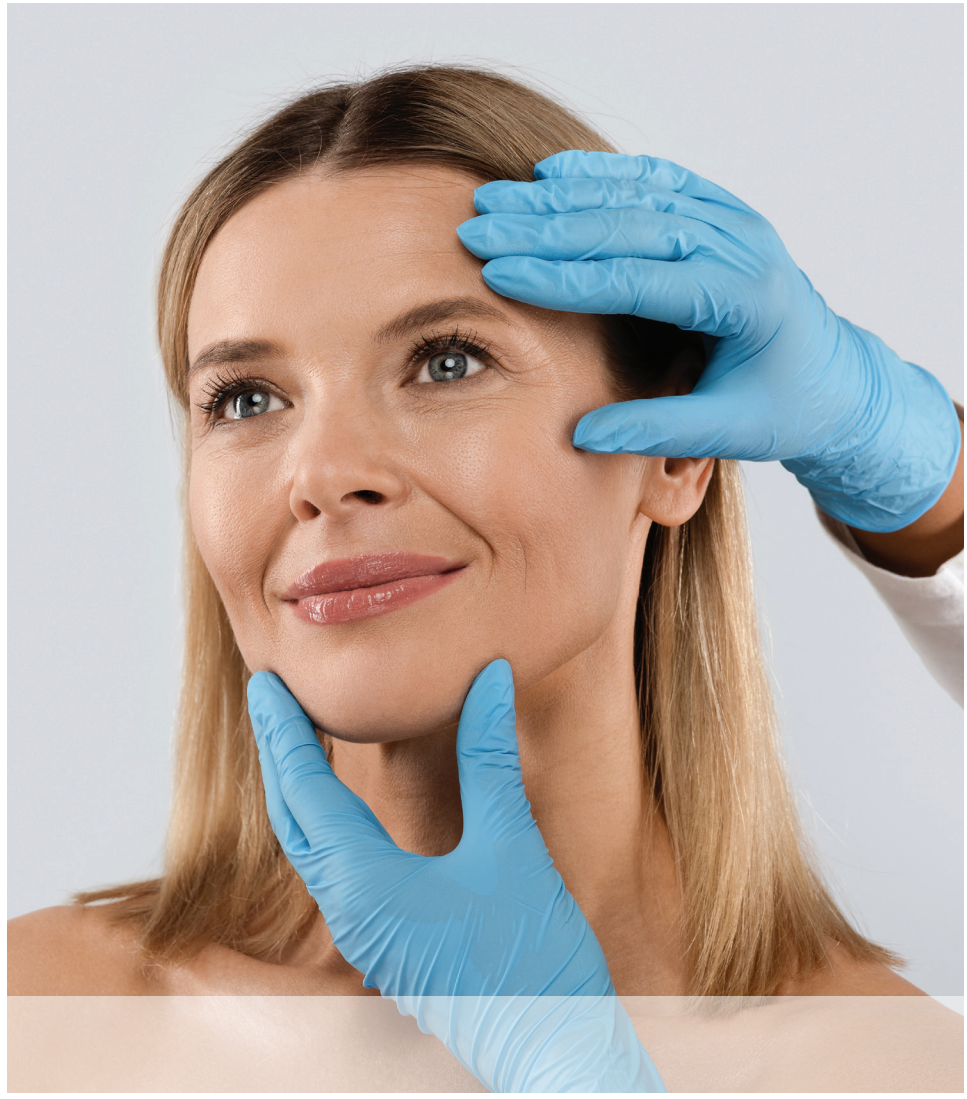

Q&A:

Revance's New CEO Nadeem Moiz Charts Bold Vision After Crown Acquisition



By Jamie O'Toole

The newly appointed CEO Nadeem Moiz uncovers his vision for the future of aesthetics, skincare and brand evolution since Crown Laboratories' aquisition of Revance.

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In February 2025, Crown Laboratories acquired Revance Therapeutics, uniting two leaders in skincare and aesthetics under the Revance name. Following the acquisition, Revance appointed a new chief executive officer, Nadeem Moiz, on Oct. 1 to support its next phase of growth. Moiz, previously president, COO and CFO of the brand succeeds Jeff Bedard, the founder.

This transition reflects a long-term succession plan as the newly combined company aims to solidify its position as a leader in injectables, skin quality and skincare solutions. Moiz brings over 25 years of experience in strategy, operations and finance—a smooth progression from the role he played in Revance's recent integration efforts.

MedEsthetics sat down with the newly appointed Moiz to get a sense of what his leadership will look like for the Revance brand in 2026.

As you step into the CEO role following this transformative acquisition, what's your overarching vision for the newly combined Revance?

My vision is to build the most trusted and innovative aesthetics and skincare company—one that not only leads in science and results, but also in how we serve physicians, patients and customers. By bringing together the strengths of Crown and Revance, we have created a company that is focused on skin health for life, with unmatched expertise across regenerative, injectables and skincare. This is about more than scale—it's about shaping the next era of aesthetics, grounded in science, authenticity and partnership with our customers.

Are there new technologies, services or innovations being introduced as a result of the acquisition and your new transition?

Absolutely. The acquisition allows us to leverage Crown's world-class manufacturing and formulation capabilities with Revance's clinical innovation and brand equity. You'll see continued advancements in regenerative offerings, injectables and next-generation integrated skincare solutions that bridge professional and consumer experiences. We are also investing diligently in digital tools and data platforms that elevate patient engagement and physician connectivity.

You've already been deeply involved as President, COO and CFO—how will your leadership style evolve in this next chapter?

In my prior roles, my focus was on execution and integration—ensuring stability, growth and alignment across teams. As CEO, my role now expands to strategic vision, inspiration and helping our global team see the larger purpose of what we're building as a global aesthetics and skincare company. I want to foster a culture where innovation, accountability and empathy coexist—where every team member feels ownership of our mission and pride in what we deliver.

How do you plan to continue building on the momentum created by the Crown acquisition and the brand unification under Revance?

Momentum comes from clarity and consistency. We're aligning all of our efforts in science, commercial and operations—under one shared vision: to redefine excellence in aesthetics and skincare. Our integration teams have already made tremendous progress, and now the focus shifts to accelerating growth, deepening customer trust and expanding globally while maintaining the agility that has always defined both organizations.

