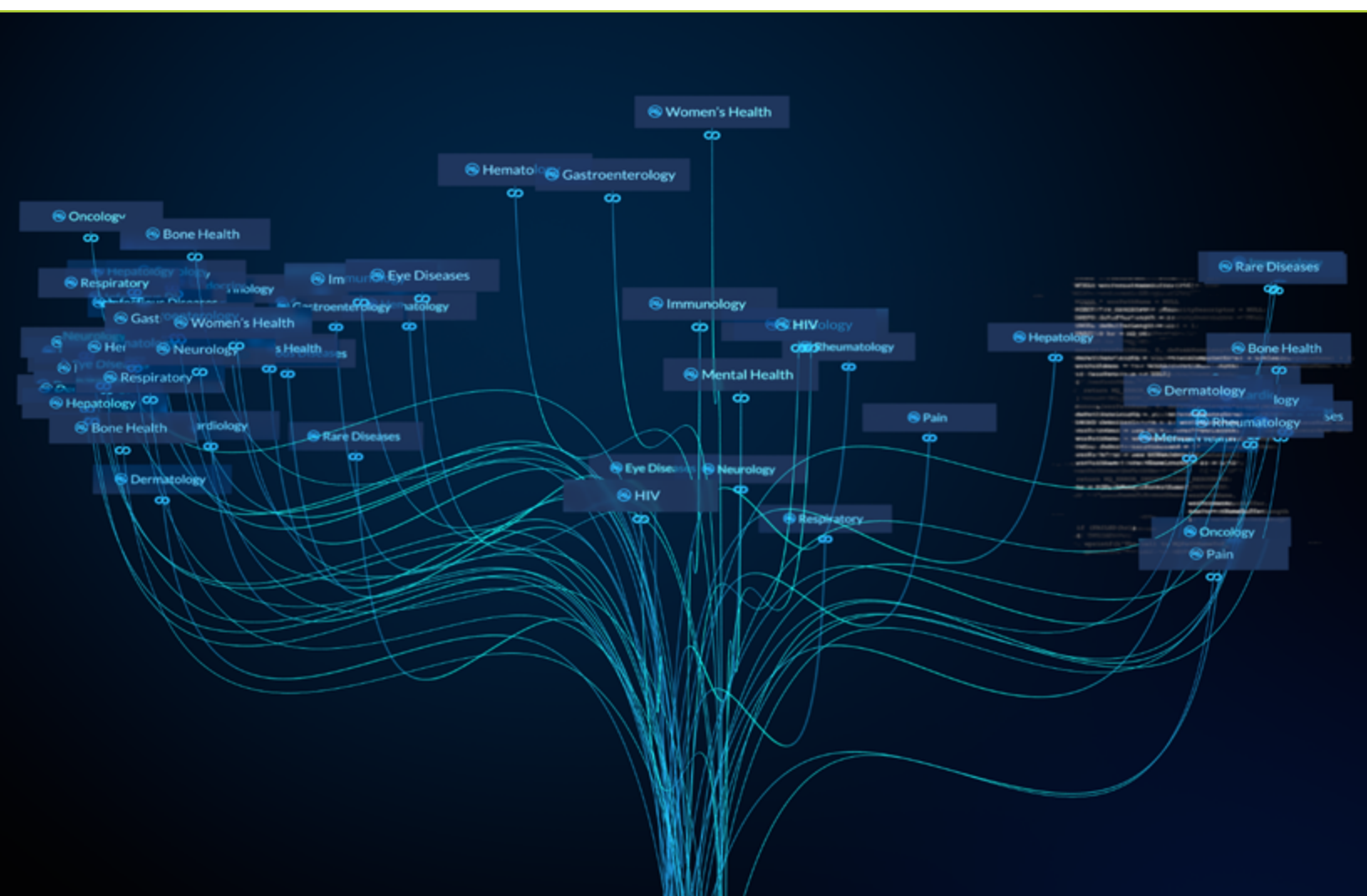


# Empowering Patients: How Pharma Ads Drive Better Health Outcomes

Survey reveals 67% of patients with chronic conditions  
took an action after seeing treatment advertising



# The critical role of pharmaceutical advertising in empowering patients with knowledge

Living with a chronic condition often means navigating a complex world of symptoms, treatments, and specialist appointments. It can be isolating and overwhelming for both patients and their caregivers, demanding significant time, energy, and emotional resources.

