

Truth in Advertising: 2008 and 2010 survey results

Education and training matters when it comes to who provides your health care, but do most patients know the qualifications of their health care provider? A 2008 survey found that while patients strongly support a physician-led health care team, many are confused about the level of education and training of their health care provider.¹ A 2010 follow-up survey², which confirmed that patients want a physician to lead the health care team, underscored that confusion remains high. Key findings from the 2010 survey included:

- ▶ **Ninety percent of respondents said that a physician’s additional years of medical education and training (compared to a nurse practitioner) are vital to optimal patient care, especially in the event of a complication or medical emergency.**
- ▶ **Eighty-six percent of respondents said that patients with one or more chronic diseases benefit when a physician leads the primary health care team.**
- ▶ **Eighty-three percent of respondents said that they prefer a physician to have primary responsibility for the diagnosis and management of their health care.**

Truth in Advertising legislation can help provide the clarity and transparency necessary for patients to have the information they need to make informed decisions about their health care.

Patients are not sure who is—and who is not—a medical doctor

Is this person a medical doctor?	Yes (%)		No (%)		Not sure (%)	
	2008	2010	2008	2010	2008	2010
Orthopaedic surgeon/Orthopaedist	94	84	3	12	3	4
Obstetrician/Gynecologist	92	93	5	4	3	3
Primary care physician ³	n/a	91	n/a	7	n/a	2
General or family practitioner	88	88	8	9	3	4
Dermatologist ³	n/a	84	n/a	12	n/a	4
Dentist	77	69	20	29	3	2
Anesthesiologist	76	78	16	19	8	3
Psychiatrist	74	75	20	21	6	4
Ophthalmologist	69	71	14	16	17	13
Podiatrist	67	68	22	21	11	11
Optometrist	54	54	36	38	10	8
Psychologist	49	41	44	53	8	6
Chiropractor	38	31	53	64	9	6
Doctor of nursing practice	38	35	37	46	25	19
Audiologist	33	30	40	47	27	23
Otolaryngologist/ENT ⁴	32	43	13	33	55	24
Nurse Practitioner	29	26	63	69	7	5
Physical Therapist	26	19	68	78	6	3
Midwife	11	7	82	86	7	7

Continued on page 2...

Additional findings from the “Truth in Advertising” surveys

Patients strongly prefer physicians to lead the health care team

Should only a medical doctor be allowed to perform the following procedures; or should other health care professionals be allowed to perform this specific activity?	Only a medical doctor (%)		Other health care professional (%)		Don't know (%)	
	2008	2010	2008	2010	2008	2010
Amputations of the foot?	93	93	5	5	2	2
Surgical procedures on the eye that require the use of a scalpel?	92	94	6	4	2	2
Facial surgery such as nose shaping and face lifts?	90	89	8	8	3	3
Treat chronic pain by prescribing drugs or other substances that have a high potential for addiction or abuse?	82	75	16	23	2	3
Write prescriptions for medication to treat mental health conditions such as schizophrenia and bi-polar disorder?	80	75	17	22	3	3
Use techniques such as spinal injections to diagnose and treat chronic pain?	79	78	19	19	2	3
Administer and monitor anesthesia levels and patient condition before and during surgery?	71	70	27	23	3	7
Commit individuals for psychiatric care against their will?	70	70	23	23	7	7

Patients want their health care professional to clearly designate their education and training

Do you agree or disagree with the following?	Agree (%)		Disagree (%)		Don't know (%)	
	2008	2010	2008	2010	2008	2010
Only licensed medical doctors should be able to use the title “physician?”	91	93	7	6	2	1
It is easy to identify who is a licensed medical doctor and who is not by reading what services they offer, their title and other licensing credentials in advertising or other marketing materials?	46	51	51	44	3	3
Would you support or oppose legislation in your state to require all health care advertising materials to clearly designate the level of education, skills and training of all health care professionals promoting their services?	Support		Oppose		Don't know	
	2008	2010	2008	2010	2008	2010
	93	87	6	10	1	3

Footnotes:

- 1 Global Strategy Group conducted a telephone survey on behalf of the Scope of Practice Partnership between August 13–18, 2008. Global Strategy Group surveyed 850 adults nationwide. The overall margin of error is +/- 3.4 percent at the 95 percent confidence level.
- 2 Baseline & Associates conducted a telephone survey on behalf of the Scope of Practice Partnership between November 4–8, 2010. Baseline & Associates surveyed 850 adults nationwide. The overall margin of error is +/- 3.4 percent at the 95 percent level.
- 3 The physician professions “primary care physician” and “dermatologist” were not referenced in the 2008 survey.
- 4 The abbreviation for ear, nose and throat—“ENT”—was not referenced in the 2008 survey.