Offering guidance for other brands that have recently acquired or are looking to acquire, how do you ensure that a brand being acquired maintains its core identity while still integrating into a larger company?

It starts with respect—for what made the acquired brand successful in the first place. The goal of integration isn't to erase identity; it's to amplify it within a stronger ecosystem. At Revance, we focus on preserving the authentic voice and values of each brand while aligning them around a common purpose. Integration succeeds when teams feel seen, valued and part of something bigger—not absorbed, but elevated.

What's your best advice for founders or CEOs who are weighing whether an acquisition will make or break their brand?

An acquisition should be viewed as an evolution and a key element of growth. The right partnership will expand your ability to innovate, reach new audiences and scale impact—without compromising what makes your brand special. My advice: choose partners who share your values and vision, not just your market. When culture and purpose align, an acquisition doesn't dilute identity—it accelerates it.

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



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OILY SKIN TODAY, FEWER WRINKLES TOMORROW?

Experts Explain the Truth Behind the TikTok Theory

From retinoids to hormones, experts uncover why those who battle acne might just be winning the long game when it comes to aging.

By Jamie O'Toole

While TikTok users bolster the notion that oily and acne-prone skin could lead to less wrinkles in the future because the skin is taking longer to transition out of prepubescent traits, doctors suggest that it's typically the products and treatments used against acne, applied for years, that are preventing wrinkles—not entirely oil production, though it does present protective benefits. Like most skin conditions and approaches to wellness, the surface tells only half the story.



Oily skin might not cause fewer wrinkles, but the treatments for acne just might.

Experts Explain the Link Between Oily, Acne-Prone Skin and Slower Aging

Circulating on the TikTok app are users claiming that acne in their 20s may be less favorable now, but in a few years, they'll age gracefully and slower. Richard Bottiglione, MD explains that oily skin appears better because the skin is more moisturized than dry skin, but acne won't reduce wrinkles. "The oil itself doesn't protect from getting wrinkles, but people with oily skin can sometimes have a dark skin tone which may help reduce how many wrinkles. Lighter skin tones or those with dry skin may have more wrinkles, but it's not if you have oily skin or not."

Acne-prone skin produces more sebum, says Erika Schwartz, MD, the founder of Evolved Science, a preventative medicine and medical aesthetics practice. Here, she specializes in using bio-identical hormones to prevent illness and link them to body and mind wellness. She says by producing more sebum, it acts as a natural moisturizer and protective barrier to the environmental pollutants attacking our skin—pollutants that contribute to wrinkles, and that is why oily skin may help protect against wrinkles and add moisture, as Bottiglione mentioned. This keeps skin hydrated from within, and hydrated skin ages better, but isn't a definitive correlation, as many factors affect acne and skin health.

Why Those Treating Acne Early Might Be Winning the Long Game on Aging

While there are many factors that play a role in the rapidity of wrinkle formation, Schwartz and Bottiglione say acne can correlate to less wrinkles because individuals with acne typically partake in using products like retinols such as tretinoin, glycolic acid and trichloroacetic acid, as well as undergoing acne treatments like lasers or microneedling at a young age. "If you've been using retinoids since your twenties for acne, you've been doing anti-aging therapy for decades without even knowing it," Schwartz says.

She continues, "Retinoids are the gold standard for preventing wrinkles. So yes, people with acne get a two-for-one benefit: naturally oilier skin plus early adoption of the best anti-aging ingredient available."

While being blessed with certain genes work in many people's favor, Bottiglione explains that it really depends on how the person takes care of their skin over time, through skincare and diet, and not necessarily solely if they have acne and oily skin. Schwartz argues that hormones play a key role in why acne shows up in the first place, especially if it shows up for the first time, or worsens, in adulthood. The skin, she adds, is a reflection of biological mechanisms, such as hormone fluctuations and liver detoxification that respond to toxins and affect the appearance of the skin.

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Oily skin naturally retains more moisture and provides a mild barrier against environmental pollutants.

When Inflammation and Hormones Override the Benefits of Oily Skin

Chronic inflammation from poor liver detoxification, including environmental pollutants, as Schwartz mentioned earlier and poor diet and dehydration contribute to acne formation. Additionally, hormone loss in adulthood, along with untreated acne, breaks down collagen over time and leads to scarring and textural damage.

"Adult acne patients who optimize their hormones, particularly women addressing estrogen, progesterone and testosterone imbalances, see dramatic improvements not just in acne but in overall skin quality, texture and appearance. When we balance hormones properly, we're not just treating acne, we're optimizing the entire person," Schwartz says.

Signs of hormonal acne tend to be more localized along the jawline, chin and lower face. As mentioned earlier, topical prescription-strength creams with retinoids, salicylic acid, benzoyl peroxide or antibiotics help hormonal acne too, but also oral medications, like spironolactone and cortisone injections—used to reduce inflammation and pain in nodules and cysts[1].

Early Intervention, Sun Protection, and Hormonal Health in Acne Management

"This is exactly why I advocate so strongly for a 360 degree approach to acne care as early as possible," Schwartz says. "We need to control inflammation and prevent scarring so patients get the natural benefits of oilier, thicker skin without the long-term damage from chronic inflammation."

Bottiglione says for teens and young adults, who might be looking to prevent wrinkles while mitigating acne should use SPF beside their retinol and acne treatments. SPF, even for patients between 30 and 50 years old, is important to fight aging. "Wrinkle formation happens when you don't protect your skin, so an SPF is most important if you have acne or not. If you find you have acne and wrinkles these ingredients can help treat both skin concerns. Continued use of these ingredients can help in the long term wrinkle reduction," he adds.

Ultimately, teenage acne, driven by puberty's hormonal surges, tends to be more inflammatory and widespread, but if treated properly, most teens outgrow it and benefit from oilier skin and potentially decades of retinoid use, Schwartz says. Adults who experience acne for the first time, however, tend to have hormonal acne and would need to address the root cause, the hormonal imbalance, not just treat surface symptoms.

