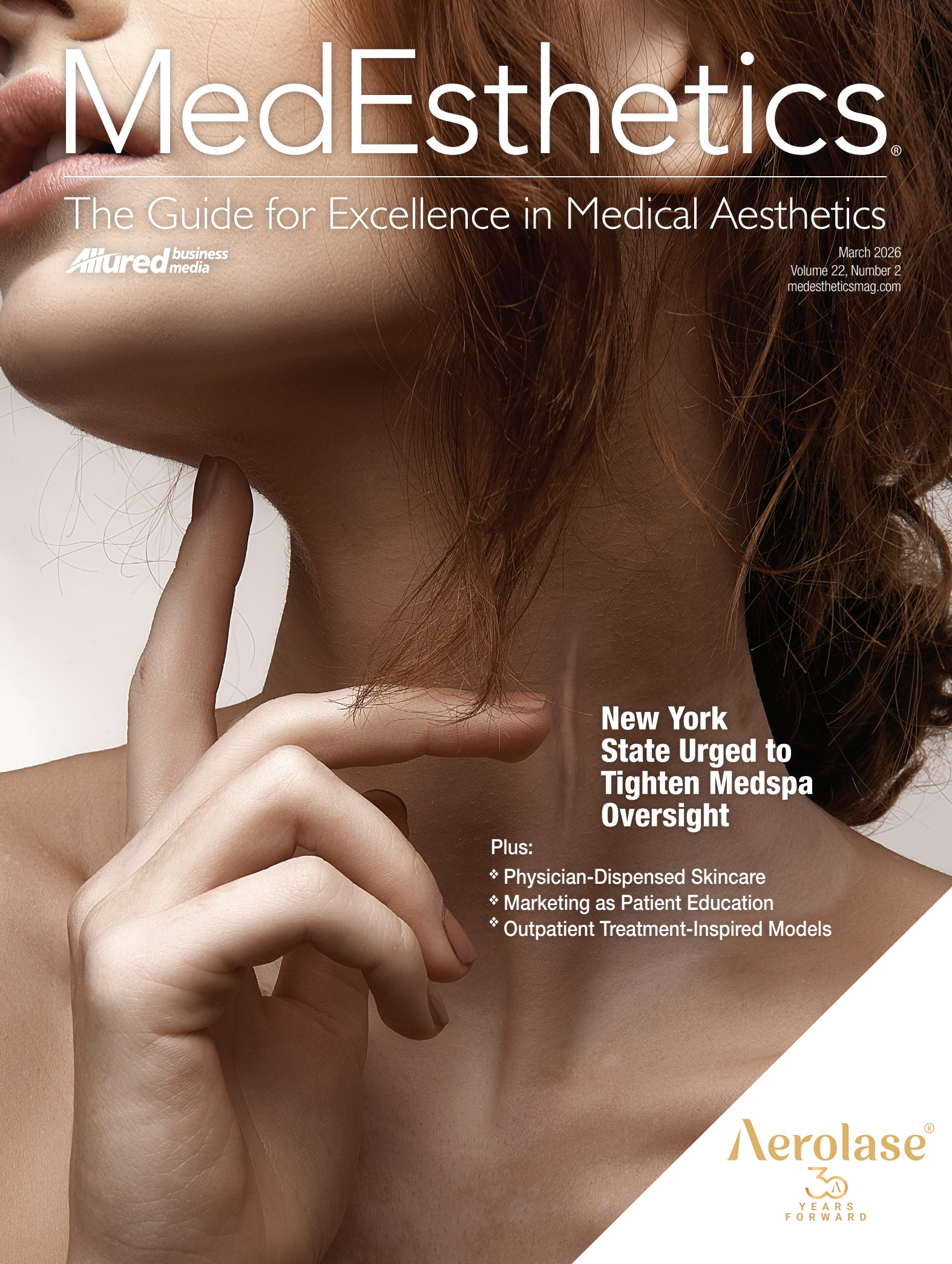

MedEsthetics®

The Guide for Excellence in Medical Aesthetics

Allured business media

March 2026
Volume 22, Number 2
medestheticsmag.com

New York State Urged to Tighten Medspa Oversight

Plus:

- Physician-Dispensed Skincare
- Marketing as Patient Education
- Outpatient Treatment-Inspired Models

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THE PATIENT PROFILE
Condition: Dull texture, congested pores.
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STRATEGY:
We utilized Zemits EvoPlasm™ to bookend the treatment — purifying before trauma and sealing immediately after.

STEP 1: PREP (5 mins)
- Step: Cleanse + exfoliation.
- ACTION: Perform a 5-minute EvoPlasm, Cold Plasma pass on dry skin immediately after dermaplaning.

PRACTICAL BENEFIT:
Instantly reduces up to 99% of surface bacteria on compromised skin. You get a preped field without the stinging or dehydration of chemical antiseptics.

STEP 2: INFUSION + DERMEDROP (5 mins)
- Peptide Meso Serum, followed by DermeDrop.
- ACTION: Apply serums onto the plasma-treated skin, then perform the DermeDrop™ Deep Skin Hydration pass.

PRACTICAL BENEFIT:
This is a dual-delivery system. First, EvoPlasm turns the stratum corneum into a "sponge" (+24% absorption). Then, DermeDrop Deep Skin Hydration opens temporary micro-channels. The result? Active ingredients are driven far deeper than topical application alone.

STEP 3: SYNERGY (20 mins)
- Step: Oxygen Dome Therapy followed by Cold Therapy.
- ACTION: First, perform Oxygen Dome Therapy to replenish the skin. Immediately follow with Cold Therapy to sculpt and tighten.

PRACTICAL BENEFIT:
Oxygen Dome restores cellular respiration and calms the skin. Cold Therapy then acts as a physical lock—tightening pores and sealing the active ingredients inside before the final plasma step.

STEP 4: RECOVERY (5 mins)
- Step: Finish the treatment.
- ACTION: Perform a final EvoPlasm pass over the treated area.

PRACTICAL BENEFIT:
Seal the hydration. Calms irritation. Boost more collagen production .



Courtesy of Licensed Esthetician, Ashley Ford @fullmoonhealingstudio

THE BUSINESS CASE
Eliminate Overhead:
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  Upgrade just 3 clients/day to unlock ~$2,640/mo in extra revenue.

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Emily Little
Associate Managing Editor

elittle@allured.com
630.344.6058

Knowledge is Power



Practitioners are making sure their patients are well-informed and that they understand the procedure and follow-up.

I will be the first to admit that I am not an expert when it comes to medical aesthetics. I've learned a lot over my time as an editor at Allured, but it's still a very new field for me. As I take my first steps into this arena, I'm constantly reading and learning about the latest technologies and innovations, discovering what our readers are using to make their jobs easier.

When preparing this month's issue, I noticed a general theme of patient education and awareness. Practitioners are making sure their patients are well-informed and that they understand the procedure and follow-up. Even in the context of an AI concierge to help with booking and follow-up, the goal is always to get to the core of the patient's concern.

A well-informed customer is a business' best asset. They aren't going to come back if they feel lost in the dark about their treatment. This month's issue shows the importance of informing the customer about their procedures and ensuring clarity and trust between patient and physician.

We also dive into some of the biggest trends in aesthetics for the upcoming year. From regenerative approaches to supplements to rehabilitative care, consumers are seeking a kind of "inside-out" beauty. 2026 is about personalization and enhancing one's natural features, focusing on small tweaks rather than dramatic changes. And these trends also extend to follow-up and after-care, ensuring that patients nurture their results to make them last as long as possible.

My goal in every magazine is to give practitioners something that will help them do their job and enhance their skillset. The March issue has so many little nuggets of wisdom and insight, and I've already learned so much. This industry is rife with experts, ready to share their knowledge.

I think it will be fascinating to see how these trends evolve over the coming year, and I think the well-informed patient will remain central to innovation.

Emily Little

Image by Tatiana at Adobe Stock


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INTRODUCTIONS



On January 26, 2026, **PROLLENIUM Medical Technologies** announced the appointment of Erick Brenner as chief executive officer. Brenner most recently served as president of Galderma US, where he oversaw a $1.8 billion portfolio across injectable aesthetics, dermatologic skincare and therapeutic dermatology. He has more than 25 years of experience across pharmaceuticals, medical aesthetics and consumer skincare.



On January 29, 2026, **BIOCORNEUM** announced the launch of SiliSilk, a non-SPF silicone gel designed to expand patient options for scar recovery. According to the company's press release, SiliSilk is designed for versatile use with professional-grade silicone in a non-greasy gel format. Further, SiliSilk creates an oxygen- and moisture-rich barrier that promotes natural skin repair, which helps to prevent and minimize formation of abnormal scars.



Regenerative medical technology company **LYMA** published its financial results for fiscal year 2025, reporting revenues of $48 million. The company attributes its significant growth to its successful expansion into the United States market.

The company hopes to continue its expansion in 2026 in both the United States and the United Kingdom, with plans to deepen its presence in these key markets. Further, LYMA also plans to establish its presence in other key regions, such as Australia and the United Aram Emirates.

"We are super excited to continue our expansion in the US and other key markets at the same time as bringing new products to market later in 2026," Goff concluded.

Images courtesy of LYMA; PROLLENIUM; BIOCORNEUM

















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30 Years of Intention. 30 Years of Purpose.

30 YEARS FORWARD

In 1996, while the aesthetic laser industry raced to market, Aerolase made an unconventional choice: we chose to be right, not first. The prevailing laser platforms of the era shared a fundamental limitation: they could not safely and effectively treat the full spectrum of Fitzpatrick skin types. Rather than accept that compromise, Aerolase's founders committed to engineering a solution from the ground up.

