



## *NPs & PAs— Six Reasons Why They Need to Be Part of Your Strategy*

The healthcare system is undergoing fundamental shifts, including a trend toward team-based care provided by professionals from multiple disciplines. Pharma and medical device marketers may overlook the increasing importance and broadening scope of practice for two key groups of healthcare providers: nurse practitioners (NPs) and physician assistants (PAs). They are a growing presence in everyday clinical care, with demand far exceeding the number of new graduates. Here are six reasons why NPs and PAs are a group you can't afford to ignore in your pharma and medical device marketing plan.



# 1 Their Numbers Are Booming

300,000  
NPs & PAs  
*currently practicing  
and prescribing in  
the United States<sup>1,2</sup>*

Grow by 30%  
*within a decade<sup>4</sup>*

**Right now, there are well over 300,000 NPs and PAs practicing and prescribing in the United States.<sup>1,2</sup>**

One recent study reported that they account for 20% of the composite clinician labor force.<sup>3</sup>

Both groups are rapidly increasing in numbers, reflecting their growing importance in clinical care delivery and the attractiveness of these careers. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that both professions will increase by about 30% between 2014 and 2024.<sup>4</sup>

## NPs

- There are more than 220,000 licensed NPs in the United States.<sup>1</sup>
- High demand is spurring increased numbers: in 2014-2015, there were an estimated 20,000 new graduates.<sup>1</sup>
- One study projected that there will be 244,000 NPs by 2025—of these, 198,000 will be providing direct patient care.<sup>5</sup>

## PAs

- At the end of 2016, there were more than 115,000 certified PAs in the United States.<sup>2</sup>
- The number of PAs has more than doubled over the past decade—including a 6% increase in the last year alone.<sup>2</sup>
- With a growing number of new training programs, it's estimated that the number of PAs will exceed 125,000 by 2018.<sup>2</sup>



## 2

### They're Assuming Greater Responsibility for Clinical Care

#### NPs & PAs ...

- *see patients*
- *diagnose and treat illnesses*
- *perform procedures and examinations*
- *provide patient education*

These skilled, highly trained professionals will collaborate with physicians and other healthcare professionals in emerging care models such as patient-centered medical homes and accountable care organizations, emphasizing close follow-up and continuity of care.<sup>6</sup>

NPs and PAs will play an especially important role in managing patients with chronic conditions, such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease, emphasizing close follow-up and continuity of care with the goal of improving outcomes for these high-cost, high-burden conditions. They'll be an essential part of strategies to meet the care needs of an aging population, especially as the last of the "Baby Boomers" approach retirement age.<sup>7</sup>

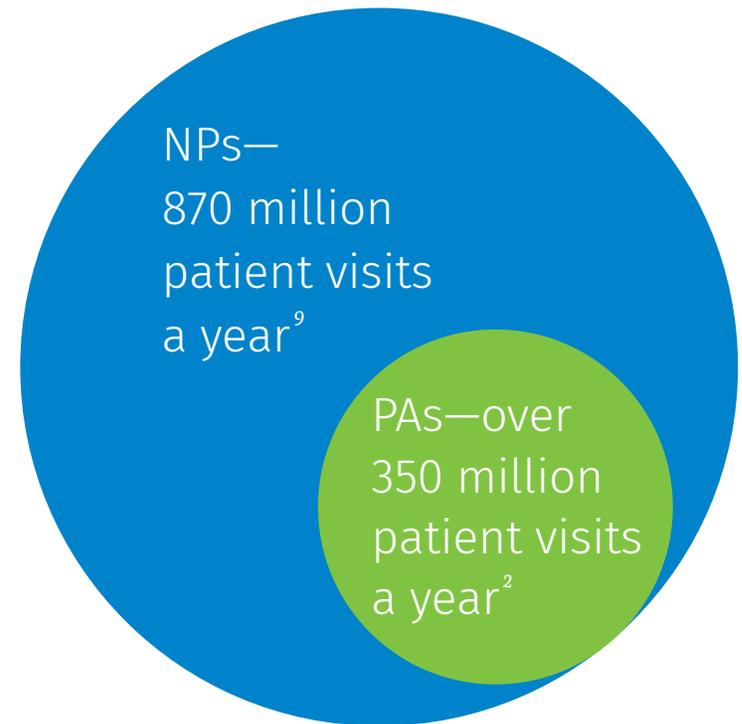
- **Not just primary care.** NPs will play a key role in ensuring the availability of primary care providers.<sup>8</sup> More than 80% of NPs were prepared in family practice or adult/geriatric primary care programs—a much higher percentage than for physicians. 55% are prepared in family medicine and another 22% in adult medicine and geriatrics.<sup>9</sup>
- **Family medicine/general practice** is also the most common clinical area for PAs—about 20%. However, they work in a wide range of other settings as well, including surgical subspecialties and emergency medicine.<sup>2</sup>



