

# **2025 Direct-To-Consumer Social Media Rx Advertisement Survey: Prescribing Medical Professionals**

**Conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago  
With funding from Arnold Ventures**

Interviews: 02/7-28/2025  
1,004 adults

NOTE: All results show percentages among all respondents, unless otherwise labeled.

## Section 1. Screening

### What type of health care provider are you?

[TERMINATE “Other” and “I am not a health care provider”]

|                                         | Frequency |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------|
| Physician                               | 854       |
| Nurse Practitioner                      | 78        |
| Physician Associate/Physician Assistant | 72        |
| I am not a health care provider         | 0         |
| Other                                   | 0         |

*N=1,004*

### Which of the following best describes your primary work setting?

[TERMINATE “Nursing home/assisted living facility” and “Telehealth/internet-based service” and “Other”]

|                                       | Frequency |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| Clinic                                | 781       |
| Hospital                              | 223       |
| Nursing home/assisted living facility | 0         |
| Telehealth/internet-based service     | 0         |
| Other                                 | 0         |

*N=1,004*

### Approximately how much of your total professional time is devoted to patient-facing activities? Please provide your best estimate below.

*Patient-facing activities include seeing patients, documenting visits, or performing tasks directly related to patient care (ordering tests, refilling medications, etc.). This **does not** include tasks related to practice oversight or management.*

[If < 50% TERMINATE]

|               | Frequency |
|---------------|-----------|
| 50-75% (NET)  | 39        |
| 76-100% (NET) | 965       |

*N=1,004*

**Are you authorized to prescribe medications in your clinical practice?**

[TERMINATE “No”]

|     | Frequency |
|-----|-----------|
| Yes | 1,004     |
| No  | 0         |

*N=1,004***In the past three months, approximately what percentage of your patient visits involved prescribing or refilling at least one medication? Please provide your best estimate below.**

[If &lt; 25% TERMINATE]

|               | Frequency |
|---------------|-----------|
| 25-49% (NET)  | 93        |
| 50-75% (NET)  | 316       |
| 76-100% (NET) | 595       |

*N=1,004***Section 2. Social Media Use****Do you currently have any social media accounts?**

[If “No” selected, skip to Section 4]

|     | Frequency |
|-----|-----------|
| Yes | 951       |
| No  | 53        |

*N=1,004***How often do you use social media?**

[If “Never” selected, skip to Section 4]

|                                            | Frequency |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Often (NET)</b>                         | 769       |
| Very often (daily or multiple times a day) | 482       |

|                              | Frequency |
|------------------------------|-----------|
| Often (several times a week) | 287       |
| <b>Sometimes (NET)</b>       | 181       |
| Sometimes (once a week)      | 120       |
| Rarely (a few times a month) | 61        |
| Never                        | 1         |

N=951

Which social media platforms do you use? *Select all that apply.*

|             | Frequency |
|-------------|-----------|
| TikTok      | 255       |
| Reddit      | 313       |
| YouTube     | 641       |
| Facebook    | 788       |
| Instagram   | 603       |
| X (Twitter) | 342       |
| LinkedIn    | 545       |
| Bluesky     | 56        |
| Pinterest   | 213       |
| Other       | 37        |

N=950

For which of the following purposes do you use social media? *Select all that apply.*

|                                                                           | Frequency |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Personal (e.g., connecting with friends/family, personal interests)       | 871       |
| Professional networking (e.g., connecting with colleagues, organizations) | 660       |
| Patient education or sharing health information                           | 344       |
| Marketing or promoting my practice/services                               | 249       |
| Following medical/industry news or updates                                | 672       |
| None of the above                                                         | 18        |

N=950

## Section 3. Providers' Personal Experience with Prescription Drug Content

**In the past 12 months, how often have you come across advertisements for prescription drug from pharmaceutical companies on social media?**

*This refers to promotional materials created and disseminated directly by pharmaceutical companies on social media platforms to promote their prescription products to consumers.*

|                                            | Frequency |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Often (NET)                                | 525       |
| Very often (daily or multiple times a day) | 162       |
| Often (several times a week)               | 363       |
| Sometimes (NET)                            | 398       |
| Sometimes (once a week)                    | 250       |
| Rarely (a few times a month)               | 148       |
| Never                                      | 27        |

N=950

[If PersonalExp\_1 ≠ Never] **On which social media platforms have you personally encountered prescription drug advertisements from pharmaceutical companies? Select all that apply.**

|             | Frequency |
|-------------|-----------|
| TikTok      | 100       |
| Reddit      | 127       |
| YouTube     | 446       |
| Facebook    | 610       |
| Instagram   | 352       |
| X (Twitter) | 183       |
| LinkedIn    | 320       |
| Bluesky     | 12        |
| Pinterest   | 43        |
| Other       | 55        |