Three decades later, that decision has defined not just a company, but an entirely new standard of care. Today, Aerolase's microsecond pulse technology powers treatments across more than 70 countries and counting, delivering clinically proven outcomes for more than 36 FDA-cleared indications, safely and effectively across all Fitzpatrick skin types.

THE ORIGIN: ENGINEERING EQUITY INTO THE LASER

The laser industry had a skin tone problem. Conventional millisecond pulse durations generated excessive thermal diffusion, creating unacceptable risks of hyperpigmentation, burns, and scarring for patients with darker skin. Aerolase spent nearly a decade isolating the precise energy delivery parameters that would change this equation.

The result was the 650-microsecond Nd:YAG laser platform, a pulse duration engineered in the critical window between nanosecond and millisecond domains. This wasn't an incremental refinement. It was a fundamental rethinking of how laser energy interacts with tissue, achieving selective photothermolysis with dramatically reduced epidermal damage and virtually no risk of post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation.

"If we were going to offer something new, it had to be radically better, not just marginally different."

Pavel Efremkin, Founder and CEO of Aerolase

Aerolase earned its FDA 510(k) clearance in 2000 and expanded its regulatory portfolio through 2004, establishing the LightPod Neo and LightPod Era platforms that would form the foundation for the Neo Elite and Era Elite devices used by practitioners worldwide today. By 2015, the clinical foundation was complete, and a medical advisory board of leading dermatologists was in place, all before large-scale commercialization.

1996 Aerolase was Founded

2000 - 2004 Initial FDA clearances

2005 LightPod Neo & Era platforms established

2006 – 2011 Controlled US market entry with industry leading dermatologists

2012- 2015 Medical Advisory Board formed; peer-reviewed studies published

2016 - 2017 Expansion into Europe, Middle East, Asia, & Africa

The Science Comes First

The laser industry had a skin tone problem. We spent nearly a decade solving it - engineering 650-micropulse pulse technology that made safe treatments across all Fitzpatrick skin types possible for the first time.

Proving It Works Everywhere

We didn't chase volume — we chose our first customers as carefully as we'd chosen our technology. Clinical outcomes, not marketing budgets, drove adoption.



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Aerolase® 30 YEARS FORWARD

THE TECHNOLOGY: TWO WAVELENGTHS, LIMITLESS POSSIBILITIES

Aerolase's clinical versatility stems from two complementary laser platforms, each engineered with the same philosophy of precision energy delivery. The Neo Elite features a 650-microsecond 1064nm Nd:YAG laser optimized for deep dermal and vascular targets, while the Era Elite delivers a 300-microsecond 2940nm Er:YAG laser for controlled full-ablative resurfacing. Together, they address a comprehensive range of clinical indications:

Delivered through a contact-free handpiece, requiring no consumables, no anesthesia, and minimal downtime, Aerolase has redefined what a laser platform can accomplish in a clinical setting. Skin health professionals can treat a wide patient population with confidence, regardless of skin type, within a streamlined workflow.

PROVING IT GLOBALLY: INTENTIONAL EXPANSION, UNDENIABLE RESULTS

Between 2006 and 2015, industry-leading dermatologists across the United States, including Michael Gold, MD, and David Goldberg, MD adopted the platform and conducted independent case studies that validated clinical outcomes across diverse patient populations. International distributors followed, drawn by published clinical results.

Aerolase's trajectory from technology pioneer to global market presence has been built on a principle that remains unchanged: every adoption is a proof point, and every proof point is earned.
With the science validated globally, Aerolase turned its focus to building the commercial infrastructure worthy of its technology. The Neo Elite and Era Elite platforms launched in 2018, followed by the addition of the Exci308 excimer device in 2022, extending its reach into targeted phototherapy for autoimmune skin conditions like vitiligo and psoriasis.

THE NEXT 30 YEARS: WHERE PRECISION MEETS GLOBAL IMPACT

The aesthetic and medical laser market is projected to exceed $25 billion globally within the next decade[1]. And by 2050, it is projected that over 85% of the world's population will have skin of color[2]. As the industry scales, so does the imperative for technology that serves all patients equally. Aerolase is positioned at the center of that shift.

Aerolase's commitment to treating all skin types safely isn't a marketing position; it's an engineering principle embedded in every device Aerolase has ever built. As global demographics shift and patient populations become increasingly diverse, that principle becomes not just a differentiator, but a necessity.

> *"It was designed to be safe for all skin types — not as an added feature, but as a fundamental requirement."*
>
> *Pavel Efremkin,*
> *Founder and CEO of Aerolase*

Thirty years ago, Aerolase set out to solve a problem the rest of the industry accepted as inevitable.

The next thirty years will be defined by the same principles that shaped the first: precision engineering, clinical integrity, and an unwavering belief that the best technology should work for everyone.

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2018
Neo Elite, Era Elite, & Neo V launched

2019 - 2021
North American commercial infrastructure built out

2022 - 2023
Expansion into Mexico, Australia & the launch of Exci308 & Neo Derm

2024 - 2025
Launched Hybrid Fractional, & expanded into India

2026+
Continuing to define the gold standard in aesthetic & medical technology

From technology pioneer to market leader

The science was undeniable. Now we built the commercial engine to match it.

Proving what 30 years of precision enables

Three decades of physics-first innovation. One unwavering commitment: healthy energy that works for every patient, every time.



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BUSINESS CONSULT BY MICHAEL PATTERSON, FOUNDER & CEO OF SCULPTED VISION ELITE GROWTH



Visibility vs. Credibility: How Patients Interpret a Surgeon's Online Presence

Prospective patients form trust in plastic surgeons long before a consultation, not through visibility alone but through repeated exposure to clear, consistent signals of expertise and professionalism across every digital touchpoint.

Prospective patients begin forming impressions of plastic surgeons well before a consultation, often through fragmented information encountered across websites, search results, professional listings and social platforms. These impressions are shaped less by any single interaction and more by how consistently a surgeon's expertise and professionalism appear wherever patients encounter the practice.

Over time, trust is built less through visibility alone and more through familiarity. Patients are not simply noticing whether a surgeon appears online. They are assessing whether what they see feels aligned, measured and reliable. When information holds together across platforms, confidence grows. When it does not, hesitation begins to surface.

Patients Decide Earlier Than Ever

A website, a review profile, a search result or a short piece of social content often becomes a patient's first meaningful introduction to a practice, long before a phone call is placed or a form is submitted.

Image by Duncan Andison at Adobe Stock/

This early exposure is active, not passive. Patients research procedures, outcomes and surgeons over weeks or months, often without signaling interest. During this time, they are not only gathering information but also judging how that information is presented. Clarity, consistency and tone all influence how comfortable they feel taking the next step.

These impressions are rarely formed in a single moment. Patients absorb information across multiple touchpoints and draw conclusions based on patterns rather than isolated messages. They may not consciously evaluate each platform, but they notice when things feel aligned and when they do not.

Visibility and Credibility Are Not the Same Thing

In a crowded digital landscape, visibility is often confused with credibility. Being easy to find online matters, particularly in competitive markets, but exposure alone does not establish trust. A practice can appear repeatedly in search results or directories and still leave patients uncertain.

Credibility develops through coherence. Patients look for information that feels consistent, grounded and professionally presented wherever they encounter it. They care less about where a message appears and more about whether it reinforces the same impression over time.

When visibility is supported by clarity, confidence builds. When it is not, repeated exposure can work against a practice. Inconsistencies, vague positioning or mixed signals become easier to notice. In a field where decisions carry emotional, physical and financial weight, even small uncertainties can delay action or push patients elsewhere.



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How Digital Fragmentation Happens

Digital fragmentation is rarely intentional. A practice's online presence evolves over time, shaped by different contributors, changing priorities and shifting standards. Websites are updated, while search listings, directories and social profiles often change independently. Each channel may be accurate on its own, yet misaligned when viewed together.

Credentials may be described differently across platforms. Tone can drift from professional to promotional. Outdated details may remain visible in one place while being corrected in another. Individually, these issues seem minor. Taken together, they influence perception.

When Strong Credentials Lose Clarity

Most plastic surgeons have extensive training, certification and experience. Still, strong credentials do not always translate into patient confidence. Authority can be diluted when information is hard to find, inconsistently presented, or framed in a way that feels exaggerated or unclear.

Patients respond more favorably to concise, accurate representations of experience than to long lists of claims. Precision tends to carry more weight than volume. When credentials are presented consistently and without embellishment, they reinforce credibility.

Problems arise when credentials appear differently across platforms, are buried beneath promotional language, or are emphasized unevenly. In these situations, hesitation is rarely about qualifications themselves. It comes from how clearly those qualifications are communicated.

Consistency as a Signal of Professionalism

A unified presence reduces the effort required to make sense of information. Patients can focus on understanding the practice rather than reconciling discrepancies, which directly affects how confident they feel moving forward.

Consistency also serves as a quiet signal of professionalism. When information appears aligned across platforms, patients infer organization, attention to detail, and reliability without consciously evaluating each element.

Small gaps in tone, emphasis or presentation can raise questions, even when clinical qualifications are strong. Over time, these signals influence whether a practice feels steady and dependable or fragmented and uncertain.

In this context, professionalism is inferred rather than stated. It emerges through repetition, alignment, and restraint, not through emphasis or persuasion.

What Surgeons Should Periodically Review

Periodic review of a practice's online presence helps ensure that current expertise and standards are reflected



Patients form trust based on how consistently clear and professional a practice appears across every place they encounter it.

accurately. This does not require constant changes, but it does benefit from intention.