Patients want to understand their treatment options, and more than ever, they're proactively seeking medical information and advocating for themselves in the doctor's office.

About 60 percent of people research treatment options before talking to their healthcare provider (HCP), and over 70 percent look for information about a drug before taking it.<sup>1</sup>

No two patient journeys are the same, and today's advertising options allow brands to reach ideal patients, caregivers, and HCPs while they actively seek medical information and when they are consuming media unrelated to a condition.

Patients are almost as likely to learn about new medications from watching TV as from their HCP. A new survey from Cadent found that 62 percent of people named TV ads as their primary source for learning about treatment options, second only to their doctor (68 percent).<sup>2</sup>



## 55%

Discovered a health condition they didn't know they had



If not for pharma ads...

## 62%

Would have missed out on learning about the condition

Source 3



# Critical knowledge gaps

This underscores the critical role of pharmaceutical advertising in empowering patients with knowledge and facilitating informed decision-making. **When the right message reaches the right patient at the right time, it can be truly life changing.** Pharmaceutical ads help patients see around corners, providing access to crucial information about disease awareness and treatment options that might otherwise remain unknown. In a recent survey from MAGNA and DeeplIntent, 62 percent of patients reported they would not have known about a health condition if they had not seen an ad from a pharma company.<sup>3</sup>

This knowledge is particularly vital given the limited facetime patients have with healthcare providers. Appointments booked months in advance boil down to mere minutes of face time with the physician. The average consultation lasts 17 minutes, and 37 percent of that time is spent with the physician filling in electronic health records.<sup>4,5</sup> This leaves about 10 minutes for sharing every symptom, concern, life update, and treatment option. Pharmaceutical advertising helps bridge this gap, ensuring patients arrive prepared for these critical conversations, equipped

with the knowledge to discuss their options effectively and make informed choices about their care.

One of the biggest hurdles to treatment adherence is patient costs, and manufacturers provide patient assistance programs to help overcome this issue. Despite setting aside billions of dollars for patient support, only three percent of patients use these services.<sup>6</sup> A lack of awareness about these programs and misunderstanding of how the programs work keeps patients from using these programs, according to a survey from Phreesia.

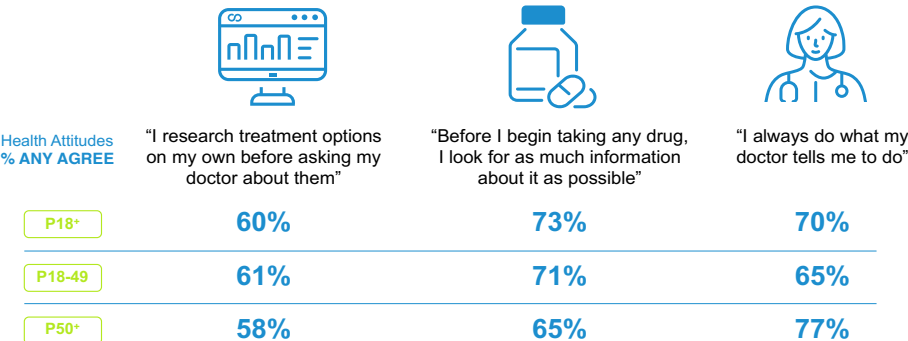
To better understand consumer perceptions of pharma ads and whether treatment ads impact patient health outcomes, Swoop surveyed 902 chronic condition MyHealthTeam community members.

In this whitepaper, we will explore these exclusive survey results, the role of direct-to-consumer (DTC) advertising, and how pharma marketers can improve their campaigns for all involved: patients, caregivers, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and physicians.