N=923

**In the past 12 months, how often have you come across posts by social media influencers discussing prescription drugs?**

*This refers to any content shared by influencers that discusses or promotes a prescription drug, whether or not it is sponsored by a pharmaceutical company (e.g., testimonials, reviews, or general discussions).*

|                                            | Frequency |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Often (NET)</b>                         | 223       |
| Very often (daily or multiple times a day) | 57        |
| Often (several times a week)               | 166       |
| <b>Sometimes (NET)</b>                     | 526       |
| Sometimes (once a week)                    | 255       |
| Rarely (a few times a month)               | 271       |
| Never                                      | 201       |

N=950

[If PersonalExp\_2≠ Never] **On which social media platforms have you personally seen posts by social media influencers discussing a prescription drug? Select all that apply.**

|             | Frequency |
|-------------|-----------|
| TikTok      | 171       |
| Reddit      | 72        |
| YouTube     | 281       |
| Facebook    | 368       |
| Instagram   | 319       |
| X (Twitter) | 118       |
| LinkedIn    | 142       |
| Bluesky     | 14        |
| Pinterest   | 37        |
| Other       | 19        |

N=749

In the past 12 months, has information you found on social media influenced you to start prescribing a medication you otherwise would not have?

|     | Frequency |
|-----|-----------|
| Yes | 187       |
| No  | 763       |

N=950

In the past 12 months, has information you found on social media influenced you to stop prescribing a medication that you had previously prescribed?

|     | Frequency |
|-----|-----------|
| Yes | 90        |
| No  | 860       |

N=950

## Section 4. Patient-Provider Interactions

In the past 12 months, have any of your patients asked you about a medication that they said they learned about on social media?

[If “No” selected, skip to Section 5]

|     | Frequency |
|-----|-----------|
| Yes | 688       |
| No  | 316       |

N=1,004

Did any of these patient inquiries lead you to write a prescription for the medication they asked about?

|     | Frequency |
|-----|-----------|
| Yes | 417       |
| No  | 271       |

N=688

**Which, if any, of the following medication types or classes have patients asked you about, stating they learned about them on social media? *Select all that apply.***

|                                                               | Frequency |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| ADHD stimulant medications (e.g., Adderall, Vyvanse, Ritalin) | 205       |
| Autoimmune medications (e.g., Humira, Remicade, Stelara)      | 215       |
| GLP-1 receptor agonists (e.g., Ozempic, Wegovy, Mounjaro)     | 549       |
| None of the above                                             | 44        |

N=688

## Section 5. Perceptions of Pharma DTCA

**Which of the following statements best describes your opinion about social media-based advertising for prescription drugs?**

|                                                                            | Frequency |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| It can benefit patient care                                                | 61        |
| It can negatively impact patient care                                      | 135       |
| It can have both positive and negative effects, depending on the situation | 693       |
| It has minimal or no effect on patient care                                | 87        |
| I'm not sure / No opinion                                                  | 28        |

N=1,004

**How concerned are you about the following potential effects that social media advertising for pharmaceutical products may have on patients?**

|                                                                | Concerned (NET) | Very concerned | Somewhat concerned | Not concerned (NET) | Not too concerned | Not at all concerned |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Unrealistic expectations of drug outcomes (N= 1,004)           | 868             | 426            | 442                | 136                 | 125               | 11                   |
| Limited awareness of possible harms or side effects (N= 1,004) | 853             | 386            | 467                | 151                 | 135               | 16                   |



|                                                                     | Concerned (NET) | Very concerned | Somewhat concerned | Not concerned (NET) | Not too concerned | Not at all concerned |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Unrealistic expectations about drug access (N= 1,004)               | 844             | 390            | 454                | 160                 | 148               | 12                   |
| Potential for inappropriate prescribing (N= 1,004)                  | 775             | 335            | 440                | 229                 | 199               | 30                   |
| Possible loss of trust if providers decline to prescribe (N= 1,004) | 685             | 223            | 462                | 319                 | 277               | 42                   |

Which, if any, of the following potential benefits do you see in social media advertising for prescription products? *Select all that apply.*

|                                                                                       | Frequency |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Increases awareness among patients about available medications                        | 581       |
| Encourages patients to ask about medications they might not have considered otherwise | 523       |
| Prompts deeper conversations about treatment options                                  | 522       |
| Improves access to information for those who face health care barriers                | 364       |
| Reduces stigma around certain conditions or medications                               | 446       |
| Another benefit not listed here                                                       | 27        |
| I do not see any potential benefit                                                    | 128       |