Surgeons may consider whether training and experience are clearly presented, whether messaging reflects the practice's current focus, and whether outdated or conflicting information remains visible. Viewing these elements through the lens of a prospective patient often highlights gaps that are easy to miss internally.

The goal is not perfection. It is alignment. When information reflects how a practice operates today, uncertainty is reduced, and decision-making becomes easier for patients.

What Actually Influences Patient Confidence

Patient confidence is shaped less by persuasion and more by reassurance.

Healthcare consumer research suggests that patients often interact with 7–13 touchpoints before booking a consultation, encountering a practice repeatedly rather than deciding after a single visit. Repeated exposure to consistent information supports familiarity and recall, making practices easier to recognize when patients are ready to move forward. During this process, patients often cross-check multiple signals, including professional profiles, search results and reviews, reinforcing the importance of consistency across everything a practice makes visible.

When messages conflict or tone shifts, doubt is introduced, even when clinical qualifications are strong. Confidence rarely forms all at once. It develops through repeated exposure to information that reinforces the same impression over time.

These signals influence not only whether a patient schedules a consultation but also how secure they feel throughout the decision-making process.

Viewing Presence Through the Patient Lens

Patients do not evaluate platforms in isolation. They experience a practice as a whole, forming impressions based on how information aligns across every point of contact. Each interaction either strengthens or weakens overall credibility.

When a digital presence is clear and cohesive, patients feel oriented and confident. When it is fragmented, uncertainty enters quietly and often without explanation.

In a field where trust carries real weight, even minor inconsistencies can influence whether a patient moves forward or continues searching. Visibility creates opportunity, but credibility determines outcomes. Practices that understand this distinction are better positioned to support informed decisions, stronger patient confidence, and trust that extends beyond the consultation. ME



Michael Patterson is the Founder and CEO of Sculpted Vision Elite Growth, a digital growth firm working exclusively with U.S. board-certified plastic surgeons and aesthetic practices. He helps practices strengthen online visibility, build credibility, and maintain a clear, consistent presence across digital platforms to support reliable patient demand.

His work centers on how patients research, compare and choose plastic surgeons in competitive markets. Michael focuses on the role clarity, consistency, and accuracy play in patient trust, particularly before any direct interaction with a practice, and how online presence shapes perception throughout the patient journey. His perspective is grounded in real-world patient behavior and the evolving ways prospective patients evaluate plastic surgeons online, with an emphasis on building consistent patient flow rather than short-term spikes in attention.

In addition to his client work, Michael contributes content to industry publications and produces the Vision to Volume podcast, where he educates and informs surgeons on how visibility and credibility influence patient behavior in plastic surgery practices.

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NEW YORK STATE URGED TO TIGHTEN MEDSPA OVERSIGHT AS DERMATOLOGY GROUPS, NYC COUNCIL WARN OF WIDESPREAD VIOLATIONS

By Jamie O'Toole



Dermatology groups and the NYC Council are urging lawmakers to tighten medspa regulations after a report found widespread licensing and safety violations across the state's appearance-enhancement businesses.

On Jan. 6, the American Academy of Dermatology Association (AADA) and the New York State Society of Dermatology and Dermatologic Surgery, released a statement, joining the New York City Council in urging New York lawmakers to require medspas and cosmetology and nail establishments to clearly disclose that they cannot perform medical procedures.

The AADA states that many clients assume staff are licensed in medspas, but these treatments require the expertise of board-certified dermatologists. Per the Jan. 6 press release provided by the AADA, the organizations also join the Council in urging New York State to launch a public education campaign informing consumers about the risks of undergoing cosmetic medical procedures in unlicensed or improperly supervised facilities[1].



NYC Council Report Details Regulatory Failures in Medspas Across the City

In December 2025, the council released a report called 'A Joint Enforcement Operation Against Improperly Licensed Medspas in NYC,' detailing why these investigations were initiated across New York, motivated by the rapid expansion of medspas across the state. The report also provided updates of the hearings that took place addressing the violations and lack of regulation.

The investigations took place between June and September 2024 by the NYC Council's Oversight and Investigations Division[2]. Of the 15 inspected medspas across the five boroughs, the majority failed to display licenses, maintain safety records, have medical professionals present or comply with insurance requirements; some also employed unlicensed or expired practitioners[2].

NYC Physician Calls for Clearer Oversight and Continuous Education in Cosmetic Procedures

David Goldberg, MD, JD, a physician-attorney and the Director of Cosmetic Dermatology and Clinical Research at the Schweiger Dermatology Group in New York says the issue with quality at medspas has been an ongoing issue for some time in New York and across the country. He agrees with the Council's assessment that current regulatory legislation is lacking in clarity and consistency, and that disclosure for AEB businesses"where there is no license for the medical procedures being performed is important patient safety information."

At Schweiger Dermatology in New York, he says providers receive ongoing training through webinars, modules and in-person education, with all PAs and NPs supervised on-site by physicians. While appropriate training and oversight are necessary, these are often baseline. Continued education and ongoing training for protocols and procedures should be fluid, Goldberg adds.

"Safety is always the number one priority. It must be—these are elective cosmetic procedures," he says. "Licensure is the obvious requirement and baseline for patient safety, but even that is not enough."



Dermatology groups and the NYC Council are pushing for state laws requiring clear disclosures about what procedures medspas are legally prohibited from performing.

Investigation Spurs Proposals for Stricter Oversight

All 15 of the inspected businesses received DOS violations, resulting in four license revocations now issued, and four cases have been fully adjudicated. Of the 15 businesses, 93% had license display problems and 86% were missing required safety records. The cases for the remaining 11 inspected businesses appear to still be pending, the report states[2].

The council proposes the state lawmakers to consider enacting a law requiring all Appearance-Enhancement Businesses (AEBs) to clearly display disclosure that they are not licensed to perform medical procedures. It would list common services that AEBs are prohibited from providing, including Botox and other injectables, dermal fillers, platelet-rich plasma (PRP) treatments, intravenous (IV) therapy and infusions and body contouring procedures.

State Health Commissioner James McDonald, MD says, "The Department of Health reminds New Yorkers of the importance of ensuring their provider has the proper qualifications and training, especially as cosmetic medspa procedures become more popular. Licensed health care professionals undergo rigorous training to understand the complexities of human physiology, and are the only individuals qualified to perform these services. The Department of Health will continue to investigate and hold individuals and practices accountable who offer unauthorized services that put people's lives at risk." ME

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

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INSIDE-OUT AND INNOVATIVE:

What's Trending in Aesthetics for 2026

By Jamie O'Toole

WHEN 2025 FIRST BEGAN, the year projected new innovation, potential FDA-reviews, with brands adopting other brands under M&A to combine two concepts, and research that, by the end of the year, debuted breakthroughs to expect in 2026. In the new year, one thing seems to be prominent in medical aesthetics as 2025 passes the baton: inside-out, 360 radiance. Skincare you eat and beauty that starts within—a gradual but lasting reflection. Technology and medicine are keeping up, and in 2026, personalization, one of 2025's greatest focus points, will prioritize biocompatibility, longevity and whole-body wellness.

MedEsthetics wishes you a happy New Year; here's what we anticipate will be trending in 2026.



Medspas as Hubs of Preventive and Optimized Wellness: Beyond Aesthetics

Anthony Brissett, MD, FACS, president of the American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery (AAFPRS), says patients increasingly recognize that true health starts from within, with internal wellness visibly reflected in outer appearance, positioning medical spas as leaders in preventive and regenerative care. Outside of medical spas, in traditional doctors offices and hospitals, laboratory test results are a fundamental component of diagnosis and disease monitoring; however, there are limitations in current testing methods, and patients rarely receive care that optimizes health, only maintaining "normal" levels[1].

In medspas, patients are receiving that optimized level care, whether it be hormone therapy, menopausal support or NAD therapy. Many patients look to medspas now for not only cosmetic enhancement, but to provide a regimen that is monitored and elevates their health and appearance in ways they may not receive in their typical healthcare system. GLP-1, a prescribed medication that may have extended access if TrumpRX fulfills its promises in 2026, are what has welcomed many patients to aesthetics altogether, and also wellness services.

Though it was reported in 2023 that these weight loss medications also benefit cardiovascular health[2], in addition to diabetic management and weight loss, it was when medspas started implementing the drug for weight loss that patients were introduced to the drug's longevity aspects, including liver health and cellular optimization. Now medspas not only provide plans for weight loss with the drug, but also provide monitoring protocols as fit individuals use GLP-1 for aging concerns.

Providing GLP-1s showed to be a wise decision for revenue, too. According to Guidepoint Qsight, in 2024, GLP-1 sales accounted for an average of 15% of total monthly non-surgical revenue among practices offering these treatments. Patients receiving GLP-1 represented 14% of all visits at these practices during the same period. Demonstrating how GLP-1 acted as a driver for patient acquisition, approximately 40% of GLP-1 patients in 2024 were entirely new to the practice where they received their prescription[3].

Plastic Surgeon Johnny Franco, MD, FACS says, "You're going to see more industry partners entering the aesthetic space with new medications and peptide combinations that are tailored to specific needs—not just weight loss, but also muscle preservation and other bio-enhancement goals."

Supplements Will Shape Aesthetic and Surgical Practices

Supplements and their integration into pre-and-post-op regimens, but also as standalone support for external appearance, made waves in 2025 and will continue to in 2026 as well, as holistic, wellness-focused care accelerates, thanks to GLP-1's impact. FDA oversight in this category is still limited, however, leaving medspa clinicians an important responsibility to carefully track supplements they recommend.