## In This Whitepaper:

- **Patient perspectives on pharma ads:** An in-depth analysis of survey results revealing how patients with chronic conditions view and react to treatment advertising, including taking action after seeing an ad.
- **Pharmaceutical advertising trends and goals:** An overview of the latest trends in pharma ad spending, and the underlying objectives of pharma ads, moving beyond awareness to focus on patient empowerment, education, and improved health outcomes.
- **Patients' advice for pharma marketers:** Actionable strategies for pharma marketers to enhance their campaigns, from the patient's perspective.

### Across all age groups, patients take an active role in understanding treatments



# Patients see the benefits of treatment advertising

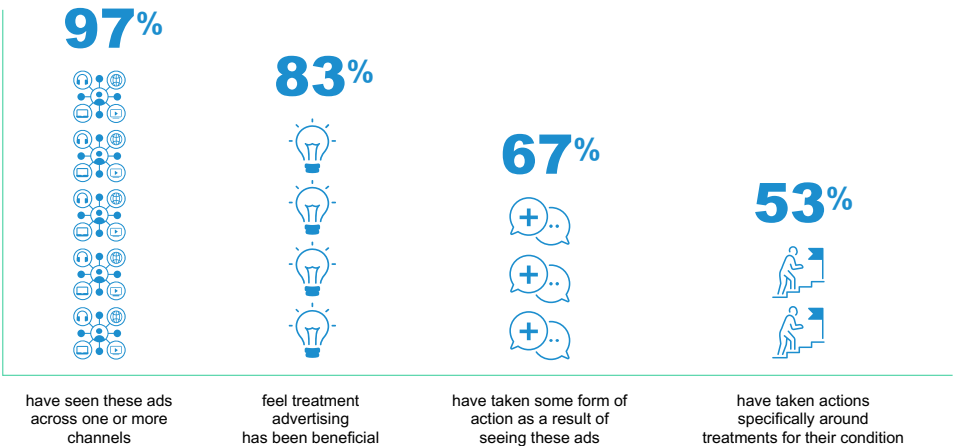
Before diving into the trends and goals of pharma ad spending, first take a look at the important question from this research project: Do pharma ads make a positive difference?

- 83 percent feel treatment advertising has been beneficial
- 66 percent see the main benefit as building a better understanding of available treatment options
- 67 percent have taken some form of action as a result of seeing treatment ads
- 53 percent took an action specifically around treatment

These survey results clearly demonstrate that pharmaceutical advertising resonates with patients and motivates them to take action. But how are pharma companies investing their resources to achieve these outcomes?

The next section explores the underlying goals driving pharmaceutical advertising and examines the latest spending trends shaping the industry. Followed by a deeper dive into the specific actions chronic condition community members are taking after seeing treatment ads, providing a more granular understanding of how pharma advertising influences the patient journey.

## Patients see the benefits of treatment advertising



Source: Swoop MyHealthTeam Community Survey 2025

**97%**  
have seen these ads across one or more channels

**83%**  
feel treatment advertising has been beneficial

Source: Swoop MyHealthTeam Community Survey 2025



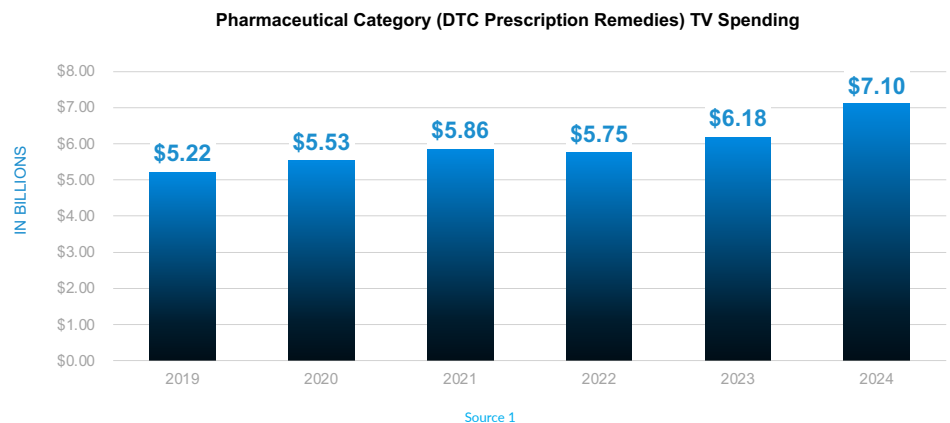
# Investing in patient empowerment: The goals and trends shaping pharmaceutical advertising