"Very often, patients who struggled with oily, acne-prone skin in their younger years are those with fewer wrinkles and youthful skin in their 50s and 60s," Schwartz says. "Young and older need to address the liver detoxification system, environmental factors, diet, hydration, sleep, stress and understand that acne represents complex processes occurring in many organs but seen in the skin and thus need to get to the root cause and treat it along with the skin." ME

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

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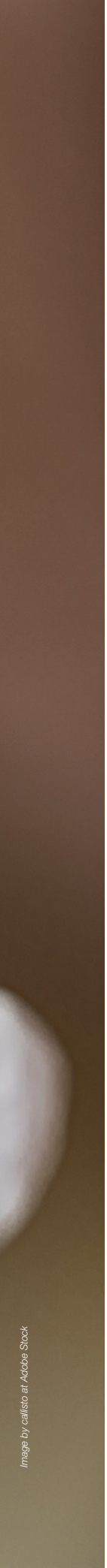

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MICRONEEDLING OPENS A PORTAL—

Now Clinicians Have a Chance To Shape What Goes In

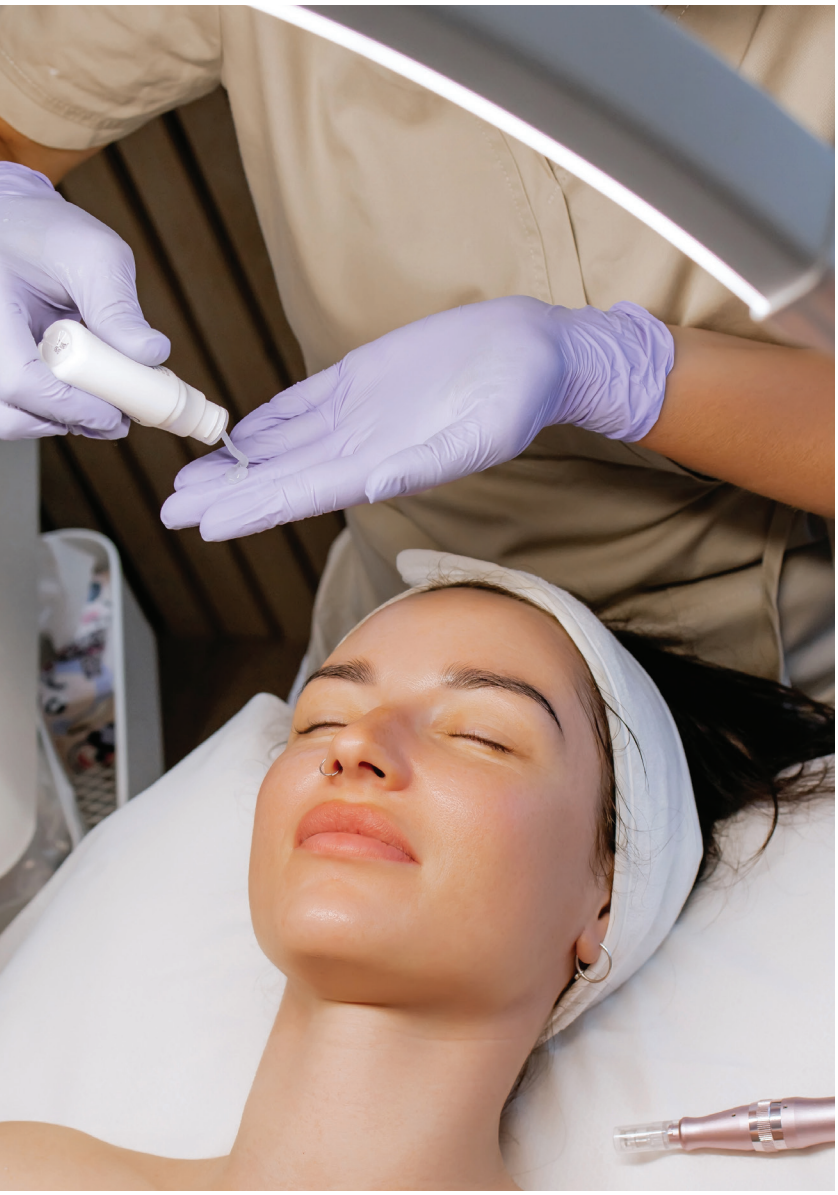
Microneedling is no longer just a clinic-only treatment—it's now a rising at-home ritual. But with deeper skin access comes higher stakes. From potent actives to dangerous irritants, what you apply matters more than ever.

By Jamie O'Toole

Recent beauty reports indicate that one of the top-growing facial services right now is microneedling, especially as micro-needling widens its reach via at-home tools. Microneedling is a common technique for skin renewal, claiming a resurgence since the emergence of PRP and stem cell therapy. Laying the groundwork for these new technologies to penetrate deeper, microneedling is also enabling an avenue to bolster patients' esteemed skincare routines. What serums patients are using in their at-home and in-office microneedling routines matter greatly, however, and the routine providers layout before and after matter too.

Microneedling's Growing Popularity and Skincare Potential

Spate's recent popularity index[1] reported that Google facilitated 538.9K average monthly searches, while TikTok saw 9.7 million average weekly views about microneedling. This, the report states, presents an opportunity for beauty brands to offer pre- and post-treatment care products for the recovery phase, but it also presents an opportunity to position topicals and particular actives that are especially beneficial to penetrate into the skin during microneedling, beyond PRP and exosomes.



Microneedling creates microchannels that boost ingredient absorption unlocking the full potential of serums when paired with the right actives.

With microneedling becoming an accessible routine at home, the report suggests that brands should exercise caution when encouraging consumers to undertake even minimally invasive procedures at home. Its popularity signals a need for brands to be transparent and provide educational content, an important extension to merely providing these treatments that are now consumer-friendly.

Because microneedling creates controlled micro-injuries that form temporary channels for enhanced product penetration, it opens sort of like a portal to the skin, allowing beneficial ingredients to lock into the skin once it heals and mends. If serums are applied after these channels close, Lua Padova, an esthetician at Body+Beauty Lab in Philadelphia, says absorption is less efficient and the overall effectiveness is reduced.

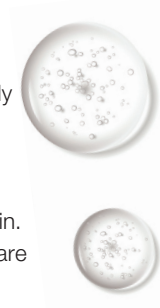
Choosing the Right Serums for Microneedling

When evaluating which serum to use with microneedling, Padova says it's important to avoid ones with irritants or strong actives such as retinoids, vitamin C, alpha hydroxy acids, like glycolic and lactic acid and beta hydroxy acids, such as salicylic acid. While these ingredients are beneficial for surface-level, every day routines, when introduced through microneedling, these ingredients can cause irritation and inflammation.