"I think in 2026 you'll start to see real changes in how aesthetic providers treat patients, with a much more holistic approach. But if history has taught us anything—especially in plastic surgery—it's that change tends to be incremental, and honestly, that's appropriate," Franco says.

> "I think in 2026 you'll start to see real changes in how aesthetic providers treat patients, with a much more holistic approach."

Supplements are not only offering patients the inside-out care they're looking for, addressing issues like libido and energy levels, but they are also being used in aesthetic practices to minimize downtime and make recovery comfortable—a goal for many clinicians whose patients have busy lives. Franco says minimizing downtime and reducing complications has always been important, and layering in nutrition, peptide integration, hyperbaric treatments and light therapies have become helpful components on optimizing patients for the onset of their goals.

Franco informs, however, that while some of the rapid recovery protocols and new wellness treatments are incredibly exciting and promising, "many of them are just

Image by NDS at Adobe Stock

now entering ongoing studies or are in the planning stages for trials launching in 2026. So 2026 will really be the tip of the iceberg."

In 2026, adoption of these supplements will likely begin slowly and build momentum as study results emerge, Franco adds. A significant increase is expected by late 2026 and into 2027, he says—once the science is established and there is a clearer guidance on which treatments and combinations work best for specific procedures.

Wellness is clearly becoming a priority for younger patients, who know that skin health starts within: a 2025 McKinsey survey found that nearly 30% of Gen Zers and millennials in the United States report prioritizing wellness "a lot more" than a year ago, compared with up to 23% of older generations[4].

Reimagining Aesthetic Devices for Therapeutic and Rehabilitative Care

A sector of wellness, outside of supplements and medications that many did not anticipate to emerge in 2025, was the FDA approval and clearance of devices with minimally invasive technology for rehabilitation and recovery—applications beyond aesthetics. In October, BTL Aesthetics' Emsculpt Neo, a non-invasive muscle-stimulation device, was used to help prepare Hungarian astronaut Tibor Kapu for his ISS mission by counteracting muscle loss associated with microgravity. The device supported his strength, endurance, balance and recovery as part of astronaut physical conditioning.

And recently, on Dec. 18, Cutera's truFlex muscle-stimulation device received FDA clearance to expand beyond aesthetics into rehabilitative and therapeutic uses for arm and calf muscles. The approval enables applications such as preventing muscle atrophy, improving circulation and range of motion and supporting post-surgical and rehabilitation care.

"Rehabilitation and muscle wellness represent two of the most exciting growth areas in medical technology today," said Taylor Harris, CEO of Cutera. These new implications, expected to expand further in 2025, create an unexpected pathway into aesthetics through wellness, potentially as impactful as GLP-1.





'Tweak'ments Over Dramatic Changes

Patients increasingly wish to enhance what they already have, rather than alter their appearance completely. In early 2025, Merz Aesthetics' global Pillars of Confidence study, surveying 15,000 adults, indicates that 79% of respondents prefer treatments that enhance rather than alter and 49% of respondents worry about unnatural results[5]. The aesthetic industry calls this desire 'tweak'ments, treatments that do not aim to correct but rather cultivate our body's natural processes.

Keeping this in mind, the goals of younger patients and older patients look similar, Grace Peng, MD FACS told MedEsthetics in June: a fresher look without looking "done." Celebrities are a driving force for influencing natural looking results, ones that sculpt without modifying. In 2025, celebrities became ambassadors for effective devices, including Kim Kardashian for Sofwave and Salma Hayek Pinault for Ultherapy prime.

Mechanisms That Mimic: Regenerative Approaches Transform Facial Aesthetics

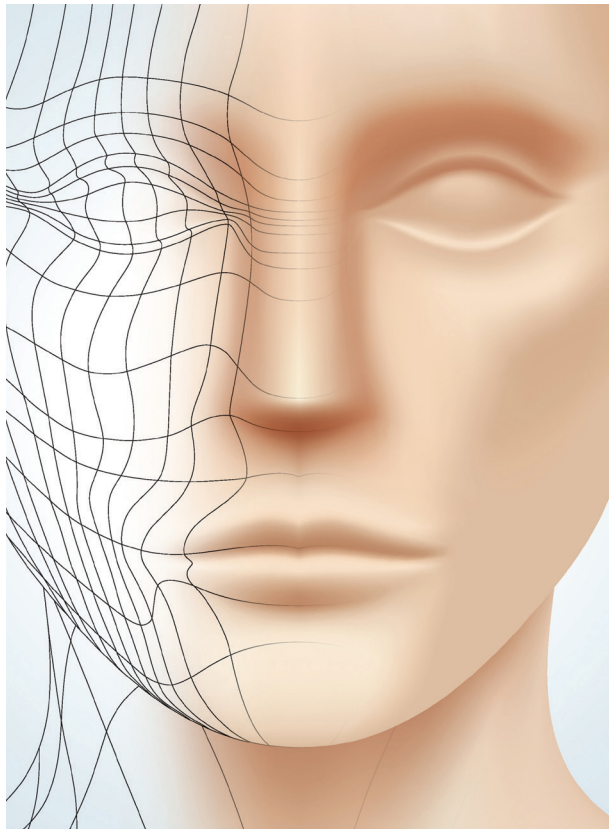
'Tweak'ments can be accomplished with many energy-based devices on the market, achieving goals like body contouring and face lifting, but what's offering subtle enhancements that are good for the skin and not just filling

Clockwise from top: Image by PixelMe; Melafon at Adobe Stock

the face, are biostimulatory fillers—biocompatible with the patient's skin. Exosomes and secretomes are advancing each day in research and development, too, but science is still emerging in replicating the process of regeneration in the same way that it fabricates these cells. Brissett stresses that patients should know not all exosomes are created the same.

AAFPRS and Franco note that biostimulators like poly-L-lactic acid and calcium hydroxyapatite are increasingly paired with energy-based modalities like RF microneedling and ultrasound to stimulate collagen and elastin regeneration, producing natural, lasting improvements in texture, tone and firmness. Patients experiencing skin laxity and volume loss from GLP-1 use typically undergo these biostimulatory fillers, paired with these modalities. Brissett says this represents a shift from filling or tightening to reawakening the skin's own regenerative capacity.

"In the past, we often tried to fix everything by simply adding more filler. Now, both providers and patients understand that just overfilling is not the answer. Because of the weight loss revolution, we're seeing a lot of younger patients—people in their 20s and 30s—presenting with concerns we used to associate with patients in their 40s, 50s, and 60s," Franco says.



Enhancing, Not Altering: Tech-Driven Precision in Facial Aesthetics

What's helping make 'tweak'ments that renew seamlessly without looking noticeable are digital tools, ones that predict placement before it's done and analyze the skin to visualize what it needs, requires or deserves. AI skin analysis, predictive visualization software and wearable recovery monitors improve precision, safety and satisfaction, Brissett says.

Imaging systems have been upgraded in 2025, allowing patients to preview potential outcomes on their face to imagine the style they want to accomplish surgically, especially in rhinoplasty and aging-face surgery, Brissett says. AI capabilities make discussions far more tangible, too, Franco adds. Whether in person or during virtual consultations these skin analyses visually show patients the types of results that are realistically achievable. Words like "subtle," "natural" or "full" can mean very different things to different individuals, and by using 3D imaging and AI modeling to illustrate potential outcomes, patients gain a clear and accurate understanding of what is truly possible.

"Rather than dramatic alterations, we focus on enhancing facial balance, structural integrity, ethnic identity and skin quality and longevity. This patient-centered shift has elevated refinement and personalization across all three pillars: rejuvenation, rhinoplasty and reconstruction," Brissett continues.

In 2026, the goals for many patients, and the practitioners mapping their treatment plan is nurturing a result—watering an end goal so that a natural-looking result can be achieved, rather than fabricating the end goal immediately. As technology keeps up with solutions that do not artificially change the face but are compatible with its natural course, 2026 is looking like an exciting year for medical aesthetics.

We'll see you in 2026, a year of new innovations, technological breakthroughs and professional advancements. ME

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MARKETING AS A FORM OF PATIENT EDUCATION:

WHY THOUGHTFUL CONTENT REDUCES FEAR, MISINFORMATION AND UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

In medical aesthetics, marketing isn't just about visibility—it's the first classroom where patients learn, form trust and shape expectations and getting it right can transform consultations, outcomes and your practice's credibility.

Hillary Small, Founder of The MedSpa Society



If you're running a medical aesthetics practice today, marketing is no longer just how patients find you. It's how they learn. Social media and digital platforms are typically the first exposure patients have to aesthetic treatment options, including what they think treatment is, what results should look like, what they're afraid of and who they decide to trust.

And just like any business, the goal of marketing is to bring education and value that builds trust. Medical aesthetics is no different.

Where it gets challenging is that in this industry, outcomes are not one-size-fits-all. They can vary widely based on provider training, depth of knowledge, technical proficiency and the practice's values and approach.

That's why content cannot just be pretty. In this space, content is communication, and communication shapes expectation.



Marketing is the first classroom, whether we like it or not

Many patients learn about anatomy, aging and treatment options through marketing before they ever book a consultation. That means your Instagram, your website, your YouTube and your ads are not just "promotion." They're patient education.

This is where you have both a responsibility and an opportunity:

- **Responsibility:** reduce confusion, fear and unrealistic expectations before they walk in.
- **Opportunity:** build trust faster by showing how you think, how you treat and what patients can realistically expect.

Fear and misinformation grow in the gaps

In the trenches, fear almost always comes from uncertainty. Patients worry they will look overdone. They worry they will not look like themselves. They worry they will be judged. When their only reference point is viral content, filters or dramatic outcomes with no context, they fill in the gaps with assumptions.

