

New Research Shows 74 Percent of Physicians Use AI for Clinical Information

In 79 percent of campaigns measured, AI assistants referred physicians to brand sites

ATLANTA, GA, UNITED STATES, August 26, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- HealthLink Dimensions published its 2026 Physician Communications Report, produced in partnership with DeepIntent, and found that 74 percent of physicians use at least one AI tool for clinical information, while AI assistants referred physicians to pharmaceutical brand sites in 79 percent of campaigns measured – indicating that AI tools are the new frontier for healthcare and pharma marketers to drive awareness for drugs and treatments.



For more than a decade, the report has documented what physicians say they want from healthcare marketers. This year, every stated preference is set beside a behavioral reading, giving marketers a view of not only what physicians report, but what they do. The findings are based on a survey of 896 qualified U.S. physicians across 25 questions, roughly 2.4 million email opens from HealthLink Dimensions' first-party engagement data, paired with programmatic advertising measurement data across verified clinicians.

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*Amar Duggasani, CEO,
HealthLink Dimensions*

"This report has told marketers what physicians say for more than a decade. This year we tested those answers

against measured behavior, and the gaps we found are where budgets are being spent least effectively," said Amar Duggasani, CEO of HealthLink Dimensions. "Our goal is to give marketers something they can plan against, not just react to."

AI tools are playing a more prominent role in how physicians find information. But while nearly

three-fourths of physicians employ AI tools for clinical information, only 27 percent say they rigorously verify what those tools return. ChatGPT accounts for 97 percent of the referrals measured. Meanwhile, AI-referred visits are up more than 80 percent year over year. The question for marketers is no longer whether AI reaches physicians, but how accurately AI represents their content when it does.

"Healthcare and pharma marketing is at a point where physicians are asking AI about brands, but we need to take that insight and turn it into action," said Jennifer Loga, VP, Client Analytics of DeepIntent. "Healthcare marketing has the opportunity to leverage AI in a more meaningful way that turns awareness into real outcomes for patients."

The shift is visible with other channels. While paid search still drives about 47 percent of brand-site arrivals, it is declining at 23 percent year over year. Social referrals are up 78 percent, digital media up 6 percent and email is down 8 percent across roughly 1.6 million healthcare professional site visits analyzed. For healthcare and pharma marketers, leveraging an omnichannel marketing strategy is the effective approach. More than 97 percent of healthcare professionals are reachable across display, CTV, audio, and native formats, and physicians reached on three or more channels showed nine times higher total prescription rates than those reached on a single channel.

The widest divergence appears in content. The lighter, more practical formats are not what physicians say they want, but they are what physicians engage with. While 40 percent rank clinical trial summaries and scientific data as the single most valuable content type, that category ranked sixth of seven on actual opens at a 13.4 percent median. Interactive case tools led at 18.6 percent, followed by CME at 17.3 percent and podcasts and video at 16.4 percent.

Timing shows a similar gap. Physicians describe themselves as receptive at any hour, with roughly 20 percent naming every daypart. Open data tells a different story: Tuesday through Thursday carry about 62 percent of the week's opens, with opens peaking mid-morning between 8 and 11 a.m. Reading behavior peaks at two key times. Roughly 14 percent of opens land within the first 15 minutes and about 39 percent within the first hour, followed by a distinct second wave 8 to 16 hours later.

Frequency concerns also proved overstated with 76 percent of physicians saying they want information at least monthly and 32 percent want it weekly. DeepIntent measurement found that 54 percent of physicians were reached by more than 10 brands last year, yet click engagement remained flat across frequencies with no observable fatigue curve. Prescription rates, a stronger measure of media impact than clicks, increased as frequency increased. But the research highlights that pharmaceutical campaigns account for less than 0.01 percent of all ad impressions delivered to healthcare professionals.

[The 2026 Physician Communications Report is now available for download.](#)

Methodology

A survey of 896 qualified U.S. physicians across 25 questions, roughly 2.4 million email opens from HealthLink Dimensions' first-party engagement data, and 221 campaigns representing nearly 8.3 million emails sent between January and June 2026, each classified by content type. Destination, reach, and AI-referral findings come from DeepIntent's verified-clinician measurement of 3.4 million healthcare professionals.

[About HealthLink Dimensions](#)

HealthLink Dimensions delivers data-driven solutions and real-time insights for healthcare provider marketing. Email is the core of the business: more than 25 million physician-directed emails deployed a year against a provider database sourced from over 500 trusted channels, with addresses validated monthly for deliverability. Triggered Email adds automated follow-up off real-time HCP behavior, while Script-Lift Analysis and Physician-Level Data (PLD) connect campaign exposure to prescribing change and to individual verified NPIs. By maintaining direct provider relationships through clinical news, newsletters, and job boards, HealthLink Dimensions supplies healthcare marketers with privacy-safe marketing data, technology, and research.

[About DeepIntent](#)

DeepIntent was founded on a simple but powerful belief: healthcare advertising can and should drive better patient outcomes. By uniting media, identity, and real-world clinical data, its platform empowers the world's leading healthcare brands and agencies to deliver privacy-safe, omnichannel campaigns with measurable impact. Guided by innovation, integrity, and impact, DeepIntent combines data science, media expertise, and healthcare knowledge to connect patients and providers through meaningful, privacy-safe advertising.

Nathan Lenyszyn

HealthLink Dimensions

nlenyszyn@healthlinkdimensions.com

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