

The Future of Prescription Drug Promotion and Digital Marketing

Virtual Public Workshop

September 14, 2023

12:30-5:00 pm ET

Agenda

Background and Workshop Objective

The digital marketing landscape is a dynamic and rapidly evolving ecosystem, and marketers have a rapidly growing array of communication channels to promote products to consumers including social media platforms and podcasts. At the same time, legacy communication channels like television and print ads are integrating new digital features that aim to enhance reach and impact of promotional communications. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is responsible for ensuring that promotional communications, including direct-to-consumer (DTC) and health care provider (HCP)-directed promotional communications, are truthful, balanced, and accurately communicated. To achieve its mission, it is vital for the FDA to understand the evolving digital marketing landscape, including existing and emerging platforms, strategies, and technologies used by marketers to promote prescription drug products.

The Duke-Margolis Center for Health Policy, under a cooperative agreement with the FDA, is convening a one-day public workshop that will explore the state of digital prescription drug promotion, including the marketing technologies and strategies currently available and commonly used by marketers. Participants will explore how current and future digital marketing tools can impact patient, HCP, and consumer perceptions and behaviors generally, while diving into specific issues like the presentation of risk information and disclosures of material information necessary to ensure that the prescription drug promotion through these digital platforms and technologies is truthful and non-misleading. Participants will also discuss emerging trends in both digital and legacy marketing channels and what those trends may mean for public health.

12:30 PM **Welcome and Overview**

Mark McClellan, Duke-Margolis Center for Health Policy

12:35 PM **FDA Opening Remarks**

Catherine Gray, U.S. Food and Drug Administration

12:45 PM **Session 1: The Future of Television Marketing**

Moderator: Nancy Allen LaPointe, Duke-Margolis Center for Health Policy

Objective: In this session, panelists will review and discuss the current state and future direction of prescription drug advertising on linear, or traditional, television as well as the future of prescription drug marketing across connected television, including ad-supported and subscription-based streaming platforms. Discussion will also cover the impacts to public health considerations for prescription drug marketing on television formats based on the evolving landscape of both linear and connected tv.

Presentation: Steven Woloshin, The Dartmouth Institute

Panel:

- Jennifer Hessler, North Carolina State University
- Michael Kubin, INVIDI
- Amanda Starc, Northwestern University
- Steven Woloshin, The Dartmouth Institute

Discussion Questions:

1. Where do you see the state of prescription drug television marketing in the future?
2. Do you foresee the pharmaceutical industry continuing to market through linear tv at its current level? If not, what mix of linear and connected tv marketing do you foresee in the next five to ten years?
3. What are the notable features and functionality available to marketers through streaming? What are the public health considerations around these features and functions that differ from considerations with linear tv ads?
4. How might current and emerging trends in television marketing have bearing on the balance of information presented to consumers and/or HCPs through this venue?
5. How do emerging digital marketing strategies differ from legacy marketing strategies? What new regulatory and public health considerations might these strategies present?

1:45 PM

Session 2: Use of Native Advertising on Digital Platforms

Moderator: Christina Silcox, Duke-Margolis Center for Health Policy

Objective: In this session, panelists will review settings and formats commonly used to promote prescription drugs through native advertising – promotional content meant to match the feel, look, and function of a given media format – and discuss public health considerations related to specific settings. Panelists will also discuss digital platforms where new formats of native advertising are emerging. Review and discussion of examples where native advertising has been utilized for marketing to consumers versus healthcare professionals and how the presentation of information may differ by population of interest will also be included in this session.

Presentation: Janelle Applequist, University of South Florida

Panel:

- Janelle Applequist, University of South Florida
- John Paul Marcus, Travers Therapeutics, Inc.
- Bartosz Wojdowski, University of Georgia

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the recent trends in emerging formats and settings of native advertising for prescription drug products? How might these trends have bearing on the balance of information presented to consumers through this venue?
2. What are the challenges for consumers and HCPs in identifying native ads as promotional material? How might these challenges vary between different consumer demographics?
3. What are the public health considerations related to emerging formats of prescription drug native advertising? How might these considerations vary between different consumer demographics?
4. Where do you see prescription drug native advertising appearing in the future?
5. How do emerging digital marketing strategies differ from legacy marketing strategies? What new regulatory and public health considerations might these strategies present?

2:45 PM **Break**

3:00 PM **Session 3: Patient and Consumer Experiences with Promotion on Digital Platforms, with a Focus on Presentation of Risk Information**

Moderator: Mark McClellan, Duke-Margolis Center for Health Policy

Objective: The panel will discuss emerging trends and formats observed in the promotion of prescription drug products in digital media as it relates to content intended for patients and consumers. Discussion will focus on the current methods for disclosing risk on digital platforms along with emerging methods observed through new formats. The panel will also discuss best practices for disclosing risk and considerations for time or space-limited formats, as well as how best practices may be impacted by unique platform or context considerations. Some discussion of examples of hashtags, influencer campaigns, and short-form video will also be included.

Presentation: Erin Willis, University of Colorado Boulder

Panel:

- Tony Cox, Indiana University
- Sneha Dave, Generation Patient
- Andrea Downing, The Light Collective
- Brittne Kakulla, AARP
- Erin Willis, University of Colorado Boulder

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the predominant emerging trends and formats in digital promotion of prescription drugs to consumers and patients? What are the public health considerations presented by these new formats?

2. What are some examples of real-world applications of emerging digital marketing strategies (such as use of hashtags, use of influencers, short-form video, etc.)?
3. What are the common types of risk presentations on digital platforms (for example scrolling ISI, links, etc.)?
4. What are the emerging formats and settings of risk presentation on digital platforms (for example call to action or captions on short form video)? How might certain risk profiles lend themselves to certain emerging formats or settings?
5. How might current and emerging formats impact adequately communicating risks on balance with benefits to consumers and/or HCPs?
6. What are some best practices for presenting risk information on emerging digital platforms?

4:00 PM

Session 4: Health Care Provider Experiences with Emerging Trends and Formats in Prescription Drug Digital Promotion

Moderator: Nancy Allen LaPointe, Duke-Margolis Center for Health Policy

Objective: The panel will discuss emerging trends and formats observed in the promotion of prescription drug products in digital media as it relates to content intended for health care providers. Panelists will also discuss current trends in the application of emerging formats and technologies with regard to content intended for health care providers, and public health considerations impacted by these new advertising methods.

Presentation: Evelyn Hermes-Desantis, PhactMI, Rutgers

Panel:

- Dale Cooke, PhillyCooke Consulting
- Evelyn Hermes-Desantis, PhactMI, Rutgers
- Reshma Ramachandran, Yale School of Medicine

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the predominant emerging trends and formats in digital promotion of prescription drugs to health care providers? What are the public health considerations presented by these new formats?
2. What are health care provider perceptions of information provided through promotional messages in the digital space and how might this differ by format/venue? To what extent and within what contexts/applications are health care providers utilizing information provided through promotional messages to inform clinical care decisions?

3. How are health care providers interacting with key opinion leaders with regard to prescription drug digital promotion? How might provider perceptions of content differ with regard to promotional compared with educational content?
4. How might the various types of existing and emerging digital marketing strategies either increase or decrease decisional conflict for patients and/or impact patient, HCP, and patient-HCP decision making? How does this compare with legacy marketing strategies?

5:00 pm

Closing Remarks and Adjournment

Nancy Allen LaPointe, Duke-Margolis Center for Health Policy

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