Misinformation spreads quickly because it is simple. Education takes a little more effort because it requires nuance, and nuance is where the truth lives. And unrealistic expectations are usually not "bad patients." They are a natural result of the internet teaching people the wrong baseline for what results should look like. Thoughtful content fixes this, not by overexplaining, but by being consistent and clear.

A perfect example: neurotoxin vs. filler confusion is still everywhere

Even now, there is still a lack of understanding between neurotoxin and filler. People who do not know the difference often assume that any injectable is going to drastically change their appearance in an unfavorable way. That's simply not the case.

This is the type of assumption that can be easily overcome with clear education, plain language explanation and realistic outcomes.When you consistently explain what each treatment does, who it is for and what the goal is, you remove stigma. You reduce fear. You create better conversations before the consultation even happens.

What'thoughtful content' actually looks like

The practices that do this well do not rely on trends. They build a content system that consistently puts

Image by anatolycherkas at Adobe Stock

the provider at the forefront, showing and explaining procedures, protocols and outcomes.

For each service you promote, your content should cover:

- What it is, in plain language
- What it is for, and what it is not for
- How it is performed, high level, not a medical lecture
- What it feels like, including common fears
- What results typically look like, realistic not extreme
- Timeline for results, and how long they last
- Variables that affect outcomes, because results are personalized
- Your philosophy and approach, so patients self select into the right fit

This is how you reduce misinformation without sounding defensive. You educate by leading.

Go beyond social posts, build real patient education assets

Short form content builds awareness, but if you want to reduce fear and confusion and build real credibility, you also need deeper education that builds trust now so you're the obvious choice when they're ready to book. This can include:

- **Website service pages** that explain process and expectations, not just benefits
- **Videos** that walk through procedures and recovery
- **Podcasts** that break down myths and decision making
- **Webinars** that teach injectables 101 or the differences between lasers
- **Ebooks and guides** that answer common questions
- **Quizzes** that help patients identify concerns and learn options, with clear disclaimers that a consult is required

When these assets work together, patients self educate into confidence.

The added benefit: authoritative education helps you show up in Google and AI search

This is the part many practices are missing right now. Education-driven marketing is not only about patient trust. It's also becoming a visibility strategy.

Patients still use Google, but more and more, they're using AI platforms as a shortcut to answers and recommendations. They're asking questions like, "What's the difference between Botox and filler," "What should I do for under eye hollowness," and increasingly, "Best medspa in Midtown Miami" or "Who's the top injector near me." They want a clear answer fast, and they want to feel confident the recommendation is credible.

Search engines are actively trying to prioritize helpful, reliable, people-first content, especially when it relates to health and safety. AI tools work similarly. They synthesize information from across the web and tend to surface the practices that look consistent, well-documented and trustworthy based on what's publicly available.

That means educational content is doing double duty. It's helping patients make better decisions, and it's sending credibility signals that support discoverability in both Google search and AI-driven results.

The takeaway is simple: when you publish authoritative, provider-led education across multiple platforms, you're building trust with real people and strengthening your practice's credibility across the internet.

The payoff is better patients and better outcomes

When marketing is treated as patient education, the quality of your patient journey improves before anyone even calls your office.

Patients show up:

- Less afraid
- More informed
- More realistic
- More aligned with your approach
- More ready to commit to a plan

That makes consultations smoother, outcomes stronger and retention easier. Because in medical aesthetics, marketing is not just promotion — it's the first step in patient care.

About the Author

Hillary Small is the founder of The MedSpa Society, a boutique branding, marketing and growth consultancy built specifically for cash-pay aesthetic and wellness practices. With a hands-on, operator-first approach, she helps medspas, IV therapy clinics and longevity-focused practices grow with clear positioning, high-converting patient acquisition systems and retention strategies that drive recurring revenue.

Small is also the creator of the MedSpa Marketing Shop, a resource library of templates and tools that make agency-level marketing accessible for practice owners, and the founder of Connect CRM, a conversion-focused CRM platform designed to capture, nurture, and book more leads. She hosts The Cash Pay Podcast, where she shares practical strategies on marketing, operations and scalable systems to help practices build profitable, sustainable growth. ME



Image courtesy of the author

PHYSICIAN-DISPENSED SKINCARE SHIFTS TO QUALITY AND CONSISTENCY, DRIVING STEADY MEDSPA REVENUE GROWTH

Jamie O'Toole

Membership benefits and loyalty clients are driving shifts for medical knowledge and oversight that e-commerce can't quite meet.

An October 2025 report by Kline, titled Physician Dispensed Skin Care: U.S. Perception and Satisfaction Survey, reports that patients seeking medical-grade skin care are simplifying at-home regimens and prioritizing multifunctional products and trusted brands. About 70% of dispensing physicians expected their skin care sales to grow last year. While the majority of those physicians fall in the single–digit growth bracket, with 50% of physicians generating over 10% of total revenue from skin care retailing, many medspa owners view this source of revenue as recurring enough to be significant, and a valuable experience for patients.





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This signals a shift toward sustainable, steady expansion in revenue sales for physician dispensed skincare, the Kline report states. Physicians within medspas report that while revenue from medical-grade skincare isn't a dramatic jump, like high-cost treatments such as filler or laser therapy, it's a steady stream driven by membership benefits for loyal clients and guided by medical knowledge and oversight that e-commerce cannot entirely offer in the way a professional who examines your face can.

The global physician-dispensed cosmeceuticals market reached $36.55 billion in 2024 and is expected to reach $69.84 billion by 2033, growing at a CAGR of 7.8%, according to DataM Intelligence report.

"For us, skin care revenue isn't about volume. It's about outcomes, retention and long-term skin health," says Marlee Bruno MMS, PA-C, a board-certified physician associate and founder of Mind Body & Soul Medical in Pensacola, Florida. "Patients are buying fewer products but staying consistent with the ones that work. We're seeing a 'flight to quality,' patients who are tired of the 'trial and error' of retail."

Image by PoppyPix; Petro at Adobe Stock

Patients Prioritize Trusted, Multifunctional Products Over E-Commerce Trends

Mike Stark, owner of Dermani Medspa Fort Myer says about 5% of his practice's revenue comes from physician-dispensed products. He doesn't see much of a decline in sales from e-commerce because membership pricing provides a 25% discount off retail, which is lower priced than what can be purchased online. Bruno, on the other hand, says physician-dispensed skin care accounts for approximately 15–20% of our total revenue, and that has remained relatively stable over the past few years.

As patients search for multifunctional products that work and opt for a 'less is more' mentality, especially when skin sensitivity is a concern for many patients. In 2025, clinicians responded by consolidating brand portfolios around leaders in the industry and innovation-led newcomers, the Kline report states. Stark and Bruno agree,





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though, that adding a brand to their medspas portfolio depends more on client needs and their budget at the bottom line, rather than a brand's marketing success.

Alan Durkin, MD, the Chief Medical Officer of VIO Med Spa points out that as patients turn to medspas for vetted in-office medical-grade products, it is fueled by the desire for trusted products, ones that work, and those selections are outcompeting over the counter products or e-commerce options, he says. Bruno adds that at Mind Body & Soul Medical, the trusted products patients tend to seek the most within the medspa are bio-regenerative products, ones that 'talk' to cells to stimulate collagen naturally as non-invasive, regenerative solutions are favored over traditional corrective ones.

Medspas Focus on Science-Backed, Long-Term Skincare Solutions

"[Clients] want one formulation that handles barrier repair, inflammation control and cellular signaling. We're seeing triple-digit growth in interest for exosome-based topicals and biomimetic peptides," she says.

In 2026, she is implementing product lines that invest in formulation science and stability testing, particularly advanced peptide formulations and barrier-repair technologies that support long-term skin health rather than short-term cosmetic fixes, and ingredients like L-ascorbic acid or Retinoids that maintain their molecular integrity over time. "If I can't confidently explain how a product works at a cellular level, it's not going in my medical spa," she says.

At Dermani Medspa, the Fort Myer location, where Mike Stark is the owner, the brands he incorporated in 2025 at his individual franchise location were Plated Skincare and Hydrinity Skincare, including Elta MD, Image, Revision, SkinMedica and his medspa's own product line.

"When patients understand ingredient concentrations, formulation stability and delivery

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systems, they're less likely to jump to the next trend they see online," Bruno states. "Consistency, trust in their provider and positive long-term outcomes outweigh novelty every time."

Clinical Efficacy & Ingredient Integrity is the first filter at Dermani Medspa when vetting a product for an entire clientele base, evaluating active ingredients, including type, concentration and bioavailability. While multiple brands may target similar concerns, he says, such as pigmentation, acne, aging or barrier repair—the difference is often in the potency, purity and formulation of actives.

As mentioned earlier, if patients don't use a product consistently for multiple needs or can't afford to, it won't succeed in practice, however. This is where Business Viability & Brand Alignment plays a role in, assessing pricing structure and margins, MAP enforcement, inventory management and alignment with the medspas own brand values and treatment philosophy.

"We try to avoid redundancy unless products truly offer meaningful formulation differences, such as higher active percentages, advanced delivery systems or specialized indications," Stark says. "Our goal is not to carry the most brands, but the right mix that delivers results, builds trust and supports long-term skin health."

With 64 locations in 20 states, brand selection and vetting for VIO, another franchise expanding across the nation, looks a little different. Before a new product is considered at VIO, it undergoes a review of FDA clearance, validation studies and all available outcome data to ensure it meets the organization's internal safety standards, Durkin says. The clinical lead then engages directly with the brand's scientific team to confirm its safety and potential for patient satisfaction, and the product moves to VIO's Innovation Council who evaluates without the clinical lead voting, ensuring an independent assessment of its fit for clients.