"Once the stratum corneum is bypassed, the most effective ingredients to deliver are hyaluronic acid, growth factors and platelet-rich plasma," she says. "Exosomes are also highly beneficial because of their role in cellular communication."

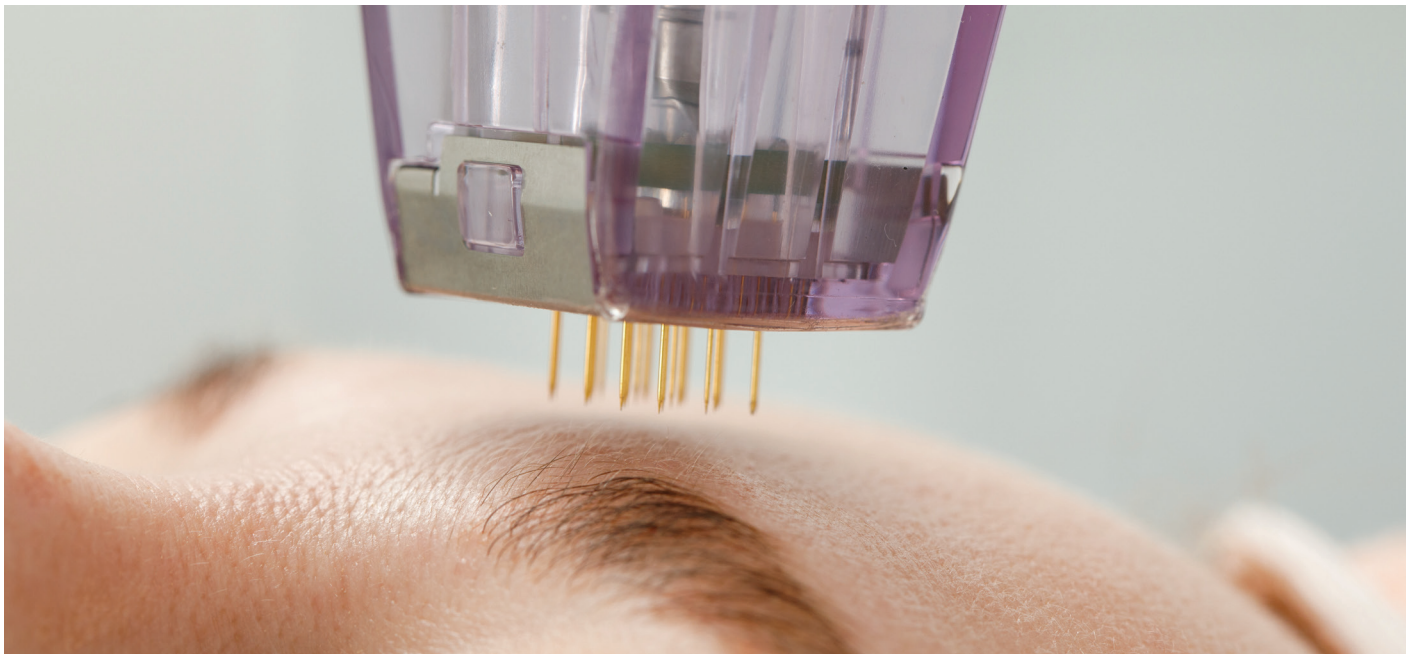
Tailoring Treatments Based on Needle Depth and Ingredient Type

The needle depth, however, plays a role in determining which topical to use, as hydrophilic molecules, like hyaluronic acid, are best delivered more superficially and don't necessarily need to be penetrated deeply, she says. Growth factors and PRP, on the other hand, should be introduced deeper into the skin. Lipophilic molecules, found in face oils, are not ideal for microneedling.



Once the correct active, compatible with a patient's needs, is discovered, Padova says the skin should be in a calm and hydrated state before treatment, pointing to the opportunity that brands have to curate post-op and pre-op skincare routines before and after undergoing needles.

From left: Image by MarijaBazarova; Yvone at Adobe Stock

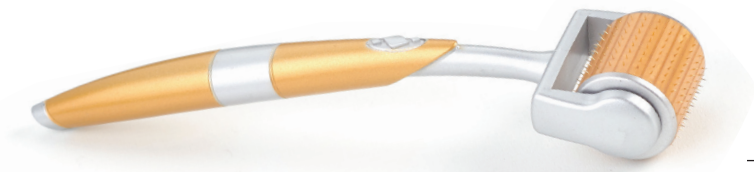


"Microneedling allows ingredients to penetrate deeper into the skin, working in synergy with the body's natural healing process to support repair, boost hydration, stimulate collagen production and help reduce inflammation."

Factors such as serum pH, proper cleansing, skin hydration and even the temperature of the treatment environment can all influence how ingredients perform, she adds, and how the skin responds during microneedling.

"Normal post-treatment reactions include redness, mild swelling and pinpoint bleeding right after the procedure, [and] within 2–3 days, patients may notice mild tightness, dryness or light flaking," she says. "Concerning reactions that should be addressed by a professional include pustules, severe swelling, rash or itching and persistent burning."

Though microneedling does involve a level of invasiveness, it works to trigger the body's natural healing process so that when the skin mends, the topicals mend with it, creating a renewed environment that clings to beneficial ingredients, resulting in increased collagen and elastin production–all key for maintaining skin elasticity and firmness[2].



With at-home microneedling on the rise, education on safe product choices is key to preventing irritation and ensuring effective results.

The Synergy of Microneedling and Skincare Ingredients

"Microneedling allows ingredients to penetrate deeper into the skin, working in synergy with the body's natural healing process to support repair, boost hydration, stimulate collagen production and help reduce inflammation," Padova says.