Pharmaceutical advertising extends far beyond simply promoting a product. Life sciences marketers strive to empower patients to take control of their health. Pharmaceutical ads aim to improve patient outcomes by raising awareness of conditions and available treatments, providing vital information about diseases, connecting patients to financial assistance, and fostering more informed decision-making.

These ads play a crucial role in improving communication between patients and healthcare providers, leading to more productive conversations in the doctor's office and increased adherence to prescribed medications. Furthermore, they can lessen the stigma surrounding certain conditions, encourage earlier diagnosis and treatment, and even inspire participation in clinical trials that drive the development of new therapies.

Pharmaceutical advertising helps educate patients about co-pay assistance and affordability programs, breaking down financial barriers to essential treatments. "Financial support programs are far more accessible than patients often realize," Co-founder and President of MyHealthTeam and Swoop Chief Patient Officer Eric Peacock said. "Anyone with commercial insurance can access financial supporting, including co-pay assistance, but most either don't know the programs exist or assume it is only available for people with lower incomes."

DTC TV spending grew 21% over four years, aligning with a similar increase in prescriptions



“Financial support programs are far more accessible than patients often realize. Anyone with commercial insurance can access financial support, including co-pay assistance, but most either don't know the programs exist or assume it is only available for people with lower incomes.



**Eric Peacock**  
Co-founder and President  
MyHealthTeam

Chief Patient Officer  
Swoop

# Current pharmaceutical advertising spending trends

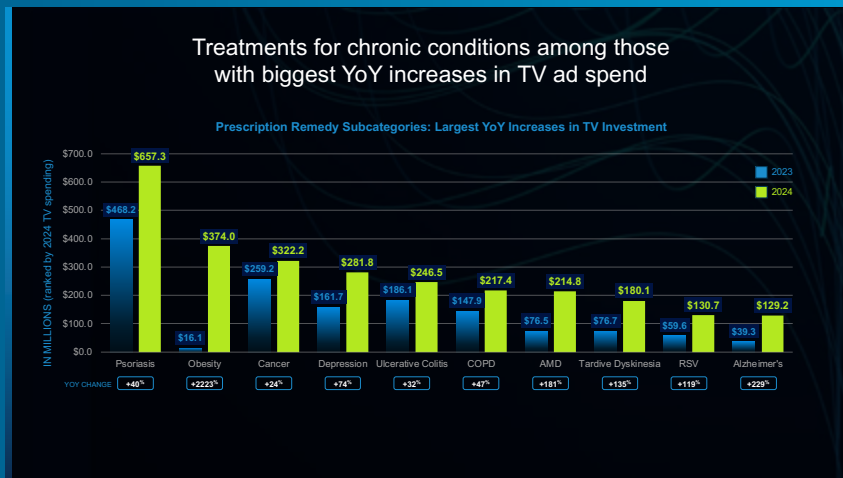
Pharmaceutical advertisers remain major investors in television advertising, with a collective spend of \$2.18 billion in the first half of 2025 alone.<sup>7</sup> Data from the VAB reveals a 21 percent rise in pharma ad spending between 2019 and 2024, mirroring a substantial increase in the millions of adults using prescription treatments. This growth is particularly evident in TV ad spending for remedies targeting chronic skin conditions, obesity, cancer, depression, and ulcerative colitis.<sup>1</sup>