N=1,004

## Section 6. Perceptions of Social Media Influencers

Which of the following statements best describes your view of social media influencers (non-health care professionals) who discuss or endorse prescription medications?

|                                                                       | Frequency |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| They generally have a positive impact on patient perceptions of drugs | 75        |
| They generally have a negative impact on patient perceptions of drugs | 226       |

|                                                                              | Frequency |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| They can have both positive and negative impacts, depending on the situation | 601       |
| They have no impact on patient perceptions of drugs                          | 44        |
| I'm not sure / No opinion                                                    | 58        |

*N=1,004*

**To what extent are you concerned about patients following advice from social media influencers (non–health care professionals) who endorse prescription drugs online?**

|                      | Frequency |
|----------------------|-----------|
| Concerned (NET)      | 865       |
| Very Concerned       | 357       |
| Somewhat Concerned   | 508       |
| Not Concerned (NET)  | 139       |
| Not Too Concerned    | 129       |
| Not At All Concerned | 10        |

*N=1,004*

[If Influencers\_2= Very concerned OR Somewhat concerned] **Why are you concerned?** *Select all that apply.*

|                                                                                          | Frequency |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Influencers can provide inaccurate or misleading information about prescription drugs.   | 735       |
| Patients might develop unrealistic expectations about these medications.                 | 681       |
| The trust I have with my patients could be undermined.                                   | 326       |
| I do not believe there is adequate regulation of influencers and what they say online.   | 512       |
| Influencers might overlook or trivialize side effects and risks.                         | 574       |
| Patients may feel pressured to request medications that are not clinically appropriate.  | 345       |
| Influencers often lack the medical expertise to offer safe or accurate guidance.         | 652       |
| Patients may attempt to self-diagnose or self-prescribe without proper medical guidance. | 526       |
| Another concern not listed here.                                                         | 14        |
| None of the above                                                                        | 2         |

*N=865*

## Section 8. Demographics

**How many years have you practiced as a physician, nurse practitioner or physician assistant?**

|                    | Frequency |
|--------------------|-----------|
| Less than 5 years  | 47        |
| 5 to 10 years      | 258       |
| 11 to 20 years     | 281       |
| More than 20 years | 418       |

*N=1,004*

**Which best describes your specialty?**

|                                      | Frequency |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| Cardiac surgery                      | 4         |
| Colorectal surgery                   | 5         |
| Neurosurgery                         | 13        |
| Surgical oncology                    | 6         |
| Pediatric surgery                    | 2         |
| Thoracic surgery                     | 1         |
| Anesthesiology                       | 41        |
| Cardiology                           | 54        |
| Emergency medicine                   | 6         |
| Family medicine                      | 162       |
| Gastroenterology                     | 59        |
| Internal medicine                    | 169       |
| Oncology (including subspecialties)  | 31        |
| Pathology                            | 6         |
| Pediatrics                           | 179       |
| Pulmonology                          | 17        |
| Radiology (including subspecialties) | 8         |
| Other surgical specialty             | 54        |
| Other medical specialty              | 187       |

*N=1,004*

|                        | Frequency |
|------------------------|-----------|
| NP/PAs                 | 150       |
| PCPs and Pediatricians | 430       |
| Specialists            | 424       |

*N=1,004*

### What is your age?

|                    | Frequency |
|--------------------|-----------|
| Less than 35 years | 86        |
| 35–44              | 304       |
| 45–54              | 259       |
| 55–64              | 230       |
| 65 or older        | 125       |

*N=1,004*

### Which of the following best describes the geographic setting where you primarily treat patients?

|                                            | Frequency |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Urban (in a city)                          | 389       |
| Suburban (near a city)                     | 542       |
| Rural (over an hour from the nearest city) | 73        |

*N=1,004*

## Study Methodology

This survey was conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago with funding from Arnold Ventures using Survey Healthcare Global (SHG) for the sample source. This research was done to evaluate the impact of social media marketing of prescription drugs on prescribing medical professional's perceptions and prescribing behaviors.

SHG provided 1,004 non-probability interviews with U.S. medical professionals. The non-probability sample was derived based on quotas related to primary work setting, total professional time devoted to patient-facing activities and prescribing authority and frequency. Interviews were conducted in English and via the web. Because non-probability panels do not

start with a frame where there is known probability of selection, standard measures of sampling error and response rates cannot be calculated.

Quality assurance checks were conducted to ensure data quality. In total, 1 interview was removed for completing the survey in less than one-third the median interview time for the full sample, or for straight lining all grid questions asked of them.