The growing popularity of microneedling, especially with the rise of at-home devices, presents a timely opportunity—not just for skincare brands, but for consumers and providers alike—to rethink and optimize how active ingredients are delivered to the skin. This evolving skincare ritual allows brands to innovate with purpose-built pre- and post-treatment products, while also empowering patients to approach microneedling with more intentional routines, guiding them in-office, but now at home. ME

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

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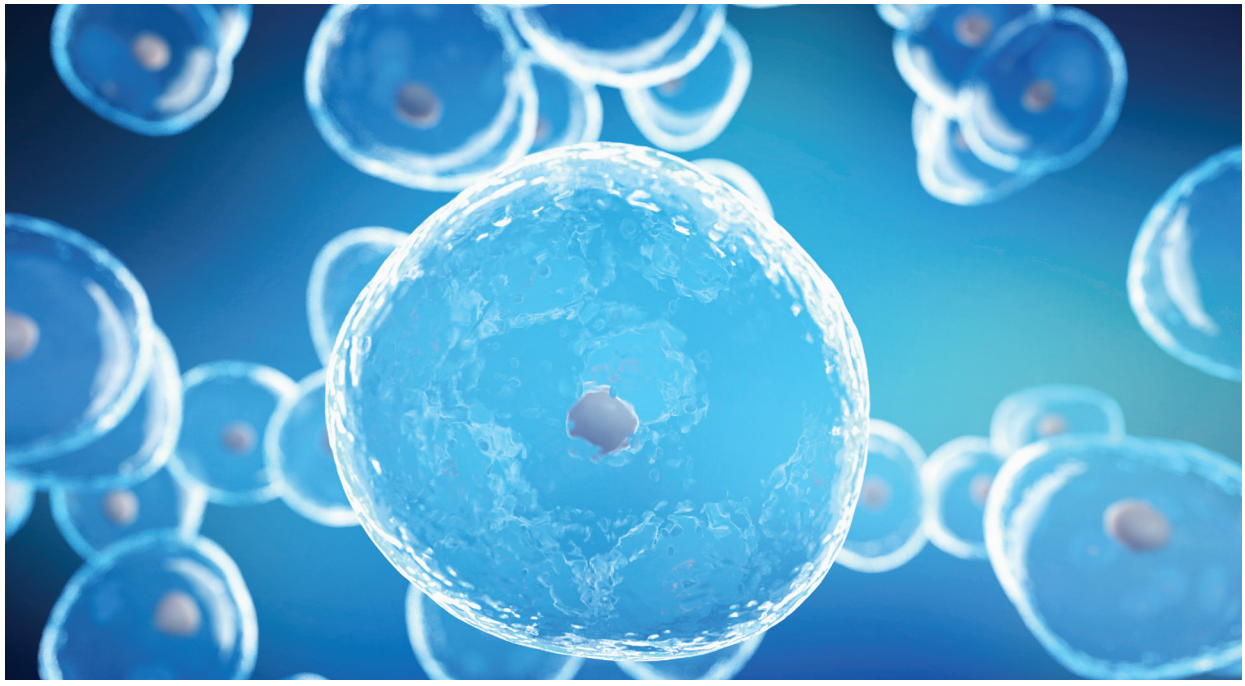

Advanced Extracellular Matrix Technology & Cell-Derived Biomolecules Are Rewriting the Rules on Post-Treatment Regeneration

The future of healing may not be about stronger ingredients—but about capturing the complexity your cells already understand.

A Shift from Single-Molecule Thinking

For decades, aesthetic science has chased regeneration through isolated interventions—one growth factor, one peptide, one active ingredient at a time. These molecules can nudge collagen production or calm inflammation, but they cannot replicate the complexity of a living healing response.

Healthy human stem cells — arguably the master architects of repair—express thousands of biomolecules simultaneously. In a 2025 publication by Combe et al., researchers quantified more than 13,000 distinct proteins within stem-cell-derived extracellular vesicles (EVs) and secretomes, illustrating just how intricate true regeneration really is[1]. Every stage of healing—cell migration, angiogenesis, ECM deposition, remodeling—requires the interplay of structural proteins, cytokines, RNAs and growth factors.

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Toward a Broader Biological Blueprint

To drive real regeneration, clinicians need access to a broader array of biomolecules that reflect the body's natural signaling diversity. Only living cells can generate this complexity, properly folding proteins, pairing them with co-factors and packaging RNA "blueprints" for new protein synthesis.

Yet, biologics are notoriously delicate. Secretomes and exosomes are prone to degradation during isolation and formulation, and proper long term storage is equally tricky. Proteins unfold, RNAs fragment and vesicles rupture—leaving most formulations with diminished potency by the time they reach the skin.

However, newer exosome-preserving technologies have improved isolation and stability, maintaining vesicle membranes and microenvironment. When made well, exosome and secretome products can deliver truly stunning results. One such example is LevEllis' Provoque serum, which contains the secretome of a stem cell derived skin progenitor cell line, developed by stem cell researcher Hans Keirstead, PhD. Provoque is also backed by a third party blinded clinical study which, unlike many topical cosmetic studies, includes impressive histological data[2].

Still, it should be noted that secretomes and exosomes primarily deliver instructions, like blueprints, for cells to construct new proteins—a process that takes time as cells convert the instructions into functional proteins, including extracellular matrix (ECM) proteins and growth factors (GFs). Arguably, delivering complete, functional ECM where and when needed would reduce workload for the cells at the wound bed, shorten recovery time and decrease pain, redness and discomfort.

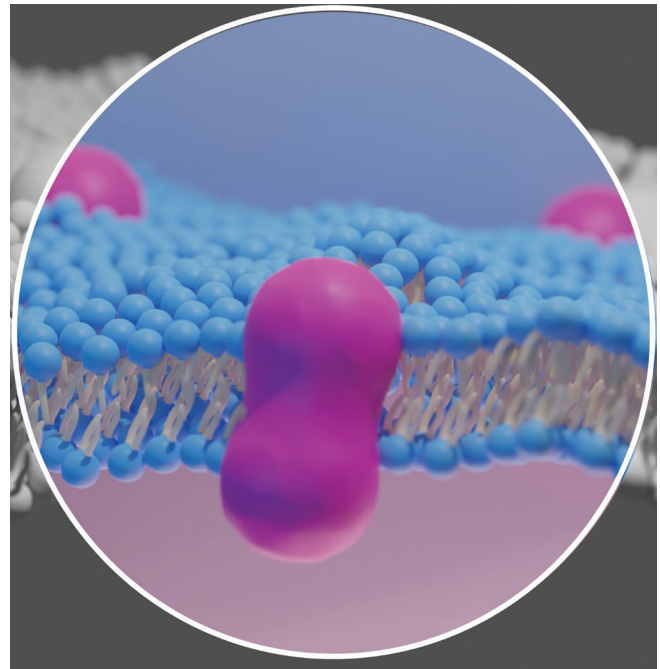
Signaling vs. Supplying

Following surgery or an energy-based procedure, the skin enters a state of controlled injury. Exosomes provide the molecular instructions for repair, but the cells receiving these molecular directions must still execute on those instructions: translating RNA, synthesizing proteins and assembling the extracellular matrix (ECM). Meanwhile, patients endure redness, swelling, pain and downtime.