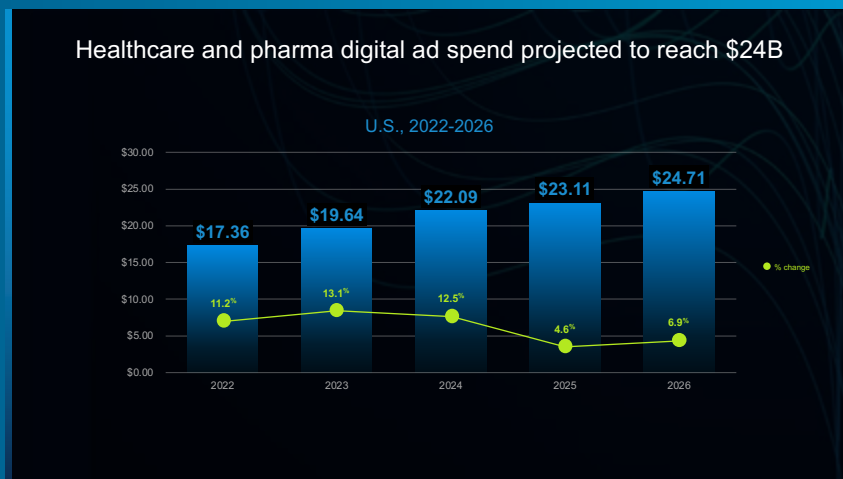
Looking beyond traditional media, digital ad spending in healthcare and pharma is projected to reach \$24.71 billion by 2026, demonstrating the industry's commitment to reaching patients across multiple channels and the evolving media habits of all audiences.<sup>8</sup>

Pharmaceutical advertising, at its core, aims to empower patients, improve health outcomes, and foster a more informed and collaborative healthcare experience. By providing crucial information and raising awareness, these ads equip patients with the knowledge they need to make informed decisions, engage effectively with their healthcare providers, and navigate the complexities of their conditions.

But do these efforts truly resonate with patients? Are pharma ads hitting the mark in achieving these ambitious goals? The next section digs into the results of Swoop's exclusive patient survey to uncover how individuals living with chronic conditions perceive and respond to treatment advertising.



Source 1



Source 8



## Survey Facts

Research methodology:

902 surveyed

2025  
March - July

Conditions surveyed:

my  
CROHNS  
AND  
COLITIS  
team

my  
MASH  
team

my  
HIV  
team

my  
HeartDisease  
team

diabetes  
team

my  
MS  
team

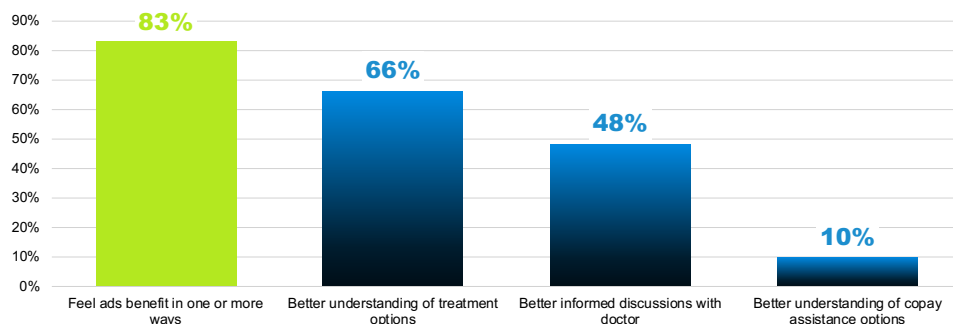
myBCTeam

The limitations of this study include convenience sampling from MyHealthTeam online communities. The findings may not be generalizable to the broader patient population and recall bias cannot be excluded.

