

# Informing and Refining the Prescription Drug Promotion Research Agenda

Virtual Public Workshop

November 19, 2021

## Agenda

### Background and Meeting Objective

The FDA is responsible for ensuring that prescription drug promotion, including direct-to-consumer (DTC) and health care provider-directed promotional materials, is truthful, balanced, and accurately communicated. However, the broader landscape for prescription drug promotion continues to evolve as patients and health care providers increasingly use digital tools to inform and manage aspects of care and drug manufacturers look to these tools to reach target audiences. While some of these tools and communication channels may be outside of FDA's statutory jurisdiction, understanding the broader digital marketing landscape is an important prerequisite to refining the FDA's own prescription drug promotion research agenda and identifying potential touchpoints where collective research could improve and safeguard the information that makes its way to patients and providers.

This meeting will feature an array of experts whose research in prescription drug promotion and digital marketing can help inform the FDA of important emerging trends, effective study designs, and other complementary learnings that may have bearing on the agency's research agenda on prescription drug promotion. Participants will explore a wide range of topics related to current and future trends in drug promotion, how drug promotion can affect patient and health care provider thinking and decision making, and how to best support research at the FDA that is both impactful and actionable.

- 1:00 p.m.**      **Welcome and Overview**  
Mark McClellan, Duke-Margolis Center for Health Policy
- 1:10 p.m.**      **FDA Opening Remarks**  
M. Khair ElZarrad, U.S. Food and Drug Administration
- 1:20 p.m.**      **The Current Prescription Drug Promotion Landscape**  
Kathryn Aikin, U.S. Food and Drug Administration
- 1:35 p.m.**      **Session 1: Prescription Drug Promotion in the Digital Space**

### Objectives

- Explore current trends in online prescription drug promotion using social media, such as the use of influencers for promoting FDA-regulated medical products
- Consider prescription drug promotion to patients that occurs through telemedicine visits, including in virtual waiting rooms
- Discuss considerations for prescription drug promotion to health care providers through electronic health record (EHR) vendors

- Explore other avenues through which prescription drug companies engage with patients and health care providers digitally, including patient engagement portals and social media groups

#### **Questions to Address**

- What current trends in online prescription drug promotion are you paying attention to and why?
- How are prescription drug manufacturers using social media and other digital tools to connect with patients? What are the research implications of prescription drug promotion that occurs in digital spaces such as through social media groups for patients with specific health conditions?
- What are the implications of prescription drug manufacturers engaging with patients in virtual health care settings, such as virtual patient waiting rooms in online telemedicine clinics? What obstacles for research does this cause, and how might those obstacles be overcome? Similarly, what opportunities for research are present in these new frontiers?
- What are the implications of prescription drug manufacturers using digital tools such as EHRs to reach health care providers? What are the implications of promotion to health care providers utilizing digital tools? What obstacles for research does this cause, and how might those obstacles be overcome?
- What methodological gaps exist in this research space? What do you wish you could measure but can't due to methodological limitations?

#### **Panel Remarks**

- Mariea Hoy, University of Tennessee, Knoxville
- Hyosun Kim, Indiana State University
- Tim Mackey, University of California, San Diego

#### **Additional Discussants**

- Jennifer Ball, Temple University
- Brent Rollins, Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine

#### **Open Discussion**

**2:45 p.m.**

**Break**

**3:00 p.m.**

**Session 2: Future Directions and Considerations for the Prescription Drug Promotion Research Agenda**

#### **Objectives**

- Explore a wide range of topics related to prescription drug promotion such as online DTC telemedicine clinics, law firm ads for drug harms, adaptive marketing, use of AI, promotion in a post-COVID-19 world, and other potential areas that would benefit from additional research
- Discuss future trends in prescription drug promotion to patients and health care providers, including promotion that occurs in the digital space.

- Consider evidence needs in prescription drug promotion research and how to best support future research in drug promotion

**Questions to Address:**

- What are some emerging trends in prescription drug promotion to patients and health care providers? How might prescription drug promotion evolve in the digital space in the future?
- In what ways has the pandemic accelerated or changed emerging trends in prescription drug promotion?
- In what ways might consumer perceptions of prescription products be impacted by emerging trends in prescription drug promotion?
- What evidence gaps exist in prescription drug promotion research?
- What do you think are the most pressing areas/questions for research on prescription drug promotion?
- What lessons can prescription drug promotion researchers learn from other fields?

**Panel Remarks**

- Abby Alpert, University of Pennsylvania
- Janelle Applequist, University of South Florida
- Jisu Huh, University of Minnesota

**Additional Discussants**

- Suzanne Bollmeier, University of Health Sciences and Pharmacy in St. Louis
- Elizabeth Tippet, University of Oregon Law School

**Open Discussion**

4:15 p.m.      **Adjournment**