Advanced ECM technology approaches the same problem from the opposite end. Instead of telling the body what to build, it provides fully formed, functional biomolecules that cells can immediately use.

The ECM: Nature's Regenerative Framework

The ECM is more than just scaffolding—it's the biological command center for tissue organization.



True regenerative aesthetics combines cellular signals and structural scaffolds—like the extracellular matrix—to mimic the body's natural healing and achieve faster, more effective tissue repair.

Composed of collagen, elastin, laminin, fibronectin and glycosaminoglycans, it anchors cells and directs migration, differentiation and communication. When the ECM is disrupted, regeneration slows or becomes disordered.

Traditional ECM products used in wound care are largely single-tissue derived and collagen-dominant, offering mechanical support but limited biochemical signaling.

The Multi-Tissue Platform: An Evolution in ECM Science

Multi-Tissue Platform (MTP) Extracellular Matrix represents a new class of ECM technology. By integrating ECM derived from multiple tissues, MTP ECM creates a matrix far richer in structure and signaling.

Unlike conventional ECMs that are often >90% collagen, MTP ECM naturally contains:

- Collagen, elastin, laminin, fibronectin and fibrillin
- Hyaluronic acid (HA) and glycosaminoglycans (GAGs) for hydration and signaling
- Hundreds of peptides, billions of extracellular vesicles and >1000 growth factors

This diversity mirrors the biochemical environment of youthful, healthy tissue. Crucially, MTP is sterilized through methods that preserve the native structure of proteins, avoiding the denaturation that has limited previous ECM products.

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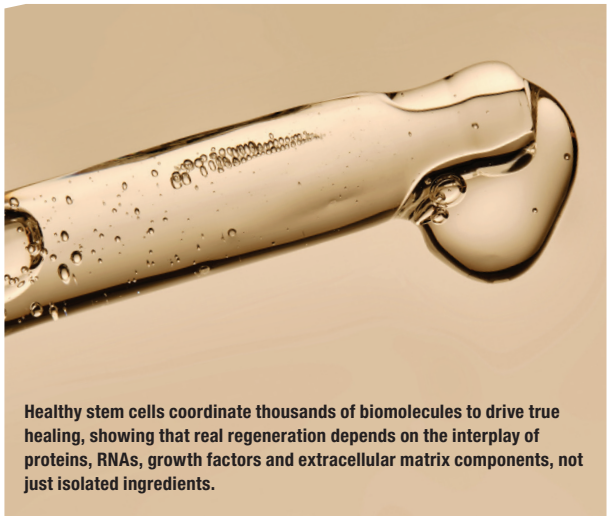

Healthy stem cells coordinate thousands of biomolecules to drive true healing, showing that real regeneration depends on the interplay of proteins, RNAs, growth factors and extracellular matrix components, not just isolated ingredients.

From Critical Care to Cosmetic Care

The foundational science behind MTP ECM was validated in wound management[3].

- XCelliStem (MTP powder) – FDA-cleared in 2018 for complex wounds, widely used in hospitals and burn centers.
- ReyaGel (MTP liquid) – FDA-cleared in 2024, formulated for topical use in dermatology and aesthetics.

ReyaGel's solubilized ECM can easily be integrated into existing procedural workflows. Following fractional laser, RF microneedling, chemical peels or hair restoration, clinicians can apply it topically to:

- Support re-epithelialization
- Lessen pain, erythema and downtime
- Improve texture and final cosmetic outcome
- Enhance patient satisfaction

MTP ECM is sterile, shelf-stable at room temperature for two years and ready to use—no mixing, refrigeration or reconstitution required. MTP ECM operates on two synergistic levels:

- Structural Regenerative Support: providing an intact, three-dimensional scaffold that supports cell adhesion and migration.
- Biochemical Orchestration: delivers growth factors, peptides and vesicles that support angiogenesis, modulate inflammation and recruit progenitor cells.

Compared to exosome-only formulations, MTP ECM offers the hardware (the physical matrix) and the software (the molecular instructions). This dual approach improves healing time while minimizing discomfort and fibrosis.

Regulatory Considerations

While exosome or secretome products can be legally marketed as topical cosmetic products, it's important to note that utilizing these products outside of topical cosmetic applications can have serious consequences. Many practitioners are impressed by the results achieved and the scientific backstory that they choose to use these products outside of their intended use, where they are currently only legally allowed as topical cosmetic products. Unfortunately, injection or use in open wounds is not simply 'off label' use because there is not any 'on label' coverage for exosome or secretome products at this time.

Conversely, MTP ECM technology has been approved by the FDA for use on burns and wounds, including surgical wounds, making it a safe choice for those that want to provide their patients with regenerative support beyond the limitations of a cosmetic topical.

The Next Frontier: Uniting Cellular Signals with Structural Matrix

The leap from single-factor formulas to complex, cell-derived biologics marks a new era for aesthetic medicine. Exosomes and secretomes have taught us how cells communicate; the extracellular matrix teaches us how they build.

By combining structure and signal, solutions like Multi-Tissue Platform Extracellular Matrix technology bridge the divide between biotechnology and aesthetics—offering faster healing, improved outcomes and a fundamentally regenerative approach to beauty and recovery. Ultimately, regeneration is not about adding more ingredients—it's about mimicking nature's design. ME

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Jordan R. Plews, PhD is a molecular biologist, stem cell researcher and biotech entrepreneur specializing in regenerative aesthetics. He previously co-founded ELEVAI Labs and FactorFive Skincare after working in biotech product development for many years at companies including Pfizer, Becton Dickinson, Velos and Natera. Plews currently leads JP BioConsulting, advising companies at the intersection of biotechnology, medical aesthetics, biomanufacturing and regulatory compliance.