# Do DTC ads impact health outcomes?

Most (83%) feel treatment advertising builds awareness of available options

Benefits of the Treatment Ads  
(Total Sample Who Have Seen Any Ads)



Source: Swoop MyHealthTeam Community Survey 2025

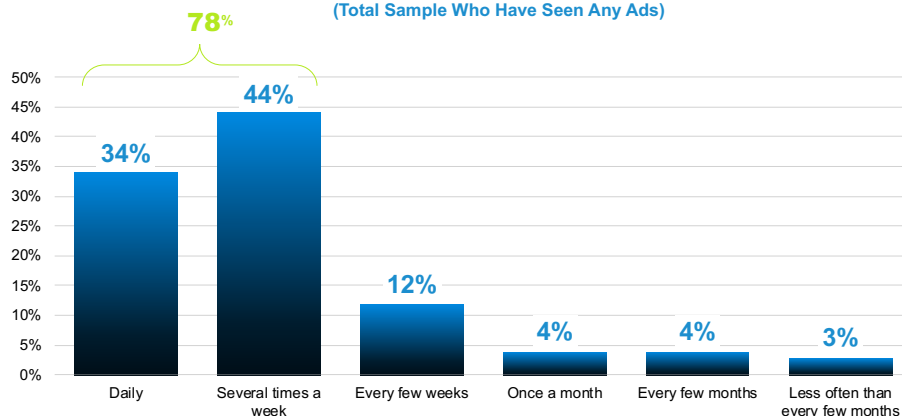
Our survey of 902 patients with chronic conditions reveals that treatment advertising influences patient actions and perceptions of their healthcare journey. The majority (97 percent) of respondents reported seeing pharma ads across various channels, with most (78 percent) encountering these ads at least weekly. This consistent exposure across all patient groups underscores the broad reach of treatment advertising.

## Patients see clear benefits to DTC ads

A significant 83 percent of chronic condition community members perceive treatment advertising as beneficial. Across all conditions surveyed, patients value the role of treatment ads in informing discussions with their doctors, expanding their understanding of available therapies, and most of all better understanding treatment options for their condition.

Majority (78%) typically notice treatment ads weekly

How Often Have Seen Treatment Ads  
(Total Sample Who Have Seen Any Ads)



Source: Swoop MyHealthTeam Community Survey 2025

# DTC ads drive action



## 66%

feel treatment advertising has improved their understanding of treatment options



## 53%

respondents took action specifically around treatment after seeing ads

The impact of pharma ads extends beyond awareness, prompting concrete actions from patients. Two-thirds reported acting after seeing treatment advertising, and 53 percent took action specifically around treatment.

These actions range from inquiring about treatment options and specific medications to scheduling appointments to switching medications. Patients reported visiting pharmaceutical brand websites and starting or switching medications after seeing an ad.

### The impact on patients living with chronic conditions is clear

These survey results unequivocally demonstrate that pharmaceutical advertising has a profound impact on patients living with chronic conditions. Not only are these ads reaching the target audience, with consistent exposure across various channels, but they are also influencing patient perceptions and driving meaningful actions in the health journey.

The overwhelming majority of patients see a clear benefit in pharma advertising, particularly in enhancing their understanding of treatment options and facilitating more informed discussions with their healthcare providers. These ads are prompting concrete actions, from researching specific medications to scheduling appointments and even starting new treatments. This data underscores

the effectiveness of current campaign strategies and highlights the potential of pharmaceutical advertising to empower patients and improve health outcomes.

### How to create ads that resonate with patients

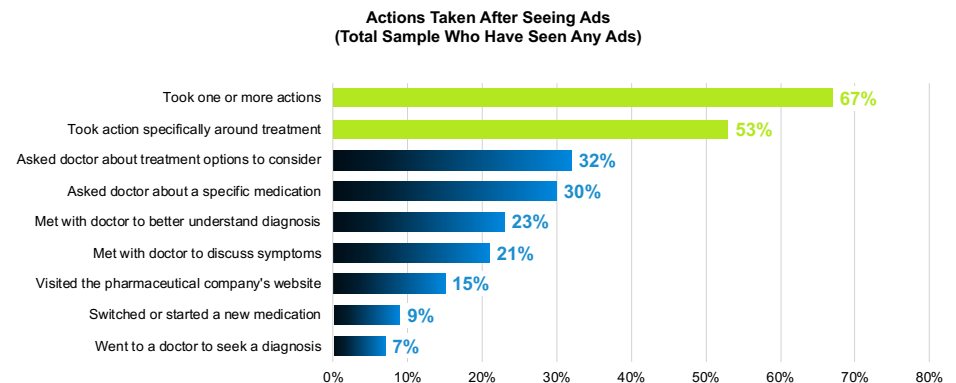
All brand managers know they should prioritize listening to patients and aim to understand their motivations, concerns, and experiences, but there's so much information to take in, it can be overwhelming.