If approved, the product undergoes a four- to six-month in-person trial at a VIO location, overseen by the clinical lead, regional medical director and leadership team. If the trial is successful, it is reviewed from a business perspective and formally onboarded.

Physician-Dispensed Skincare Thrives Despite E-Commerce, Driven by Memberships and Education

E-commerce, to medspas, may seem like a lethal competitor, and although Amazon is seen as a growing competitor, among others, according to Kline, most aesthetic practices still generate the majority of sales in-office, with digital revenue growth progressing slowly. Physicians rely on exclusive partnerships, loyalty programs and clinical credibility to protect their practices from online competition.

Memberships appear to be the vessel that's immune to e-commerce and enabling in-office sales traffic. Memberships offer discounts over time with loyalty, but it also entails guided judgement from a professional who studies your face periodically, making these memberships not just beneficial financially but useful too. "Patients also must know how to use the products correctly, what results to expect, and how to adjust if their skin changes. That education, combined with measurable results, helps patients understand why physician-dispensed products are often more effective and worth the investment," says Stark.

As physician-dispensed skincare moves into 2026, the category is no longer defined by rapid spikes in retail sales, but by consistency, credibility and patient trust. Patients are simplifying routines, investing in fewer but more effective products, and relying on their providers to curate solutions that deliver long-term skin health rather than short-lived cosmetic results.

While e-commerce continues to expand, physician-dispensed skincare remains differentiated by professional guidance, vetted formulations and integrated treatment plans that online platforms cannot replicate. In 2026, success in physician-dispensed skincare will hinge less on volume and trend-chasing, and more on outcomes, education and sustained patient relationships—positioning it as a durable and strategic revenue stream within the modern medspa.

"Ultimately, performance drives preference," Stark says. "When patients see real improvement, compliance increases, confidence grows and long-term trust is established—both in the skincare line and in the clinical expertise behind the recommendation."

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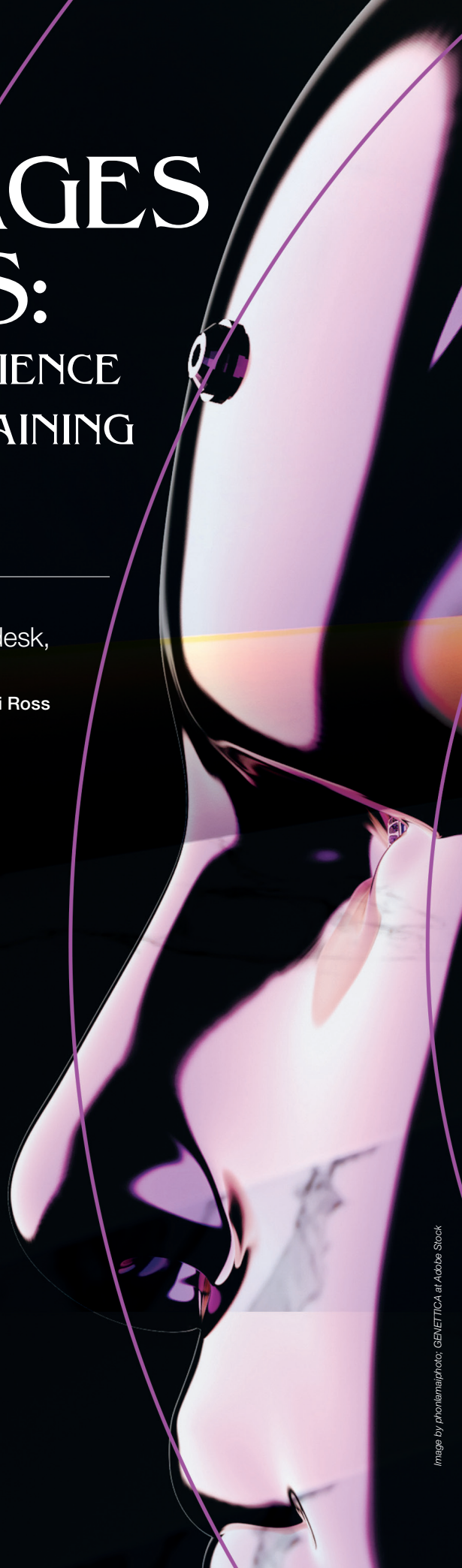
Jamie O'Toole is the associate managing editor of *MedEsthetics*.

AI CONCIERGES IN MEDSPAS:

WHAT THE PATIENT EXPERIENCE LOOKS LIKE AND WHY TRAINING STILL MATTERS

How to add an AI concierge to enhance your front desk, rather than eliminate it.

by Terri Ross



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The medspa industry is entering a decisive moment.

Artificial intelligence is no longer a behind-the-scenes efficiency tool. Platforms like Zenoti and Podium are rolling out AI-powered concierge systems that can answer calls, respond to texts and book appointments in real time. For many practices, AI is now becoming the first voice, first impression and first decision point in the patient experience.

For patients, this evolution promises what they want most: speed, clarity, and convenience.

For practices, it introduces both opportunity and accountability. AI does not improve the patient experience on its own; it simply executes the systems it is given at scale. When those systems are strong, the experience feels seamless and professional. When they are weak, AI doesn't hide the cracks; it accelerates them.





The Modern Aesthetic Consumer Has Zero Patience

Today's aesthetic consumer is fast-moving, comparison-driven, and highly distracted. They are not waiting for callbacks. They are not leaving voicemails. They are not loyal by default.

They want:

- **Immediate answers**
- **Simple booking**
- **Clear expectations**
- **Minimal friction**

If they don't get it, they move on. Speed to lead is no longer a competitive advantage. It's the baseline. Practices without call tracking, text response systems, or real-time booking are already losing revenue. They just don't see it because they can't measure it.

AI concierges close that gap by ensuring every inquiry is answered, every time. From the patient's perspective, this feels organized, modern, and responsive.

Missed calls and delayed responses don't just represent lost leads; they shape perception. When patients reach out and hear nothing back, they often assume the practice is disorganized or inattentive. AI concierges help eliminate that perception gap by ensuring responsiveness is immediate and consistent. For patients, this reinforces confidence before they ever set foot in the practice.

What a High-Performance AI Patient Experience Looks Like

When implemented correctly, AI does not replace human connection. It protects it. A strong AI-enabled patient journey offers multiple benefits, including:

Immediate Engagement

Patients are answered instantly (by phone or text) without holds or voicemail. This means confidence starts at their very first point of contact.

Instead of jumping straight to price, the AI concierge asks the right questions, such as:

1. **What concern are you looking to address?**
2. **How long has this been bothering you?**
3. **Is there a particular event or reason you are looking to get this done now?**
4. **What other aesthetic or surgical procedures have you had done in the past?**

This is not automation for convenience. This is automation with intention.

Structured Discovery

An effective AI agent asks questions in 5 strategic categories:

Image by MDOMR; faragus at Adobe Stock

1. **Call Control & Intent**
2. **Patient Qualification**
3. **Conversion & Booking**
4. **Revenue Optimization**
5. **Operational Intelligence (Data Capture for the Practice)**

See the side bar below for more details.

Correct Booking

Appointments are scheduled based on defined treatment pathways, not guesswork. Provider time is protected and patients are placed correctly.

Expectation Control

Pricing ranges, policies, and next steps are communicated clearly without overpromising or discounting the brand.

Follow-Up Without Drop-Off

Post-treatment messaging, aftercare reminders, and check-ins are handled consistently, with issues escalated to a human when necessary.

To the patient, it doesn't feel automated. It feels like the practice has its act together and is responsive and thorough.

This level of consistency also reduces anxiety prior to the visit. When patients receive clear confirmations, reminders and educational messaging before they arrive, they feel prepared rather than uncertain. Instead of walking into a consultation unsure of what will happen, patients arrive with a baseline understanding of the process and purpose of the visit. That confidence leads to more productive conversations and a stronger overall experience.

When AI is used to support pre-visit education and expectation-setting, it removes friction patients often associate with healthcare interactions. Fewer surprises, fewer misunderstandings and fewer missed appointments all contribute to higher satisfaction and long-term trust.

AI is Only as Strong as the Team that Trains it

AI concierges do not think. They execute. They operate entirely on what they are taught:

- **How to respond**
- **What questions to ask**
- **How to handle pricing**
- **When to escalate**

If your team has never been trained on phone skills, questioning frameworks, or objection handling, your AI will replicate that gap perfectly. This is the part most practices underestimate. AI does not eliminate the need for training. It raises the standard for it.

Before implementing AI, teams must be aligned on:

- **Conversation flow**
- **Communicating unique value proposition**
- **Credentialing of providers**
- **Questioning skills**
- **Value-based language**
- **Objection handling protocols**
- **Clear escalation rules**



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AI should mirror the best-trained version of your team, not your weakest habits on repeat.

Effective AI Question Framework

CALL CONTROL & INTENT (FIRST 30 SECONDS)

Goal: Control the call, identify intent, and route correctly. These questions replace: "How can I help you?"

Core Questions

- "Are you calling to book a consultation, ask about a specific treatment, or something else?"
- "Is this for you or someone else?"