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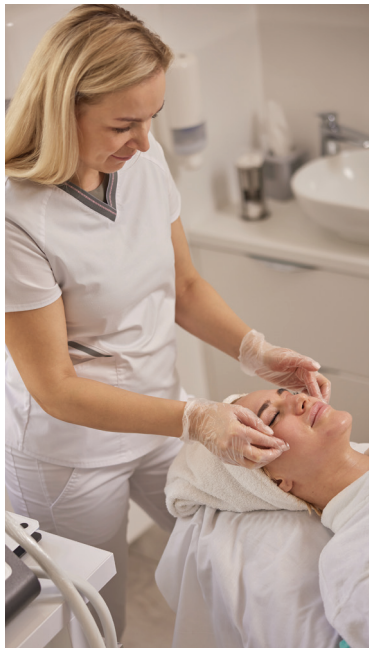

Estheticians Can Now Verify Licenses Digitally With New NCEA and BeautyAList Tool

Licensify via BeautyAList allows estheticians to verify licenses digitally, while connecting credentials to professional networks and industry resources.

Licensify is a license verification platform accessible via BeautyAList, a network application for beauty professionals combining license verification with marketing, social media and an e-commerce interface. Licensify partnered with the National Coalition of Estheticians Association (NCEA) to allow estheticians to obtain pro-level products and network professionally through a verified digital ID and profile—eliminating the manual process of credential authentication.

The NCEA is a U.S. organization that represents estheticians and works to raise standards for licensing, certification and education in the beauty and skincare industry—helping uphold authority and standards in the profession. Under this new partnership, the NCEA delivers verified digital badges and automated continuing education reminders for skincare professionals to update their skillset, per an Oct. 6 press release.

"Maintaining continuing education for state licensure and NCEA Certified credential recertification will be a breeze with this tracking software. Skin care companies will save time by using Licensify to verify buyers of their professional products and who is using them," says Susanne Warfield, executive director of NCEA.

By partnering, Licensify's capacity to connect to official state databases and confirm active licenses and monitor expiration dates will extend to estheticians accessing professional-only skincare products—a process that requires validating credentials. Per the release, the platform connects hybrid brands, international distributors and professional beauty brands with estheticians.

Licensify uses OpenID Connect to verify a license, creating a reusable digital ID, like TSA PreCheck for the beauty industry, Minina says. Once verified through Licensify, estheticians receive a public BeautyAList profile that highlights their NCEA certified credentials and expertise, making them visible to clients and brands. This visibility helps bridge professional credibility and client discovery, she adds, as brands identify authentic professionals for education, partnerships or affiliate programs, while clients view qualified skincare specialists to meet their specific needs.

"For decades, verifying a beauty license meant chasing paperwork like photos, emails and spreadsheets, with every brand repeating the same process. Licensify replaced that with a single automated system that verifies and monitors licenses in real time," says Dasha Minina, founder of Licensify and BeautyAList. If a license can't be verified automatically, the Licensify compliance team reviews it manually to ensure accuracy, she explains.

She continues, "We're giving brands the ability to segment by license type in real time so esthetician-only products can finally stay just that: esthetician-only." The next phase for the networking platform, following this launch, will extend to medical aesthetic providers. ME

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

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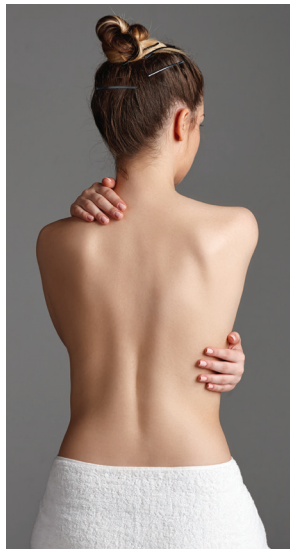
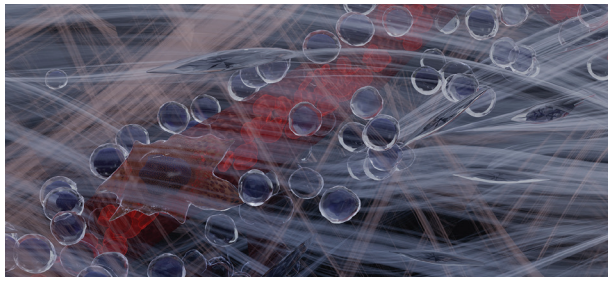


SCULPTRA SECURES EU APPROVAL FOR BODY TREATMENTS FOLLOWING STRONG CLINICAL RESULTS

Galderma has received EU certification to use Sculptra, previously known as a collagen-stimulating facial filler, for four new body areas: the gluteal region, posterior thighs, décolletage and upper arms. Already established since 1999 in Europe and 2004 in the U.S. for reducing facial wrinkles, Sculptra can now be used in Europe to improve skin quality, firmness, contour and cellulite in these additional areas. According to clinical data, patient satisfaction and visible improvements were high across all treated regions, including strong results for buttocks, thighs, décolletage and arms. Physicians say the expanded indications represent a shift toward more holistic, full-body aesthetic treatment.

CONEXEU PRINTS COLLAGEN-BASED TISSUE STRUCTURES WITH CXU BIOINK, AWAITS FDA CLEARANCE



Conexeu Sciences Inc. has 3D-printed bovine-derived collagen scaffolds using its CXU bioink platform and is now seeking FDA clearance for future use in aesthetics, wound healing and tissue regeneration. The CXU collagen extracellular matrix is designed to support personalized implants, vascular-supportive microenvironments and medical biofabrication, including custom structures for craniofacial, breast, periodontal and soft-tissue reconstruction. Functioning as both an injectable regenerative device and a printable bioink, CXU could be applied in wound care, dental and reconstructive surgery and 3D bioprinting. The advancement comes shortly after the company raised $5 million in crowdfunding to accelerate development.

HMP GLOBAL ACQUIRES MUSIC CITY SCALE AHEAD OF 2026 EVENT, EXPANDS EDUCATION PORTFOLIO



HMP Global has acquired Music City Scale, an annual symposium for professionals in aesthetic medicine, dermatology and regenerative skin health, marking its second acquisition in 2025 after Masterclasses in Dermatology. Scale co-founders Brian Biesman, MD and Michael Gold, MD will remain to oversee scientific direction and faculty engagement ahead of the 2026 event in Nashville. HMP plans to leverage its media and education platforms, including The Dermatologist and Dermatology Week, to expand Scale's educational resources while maintaining its focus on high-quality content, collaboration and innovation.