Uncovering the why behind patient choices and campaign results, can lead healthcare marketers to more effective and resonant advertising.

Ads that genuinely reflect patient language, address their specific concerns, and accurately portray their lived experiences are demonstrably more effective. Patients possess invaluable insights into what it truly means to live with a chronic condition, and incorporating their feedback leads to more impactful campaigns.

This patient-first approach fosters trust and authenticity, resulting in improved ad performance, better health outcomes, and a more informed and empowered patient community. As the saying goes, "No decisions about patients without patients." This principle should guide every stage of pharma ad development, from the initial concept to final execution.

### Two-thirds (67%) have taken one or more actions as a result of advertising



Source: Swoop MyHealthTeam Community Survey 2025



# Patient recommendations to improve pharma ads

“

We regularly hear from patients that treatment ads don't reflect the reality of their lives. They want to see ads that demonstrate a brand truly understands what life looks like for someone with their condition.

**Eric Peacock**

Co-founder and President  
MyHealthTeam

Chief Patient Officer  
Swoop

Our survey respondents provided valuable insights into how pharma marketers can optimize their marketing materials to better resonate with patients.

- Portray realistic patients and expectations: Move away from idealized portrayals and focus on relatable experiences.
- Improve access to information: Provide easy-to-access information about costs, assistance programs, and side effects through targeted channels.
- Facilitate informed conversations: Empower patients and doctors to have more productive discussions by providing the right information at the right time.

These insights offer valuable guidance for creative development, audience understanding, and targeted messaging strategies, leading to more effective and impactful pharma campaigns.



**Show more realistic patients**



**Set realistic expectations**



**Lower costs**



**Info on financial assistance**



**Explain side effects/efficacy**



**Involve the HCPS**

# Patient Perspectives

“ I wish that they would show a few people who struggle with mobility, using walkers, or wheelchairs. The commercials are usually young, mobile patients not yet experiencing disability.

MyMSTeam member

“ Be thorough and be honest. They should give a good description of the patient assistance plan they have and not just say: patient financial assistance is possible.

MyCrohnsAndColitisTeam member

“ Be more transparent about the relative risks and provide links for further information.

MyHeartDiseaseTeam member

“ Be VERY HONEST about costs and possible resources to meet them.

MyMSTeam member

“ I would have to suggest that the commercials that involve food should do their research because they have Crohn's patients eating food that we would typically not be eating. Also, they fail to hit the mark on the fact that Crohn's is exhausting and a very hard disease to have. It also affects your entire body not just your digestive system. It may be an invisible disease, but it is not invisible to us.

MyCrohnsAndColitisTeam member





## Reaching patients responsibly

When ads are relevant to the audience, they are perceived as valuable rather than intrusive, benefiting both brands and consumers. But targeted ad campaigns should not make a patient feel uncomfortable or like their condition has been outed.

The healthcare marketing landscape faces a crucial challenge: Balancing the need to deliver vital health information with the imperative to protect patient privacy. Though many marketers are most concerned about HIPAA violations, HIPAA compliance alone doesn't guarantee adherence to all privacy regulations. With more than 20 state laws focused on consumer privacy as of this writing, marketers face a dual challenge of meeting both HIPAA and state privacy standards. These laws share common themes, including heightened restrictions on the use of consumer health-related information for advertising.

Effective communication and individual privacy rights are not mutually exclusive. In fact, they are both essential for improving patient outcomes.