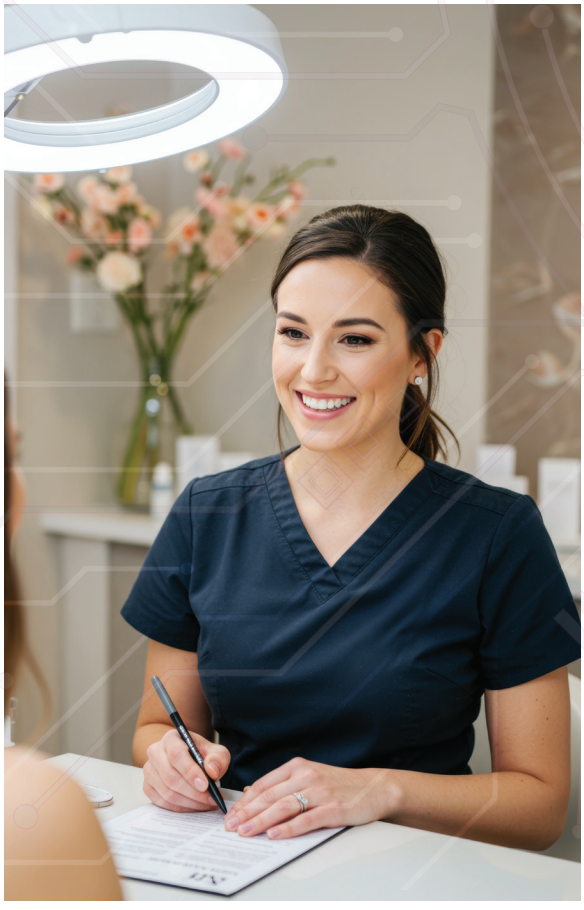
"Have you been to our practice before?"

Why This Matters

- Establishes new vs existing patient
- Determines conversion path
- Prevents wasted calls

PATIENT QUALIFICATION (THIS IS WHERE MOST FRONT DESKS FAIL)

Goal: Identify fit, readiness, and revenue potential politely.



Treatment Interest

- "What result are you hoping to achieve?"
- "What's motivating you to look into this now?"
- "Have you had this treatment before?"

Timeline & Readiness

- "Are you looking to do something soon, or just gathering information?"
- "Is there a specific date or event you're planning around?"

Budget Sensitivity

- "Our patients usually invest between $ _ and $ _depending on goals. Does that feel aligned with what you were expecting?" This alone dramatically increases show rates and close rates

CONVERSION & BOOKING QUESTIONS

Goal: Move from interest → scheduled appointment.

Booking-Focused

- "The next step would be a consultation so we can customize a plan. Would weekday or weekend appointments work better for you?"
- "Morning or afternoon is typically best?"

Objection Softening

- "What questions can I answer that would help you feel comfortable booking today?"
- "What's most important to you when choosing a provider?"

REVENUE OPTIMIZATION QUESTIONS

Goal: Increase LTV, not just book an appointment.

Upsell Without Pressure

- "Many patients who ask about _ also ask about _. Would you like to hear how they work together?"
- "Are you interested in a one-time treatment, or are you looking for ongoing results?"

Package & Membership Identification

- "Some patients prefer a treatment plan spread over several sessions for better outcomes. Would you like to explore that option?"
- "Do you currently belong to a membership or are you interested in savings for repeat visits?"

Provider & Treatment Matching

- "Based on what you shared, our most experienced provider for this result is _. Would you like me to schedule with them?"
- "Patients with similar goals often benefit from combining _ with _. Should I note that for your consultation?"

Image by MDOMR; rfassets at Adobe Stock

Why This Matters

- Increases average ticket size before the consult even happens
- Sets expectations around treatment plans (not one-off pricing)
- Positions the practice as strategic, not transactional
- Feeds the provider higher-quality, higher-intent patients

OPERATIONAL INTELLIGENCE (DATA CAPTURE FOR THE PRACTICE)

Goal: Turn every conversation into usable business intelligence.

Most front desks collect names and phone numbers. AI agents collect decision-making data.

Practice Intelligence Questions

- "How did you hear about our practice?"
- "Were you referred by a patient or another provider?"
- "What made you choose us over other options?"

Demand & Marketing Signals

- "What other treatments are you currently considering?"
- "Have you spoken to any other practices yet?"
- "What concerns or hesitations do you have right now?"

Experience & Retention Signals

- "What's most important to you about your experience here?"
- "Do you prefer reminders by text, email, or phone?"
- "Is there anything that would make this experience exceptional for you?"

Why This Matters

- Identifies which treatments are trending before revenue drops
- Shows where leads stall and why
- Improves ad targeting and messaging
- Feeds CRM, follow-ups, and provider prep automatically

This turns your AI concierge into a real-time feedback loop for leadership, not just a scheduling tool.

Pricing Conversations: Where AI Either Wins or Loses Trust

Patients will ask about the price early. That's not the problem. The problem is how the question is handled. Untrained humans rush to a number. Untrained AI will do the same.

Price without context kills conversion and erodes trust. When AI is properly trained, it slows the conversation down and acknowledges the question, asks clarifying questions, frames value proposition and pricing appropriately, and transitions toward a consult. This protects both the patient experience and the practice's positioning.

The Front Desk Role Is Not Disappearing, but Rather Upgrading

As AI handles routine communication, front desk professionals can shift into higher-level work, including managing complex scenarios, handling objections that AI may flag or cannot close, strengthening patient relationships, and supporting retention and referrals. This requires more skill, not less. Practices that fail to retrain their teams will feel friction. Practices that do will see stronger conversions and better patient experiences.

Providers Feel the Difference Immediately

For providers, well-trained AI should improve their clinical day by qualifying and routing patients the same way a strong, clinical team would, resulting in fewer unqualified prospects booked for consults.

Providers should experience better-prepared patients with clear intentions and realistic expectations, eliminating time spent on correcting misinformation or explaining why a treatment or procedure isn't appropriate. In addition, they can focus more on assessment, education, treatment planning, and delivering results. That's the real win.

The Bottom Line is that Leadership Determines Whether AI Helps or Hurts

AI concierges are most effective when leadership treats them as an extension of the team, not a replacement for it. That means clearly defining how patient conversations should be handled, coaching the team on those standards, and then training the AI concierge to follow the same playbook. Without leadership ownership, AI simply mirrors existing gaps. With it, AI becomes a strategic advantage.

The most effective practices use a hybrid model that combines AI for speed, consistency, and lead conversion with human expertise for trust, clinical recommendations, and treatment planning.

Remember, data only creates leverage when leadership knows how to use it. AI concierges are not shortcuts; they amplify strong systems and can expose weak ones.

For patients, AI can deliver a faster, clearer, more confident experience from the very first interaction. For practices, the question isn't whether AI belongs in the plastic surgery, medspa or wellness practice. It's whether the practice is ready to lead it.

Because technology doesn't define the patient experience. The systems and team training behind it do. ME

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WHY AESTHETIC PROFESSIONALS ARE EMBRACING INTENSIVE OUTPATIENT TREATMENT–INSPIRED HOLISTIC CARE MODELS

Outpatient treatments can help build consistency, accountability and lifestyle integration to aesthetic and wellness practices.

Partha Nandi, MD, FACP

The field of medical aesthetics has evolved far beyond surface-level beauty enhancement. Today's patients are increasingly informed, wellness-oriented and interested in care models that address not only appearance, but also emotional resilience, stress regulation and long-term health. As a result, aesthetic professionals are beginning to look outside traditional cosmetic medicine for inspiration — particularly toward structured, integrative healthcare models that prioritize whole-person outcomes.

One such influence comes from the framework of Intensive Outpatient Treatment , long used in behavioral health and recovery settings. While originally designed to support individuals managing mental health or substance-use challenges, the principles behind these programs — consistency, accountability, interdisciplinary care and lifestyle integration — are increasingly relevant to aesthetic and wellness-based practices.



The Shift Toward Whole-Person Aesthetics

Noninvasive and minimally-invasive cosmetic procedures have always required an understanding of skin biology, healing and patient expectations. However, research continues to demonstrate that factors such as stress, sleep quality, inflammation and nervous system regulation play a critical role in treatment outcomes, skin health and patient satisfaction.

Aesthetic professionals are now recognizing that optimizing results often requires addressing upstream contributors to aging and skin dysfunction. This includes emotional stress, burnout, hormonal imbalance and chronic inflammation — factors that cannot be fully managed through devices or injectables alone.

Holistic care models inspired by outpatient treatment frameworks emphasize regular engagement, structured support and personalized care plans—elements that align naturally with the needs of modern aesthetic patients.

Structured Care Without Full Clinical Immersion

Traditional inpatient medical models are not appropriate for most aesthetic settings. However, the structure of outpatient care — scheduled touchpoints, progressive treatment plans and multidisciplinary oversight — can be adapted effectively without crossing clinical boundaries.

In behavioral healthcare, outpatient treatment programs provide patients with consistency and accountability while allowing them to maintain their daily lives. Similarly, aesthetic practices are finding value in structured wellness programs that complement cosmetic treatments without medicalizing the experience.

Examples include:

- Multi-week skin health or recovery programs
- Guided lifestyle interventions supporting post-procedure healing
- Stress-management and recovery protocols integrated into treatment plans

These approaches help bridge the gap between procedure-based care and long-term patient outcomes.

Nervous System Regulation and Aesthetic Outcomes

Emerging research in psychoneuroimmunology suggests that chronic stress negatively impacts collagen synthesis, wound healing, inflammation control and skin barrier function. Patients experiencing high levels of

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stress may see diminished or inconsistent results from aesthetic treatments.

Outpatient treatment models place strong emphasis on nervous system regulation, routine and behavioral consistency. When aesthetic practices incorporate similar principles—such as education around stress management, recovery optimization, and lifestyle rhythms—they create an environment more conducive to positive cosmetic outcomes.

This does not require aesthetic professionals to treat mental health conditions. Rather, it involves acknowledging the interconnectedness of mind and body and designing patient experiences that support regulation, predictability and trust.