BIO-FERMENTED HYALURONIC ACID BECOMES INDUSTRY STANDARD AS MARKET POISED TO TRIPLE



More than 70% of global hyaluronic acid now comes from microbial fermentation as the beauty industry shifts toward vegan, cruelty-free ingredients, according to Future Market Insights (FMI), which forecasts the bio-fermented HA market to grow from $63.7 million in 2025 to $189.5 million by 2035. Ethical concerns and production challenges tied to animal-derived HA are driving demand for fermentation-based alternatives, with Streptococcus and Bacillus strains supplying high- and low-molecular-weight forms for medical and cosmetic use. Powdered BFHA leads due to its stability and versatility, while Asia-Pacific emerges as the fastest-growing market. FMI analysts say fermentation-derived HA is set to become a cornerstone of skincare and medical aesthetics.

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A Surge of Healthcare Professionals Entering Medspas Is Increasing the Need for Hands-On, Specialized Education

Discover how a hands-on medspa in California is helping healthcare professionals pivot aesthetic medicine, combining real-world experience, structured training frameworks and mentorship to bridge textbook knowledge and practiced skill.

Within the everyday ebbs and flows of a medspa in Capitola, California, Rebecca Small, MD provides hands-on education for medical professionals nationwide. At RSMD, the medical aesthetics studio she founded, healthcare professionals learn injectable protocol, including facial anatomy and artistry. An initiative that started over 15 years ago as small group sessions has expanded into an education initiative with courses, textbooks, videos, conferences and preceptorships.

When Small entered aesthetics, after studying at University of Cambridge and Harvard Medical School, she recounts noticing a gap between textbook knowledge and the skill involved in practice—expertise accomplished by real world examples. She set out to bridge this gap with her medspa, where students can face the trial and error that comes with the artistry and scientific skill of aesthetics in an existing environment, rather than a simulated one.

Creating Pathways for Healthcare Professionals Pivoting to Aesthetics

Keeping in mind that the American Board of Medical Specialties does not offer licensure or board certification in aesthetic medicine[1], only dermatology and plastic surgery, Small sought to create an environment where aspiring injectors could refine their technique under expert guidance. In 2022, about 69% of medical directors working in aesthetics came from "non-core" specialties[2]. The reason healthcare practitioners may be increasingly turning to aesthetics, AmSpa speculates, is due to burnout or a desire for a more flexible schedule.

Having trained physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants and registered nurses who wish to build or expand their careers in aesthetic medicine, Small's curriculum includes hands-on training, case-based learning and ongoing mentorship opportunities to support growth for clinicians looking to expand their skills or pivot to a new specialty.

"Many providers were learning piecemeal, through short workshops that lacked precepted hands-on experience, or by trial and error on the job without adequate foundational knowledge or a comprehensive, safety-driven framework," Small says. "I set out to bridge this gap by combining a rigorous academic foundation, through the textbooks I authored, my courses and case-based learning with hands-on training in my clinic."

Images courtesy of Rebecca Small, MD at RSMD



RSMD students progress from safety and anatomy (deconstruct), to functional muscle relationships (reconstruct) and finally to artistry and natural results (contour& lift).

A Three-Stage Framework That Guides Practitioners From Safety to Artistry

Zooming into the curriculum for new and evolving practitioners at RSMD, Small says procedures are broken down into three structured frameworks: deconstruct, reconstruct, contour & lift. This enables students to understand anatomy, safety zones and injection technique before layering in artistry and individualized patient goals.

Currently, to administer any injection, healthcare professionals must hold a valid certification for that specific procedure, in addition to their baseline medical degree and specialty. A practitioner can only give Botox or dermal filler injections if they possess a certification, which requires completing the appropriate training courses. These courses cover the fundamentals of botulinum toxins, proper injection techniques and how to manage possible side effects[3]. At RSMD, physicians can receive this training and supervision to obtain a Certificate of Completion and move on to perform these aesthetic treatments on their own.

"Most clinicians complete an initial hands-on toxin and filler training in a one-day course, after which they can continue skill development through advanced courses and ongoing mentorship. While RSMD's certificate is not a state or board 'license,' it provides recognized, evidence-based training that prepares licensed professionals to safely and confidently perform injections in clinical practice," Small says.

The deconstruct framework at RSMD specifically targets individual muscles with botulinum toxin—analyzing and visually deconstructing facial movements into component muscles to learn injectable protocol, Small describes. Reconstruct, however, moves on to treat multiple muscles, understanding functional relationships between muscles and how they work in opposition or synergy.

Contour & Lift combines treatments and layers procedures, such as the RSMD Liquid Lift, which combines botulinum toxin with dermal fillers. Within this framework, providers learn techniques for placing fillers safely in different face regions to achieve subtle, natural-looking results, she adds.

"This framework demonstrates a structured pathway for mastering injectables, starting with safety and precision, advancing to muscle relationships and culminating in artistry, balance and natural outcomes."

A Family Medicine Resident at Stanford School of Medicine, who trained at RSMD, said Small helped them to feel more prepared to inject the facial anatomy, adding that they can draw it on themselves, draw it on a friend and feel like they could identify those points for an injection.

Meeting the Growing Demand for Education as More Clinicians Enter Aesthetics

One of the major challenges in creating this training over the last 10 years, Small says, has been meeting the rising demand for education as more physicians, nurses and physician assistants are entering aesthetics from other specialties. Another challenge is helping providers navigate the number of available products, as skincare is an important component to aesthetics, but estheticians and dermatologists typically harness this knowledge. RSMD teaches the science and evidence behind certain ingredients to support informed choices.

Looking forward, given how rapid the aesthetics industry is growing and the amount of professionals looking to pivot to this industry, Small has plans to expand digital education platforms, develop international collaborations and advance training in the latest injectable and device-based techniques so that all healthcare professionals can access education at any stage of their career, from introductory courses to advanced techniques and ongoing mentorship.

"More broadly, I believe the future of provider-led training will focus on raising standards across the field, ensuring consistency and accountability in how aesthetic medicine is taught. By setting a higher bar for education, we can ensure that whether a patient is treated by a physician or nurse, they receive safe, evidence-based care with results that are natural, balanced and aligned with their goals," Small says. ME

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