Pharmaceutical brands must earn consumer trust by prioritizing compliance with privacy regulations while simultaneously delivering information about treatments that can improve lives. When audience data is properly anonymized and aggregated, individual identities remain protected at all times. This approach allows for effective targeting without compromising individual privacy.

Respecting individual privacy is critically important to proper audience engagement. It's also crucial to recognize that responsible, ethical, and privacy-enhancing data use can yield effective health communications to patients, empowering them to make informed decisions about their health while respecting their privacy and building consumer trust.

Compliance with privacy regulations can actually drive innovation. Partners who invest in compliance often develop more sophisticated, privacy-centric targeting methods that ultimately enhance campaign effectiveness.

## Swoop's approach to privacy compliance

- **Zero-knowledge methodology:**  
This means we build audiences without relying on consumer attributes, health data, demographics, or inferred information.
- **De-identification and encryption:**  
All data received by Swoop is de-identified and irreversibly encrypted, ensuring that personal information is removed and unrecoverable.
- **Comprehensive compliance:**  
Compliant with all state and federal laws, including MHMDA and HIPAA, Swoop is the first audience company to receive NAI certification from MyHealthTeam online communities.

The findings may not be generalizable to the broader patient population and recall bias cannot be excluded.

# Connecting with patients: Building trust and delivering value

Living with a chronic condition presents numerous challenges, from navigating complex treatment plans to managing the emotional and physical toll of the illness. To enjoy a higher quality of life, patients are increasingly taking proactive roles in their healthcare journeys, actively seeking information, and becoming experts in their conditions.

This underscores the vital role of pharmaceutical advertising in empowering patients with the knowledge they need to make informed decisions and advocate for themselves effectively. Swoop's survey of 902 patients with chronic conditions confirms the significant impact of these ads, with the majority reporting that they have seen pharma ads and find them beneficial, particularly in understanding treatment options and informing conversations with their doctors.



Pharmaceutical advertising goes beyond simply raising awareness. It drives tangible action. This survey reveals that a significant percentage of patients took concrete steps after seeing a treatment ad, from researching specific treatments to scheduling appointments with their healthcare providers. This underscores the power of these ads to influence patient behavior and improve health outcomes. Moreover, the industry's increasing investment in both television and digital advertising demonstrates a commitment to reaching patients across multiple channels to inform those who may not be actively seeking medical information.

Treatment ads must resonate with the experiences of individuals living with chronic conditions, address concerns, reflect their language, and portray realistic expectations to be effective. Incorporating patient feedback into ad development is crucial for building authenticity and trust, leading to more impactful campaigns and improved health outcomes.

Finally, responsible advertising requires a steadfast commitment to patient privacy. Navigating the complex landscape of privacy regulations is essential for maintaining patient trust and ensuring that vital health information reaches those who need it most. By prioritizing compliance and partnering with innovative companies, pharma brands can effectively reach their target audiences without compromising individual privacy rights.



## Key Takeaways

- **Pharmaceutical advertising plays a critical role in empowering patients with knowledge and facilitating informed decision-making.**
- **Treatment ads are not only reaching patients but also driving meaningful action, influencing their healthcare choices and improving health outcomes.**
- **A patient-first approach is essential for effective pharma advertising. Ads must resonate with real experiences, address concerns, and reflect language and food choices accurately.**
- **Protecting consumer privacy is paramount. Responsible data usage and compliance with regulations are crucial for building trust and ensuring the ethical delivery of health information.**

# Engage ideal patients and providers at pivotal moments in the health journey

The leading pharmaceutical and life sciences companies turn to Swoop to deliver performance without compromising privacy and trust.



[Click Here  
to Learn More](#)

**Swoop is a market leader in privacy-safe, award-winning omnichannel healthcare marketing.** Our platform connects patients, HCPs, and brands at scale across all channels, delivering unmatched engagement and proximity to patients throughout their health journey. By combining AI-driven technology with real-world data (RWD), first- and zero-party data, and engagement data, Swoop empowers pharma marketers to make faster, more precise decisions that improve patient outcomes.

# Sources & Contributors

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# TRANSFORMING OMNICHANNEL