Patient Engagement and Long-Term Retention

One of the most transferable lessons from outpatient care is patient engagement. Rather than one-off interventions, outpatient programs rely on continuity and relationship-based care. This aligns closely with the goals of aesthetic practices seeking to build long-term patient relationships rather than transactional visits.

Structured holistic programs encourage:

- Ongoing communication between provider and patient
- Clear expectations and measurable progress
- A sense of partnership in the care journey

Patients who feel supported beyond the procedure itself are more likely to adhere to post-treatment recommendations, return for maintenance care, and view their provider as a trusted advisor rather than a service vendor.

Interdisciplinary Thinking in Aesthetic Practice

Another hallmark of outpatient treatment models is interdisciplinary collaboration. While medical aesthetics remains a specialized field, it increasingly intersects with dermatology, nutrition science, stress physiology and wellness education.

Forward-thinking practices are beginning to integrate educational resources, recovery-focused protocols and wellness-adjacent services that complement aesthetic treatments. This interdisciplinary mindset does not dilute medical rigor; instead, it enhances outcomes by addressing the broader ecosystem influencing skin health and aging.



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Ethical Considerations and Professional Boundaries

It is important to note that while outpatient-inspired models offer valuable insights, aesthetic professionals must maintain clear professional boundaries. Holistic care in this context should remain educational and supportive, not diagnostic or therapeutic in a psychiatric sense.

The success of these models lies in adaptation, not replication—borrowing structural principles while respecting scope of practice, regulatory standards, and ethical responsibilities.

The Future of Aesthetic Care Models

As patient expectations continue to evolve, the aesthetic industry is likely to see greater integration of structured wellness frameworks that support both physical and emotional resilience. Intensive outpatient treatment models offer a compelling blueprint — not because they address aesthetics directly, but because they demonstrate the power of consistency, personalization and whole-person care.

By thoughtfully adapting these principles, aesthetic professionals can create care experiences that feel more supportive, more effective and more aligned with the realities of modern patient wellness — without sacrificing clinical integrity or aesthetic excellence. ME



Menopause, Menstrual Health and the Care Gap Reshaping Women's Wellness Services

A new report from O Positiv Health uncovers the striking gaps in education, trust and care shaping women's experiences—revealing just how much remains misunderstood in vaginal health.

O Positiv Health, the women's wellness brand focused on creating supplements and products that address health issues often overlooked in women, released its 2026 State of the Vagina Report. The 57-page report exploring menstruation, sexual wellness, menopause, OB/GYN care and pregnancy revealed the stigmas and educational gaps that persist for women.

Gaps in research, education, and preventive care l eave many women without the guidance they need, often driving them to rely on unverified sources for answers."

With responses from more than 3,000 women, the report shows only half of women were taught about periods before they first got one, and 43% did not know what it was when they first got one[1]. Of these women, 96% of women were unable to name the phases of the menstrual cycle.

Responses suggest taboo remains around women's genitals and feeling comfortable in their body's changes and natural progression can be a hurdle for many women, but 86% of women stated they feel alienated during menopause, and 74% say menopause negatively affected their careers[1].

Over 60% of women lack trust and comfort with their OB/GYN, and many women believe their vaginal ecosystem needs constant"fixing. "Gaps in research, education, and preventive care leave many women without the guidance they need, often driving them to rely on unverified sources for answers," said Roxanne Pero, MD, an OB/GYN from O Positiv's Medical Board of Directors.

"Rebuilding trust requires a healthcare system that prioritizes time, communication and patient-centered care, paired with accessible, evidence-based education that empowers women to understand and care for their bodies," she added. ME

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

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DERMAL FILLERS MARKET ESTIMATED TO REACH $34.6 BILLION BY 2035

Rising demand for non-invasive procedures with natural results is driving the market.

The global dermal fillers market is estimated to grow from $8.51 billion to $34.64 billion from 2025 to 2035, according to a new market report from Towards Healthcare. This growth represents a compound annual growth rate of 15% over the next five years.

Dermal fillers are medical-grade injectables designed to add volume, smooth fine lines and wrinkles and enhance facial features. They are commonly composed of compounds such as hyaluronic acid, calcium hydroxylapatite or poly-L-lactic acid.

"The market is experiencing growth due to rising demand for non-invasive cosmetics procedures that provide quick, natural-looking results with minimal recovery time," the report states. "Increased awareness of aesthetic treatment, heavily influenced by social media trends and celebrity culture, is driving interest among a broader demographic, including younger individuals and men."

According to the report, the hyaluronic acid segment is the dominant segment and is projected to remain dominant over the forecast period. The calcium hydroxylapatite segment is anticipated to grow at the fastest rate during the next five years, largely due to their natural, biocompatible properties and long-lasting results.

North America holds the largest regional share of the global dermal fillers market, due to high demand for aesthetic treatments. Asia-Pacific is expected to see significant growth during the forecast period, particularly in countries like Japan, China and South Korea. This growth is largely driven by beauty consciousness among young and middle-aged consumers and medical tourism in countries like South Korea and Thailand.

By end-user, the specialty and dermatology clinics segment holds the largest market share and is expected to grow at the fastest rate in the coming years. Patients seeking aesthetic treatments tend to prefer specialized settings for these procedures due to advanced equipment and personalized care.



BIO-TECH BEAUTY COMPANY SABLE GAINS INVESTMENT FOR LAUNCH OF BODY CONTOURING TOPICALS

Backed by breakthrough university research and bold biotech ambition, a newly launched beauty brand is quietly developing a topical innovation for body contouring.

Turret Capital and SOSV, global investment firms for life sciences and biotech companies, launched Sable on Jan. 15. The biotech beauty company, a discovery from Columbia University Medical Center, is actively creating topicals for body contouring support following aesthetic treatments and lifestyle changes, like GLP-1 therapies.

Sable's first product line is currently in development. Preclinical research studies for this product line demonstrated that an undisclosed ingredient could be selectively taken up by fat cells and achieve up to 70% reduction in fat cell volume, per a Jan. 15 press release. Sable will further develop this exclusively licensed asset into an advanced topical formulation of body creams.

The company release states that this topical is specifically for individuals seeking to enhance the visual definition of specific areas with stubborn concerns, or looking to support wellness transitions or sustain body enhancements following professional aesthetic treatments.

"By translating complex research into thoughtfully designed consumer products, we're redefining the limits of topical body care," said Daniel Chai, MD,the Founder and CEO of Sable. "Sable is focused on helping people achieve and maintain their desired aesthetic look through evidence-based innovation that supports long-term body confidence."

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FDA Approves RHA Dynamic Volume For Midface Contouring

The FDA has approved RHA Dynamic Volume for midface augmentation in adults, following a Phase III trial showing high patient satisfaction and natural-looking results.

The FDA has approved Teoxane and Revance's RHA Dynamic Volume for cheek augmentation, and also for the correction of age-related midface contour deficiencies in adults aged 22 years or older. The filler, formerly known as RHA 4 Mepi from the Teoxane RHA Collection, will formally launch under its new name in early 2026.

The approval follows a 52-week Phase III clinical trial examining patients with moderate to severe midface volume deficiency. During the trial, 75% of subjects and their superficial and deep fat layers were treated. Patients reported improved satisfaction with cheek attractiveness, youthfulness, smoothness, contour and symmetry, according to a Jan. 13 press release.

"The new midface indication enables us to meet more patient needs than ever before," said Nadeem Moiz, CEO of Revance.

Over 94% of participants said their results looked and felt natural, whether at rest or in motion, up to a year after treatment. Patients reported no restrictions in facial movement, underscoring the filler's ability to move naturally with expressions.

"This study marks the U.S. introduction of a midface contouring approach that has been supported by more than a decade of post-marketing surveillance in Europe," stated Sandra Chennoufi, Chief Scientific Officer of Teoxane. "Leveraging the versatility of RHA Dynamic Volume and the Teoxane MLT Multilayering Technique, physicians can now address midface volume deficiencies by targeting multiple tissue depths for deep and superficial fat pads." ME

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

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EDITORIAL

Content Director Emmanuel Henderson | 1-630-344-6020/ehenderson@allured.com

Associate Managing Editor Jamie O'Toole | 1-630-344-6074/jotoole@allured.com

ADVERTISING SALES

Group Publisher Jeb Gleason-Allured | 1-630-344-6069/jallured@allured.com

Business Development Manager Perri Polowy | 630-344-6075/ppolowy@allured.com

Creative Marketing/Ad Production Specialist Sarah Slivinski | 1-630-344-6027/sslivinski@allured.com

Business Intelligence Specialist Ethan Grisham | 1-630-344-6068/egrisham@allured.com

AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

Audience Development Manager Sam Attebery | sattebery@allured.com

Subscriber Customer Service 1-847-559-7557/medesthetics@allured.com

DESIGN

Assistant Design Manager James Fergus

Graphic Designer Laura Fenwick

CORPORATE

Partner & CEO George Fox

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Allured Business Media
1-630-653-2155
336 Gundersen Drive, Suite D
Carol Stream, IL 60188-2403 USA
www.Allured.com

MedEsthetics **(ISSN 1937-2140) is published monthly (except February, June, August, & December) by Allured Business Media - 336 Gundersen Drive, Suite D, Carol Stream, IL 60188-2403. Periodicals Postage paid at Carol Stream, IL and additional mailing offices.**

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to MEDESTHETICS, Attn: Audience Development, 336 Gundersen Drive, Suite D, Carol Stream, IL 60188-2403. Give both the new and old addresses. Allow two months for change to become effective.

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