3

## 1.2 Billion Annual Patient Visits

Especially in primary care—and increasingly in other specialties or settings as well—patients are likely to encounter NPs and PAs. NPs are the more familiar presence, with a proven track record of providing quality healthcare for more than 50 years.<sup>1</sup> PAs are also celebrating their 50th anniversary as healthcare providers.<sup>2</sup> In one recent survey, more than 90% of patients expressed trust in PAs and said that they provided high-quality care and improved health outcomes.<sup>10</sup>



- **Each year, patients make more than 870 million patient visits to NPs.** Most NPs see three or more patients per hour.<sup>9</sup>
- **PAs treat an average of 75 patients per week** in their principal position. Overall, PAs care for more than 350 million patients per year (seven million per week).<sup>2</sup>
- Both NPs and PAs are actively engaged with patients, spending much of their time on patient education and counseling.



## 4

### Nearly Half a Million Prescriptions Written Per Year

172,000  
NPs & PAs  
*are currently writing prescriptions.*<sup>12</sup>

With a few exceptions, this includes the ability to prescribe controlled substances.<sup>11</sup> It has been estimated that the number of NPs and PAs currently prescribing is about 172,000 (106,000 NPs and 66,000 PAs).<sup>12</sup> Based on prescribing data, they write approximately 429,000 prescriptions per year, or about 13% of all US prescriptions.<sup>13</sup>

**NPs** have full practice authority in 21 states and are lobbying hard to gain full authority in every state and the District of Columbia. Ninety-five percent of NPs prescribe medications; those in full-time practice average 22 prescriptions per day.<sup>1</sup>

**PAs**, in collaboration with physicians, also have prescribing authority in every state and the District of Columbia. Each week, the typical PA sees 16 patients with coronary artery disease, 10 with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and 15 for pain management.<sup>14</sup>

One recent study found that NPs and PAs are writing a higher proportion of prescriptions than physicians for chronic disease medications, including antihypertensives, anticoagulants, oral diabetes medications, and statins.<sup>15</sup>

Both groups see pharmaceutical reps to discuss new prescription drugs and medical devices.

70% of NPs & PAs  
*receive information on new drugs directly from pharma sales reps.*<sup>16</sup>



## 5 They Are Highly in Demand and Highly Recruited

**\$102,000**  
*Average annual  
wage for NPs<sup>4</sup>*

**\$99,000**  
*Average annual  
wage for PAs<sup>4</sup>*

NPs and PAs are among the hardest-to-fill positions in healthcare, and in the economy overall.<sup>17</sup> Demand is skyrocketing, with strong competition for recruits among physicians' offices, hospitals, outpatient care clinics, and other settings.

**Wages are rising.** The average annual wage is about \$102,000 for NPs and \$99,000 for PAs, with top wages of about \$140,000 and \$136,000, respectively.<sup>4</sup>

**Demand exceeds supply.** Despite these good wages, there aren't enough NPs and PAs to go around. Based on data from 2011-15, an average of 4,900 NP positions are posted each month, but only 3,100 are filled. For PAs, the discrepancy is even larger: 4,900 posted positions but only 2,600 jobs filled per month.<sup>17</sup>

**Numbers differ by region.** New York and California each have more than 10,000 NPs and PAs. Both NPs and PAs are in demand in the Northeast; there are also high concentrations of NPs in some southern states and PAs in western states. (The Bureau of Labor Statistics offers detailed breakdowns by metro and non-metro areas).<sup>4</sup>

Marketers and recruiters alike should know that these healthcare professionals are a highly active group. Both NPs and PAs identify strongly with their professions. They are motivated to contribute to patients' health, to enjoy a good wage and good quality of life, and to further enhance their career prospects and rewards.



## 6

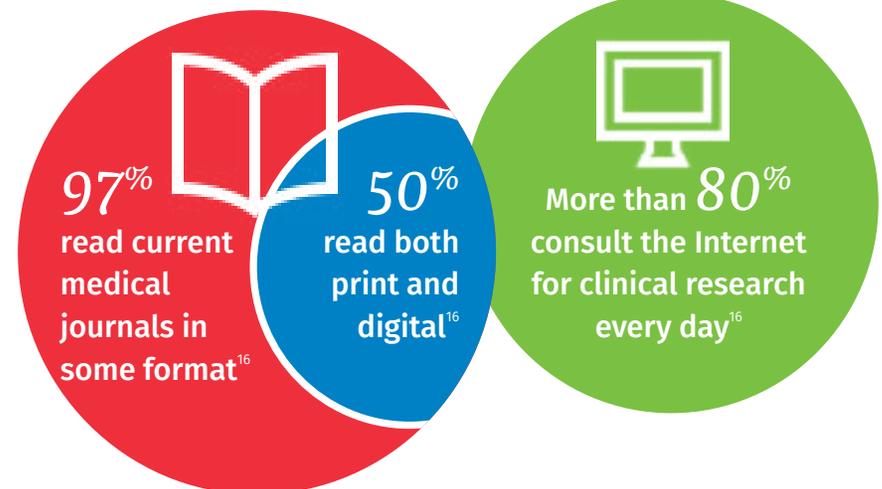
### They Seek Out and Consume Healthcare Information

Both NPs and PAs have a healthy appetite for the latest clinical information, with increasing numbers of discipline-specific books, journals, and magazines. Blogs are also gaining in importance as trusted information resources—in some cases with online communities fueled by reader contributions and interactions.

Both groups consume a lot of continuing professional development education and other content related to professional advancement. Nurses are seeking education to become NPs, and NPs are seeking doctoral degrees. PAs are practicing more specialized medicine and consuming educational materials in multiple fields.

For these healthcare providers, just as for physicians, *medical journals and publications remain a go-to source of clinical and practice information*. Peer-reviewed journals will gain even further importance as NPs and PAs continue to expand in numbers and professional roles.<sup>16</sup>

- Of those who read print and digital formats, 75% prefer print.
- More than two-thirds see advertising as a “positive component” of journals.





## *Why Does Your Strategy Need to Target NPs and PAs?*

For pharma and medical device marketers and recruiters, those patterns highlight the importance of trusted journals for reaching the NP and PA audiences. A mix of digital and print provides good access for cross-channel communication—their high interest in expanding their clinical knowledge and advancing their careers suggests a key role for digital media, such as videos, demonstrations, and educational seminars.

### NPs and PAs are:

- A rapidly growing audience of healthcare providers who see patients, recommend treatments, and prescribe medications.
- A critical part of strategies for new healthcare models and efforts to improve access to care, in primary care and other settings.
- Intensely involved in daily clinical management, including care for acute and chronic conditions.
- Highly involved in patient counseling and education.
- A highly active, in-demand group of professionals who want to enhance their skills and advance their careers.
- An audience that you cannot afford to ignore in your pharma and medical device marketing strategy!

Whether your goal is to educate and inform NPs/PAs about your latest products, recruit to your hospital or practice, or meet enrollment objectives, you'll need both access and innovative solutions to achieve success. Take advantage of the perfect combination of peer-reviewed content, an engaged audience, and efficient reach to 140,000 NPs and PAs with the Wolters Kluwer NP/PA Channel, powered by JAAPA and *The Nurse Practitioner*. To learn more, visit [wkadcenter.com](http://wkadcenter.com) or contact us at [marketingsolutions@wolterskluwer.com](mailto:marketingsolutions@wolterskluwer.com) to schedule a personalized consultation.

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