RIGHT TIME. RIGHT PLACE. RIGHT CARE.

The New Patient Journey: Strategies for Healthcare Marketers in an AI-First World

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KYRUUS HEALTH

Contents

Introduction: AI Search Is Reshaping How Patients Find Care 2
How Patient Search Behavior Is Changing—And What It Means to You. 3
Structuring Provider Profiles For Search & Patient Engagement 5
Conversion—Website Strategies For Post-Search Patient Action 7
What's Next? 8

Introduction: AI Search Is Reshaping How Patients Find Care

Patients aren't just searching for providers—they're searching for answers to their health concerns. Instead of starting on a hospital website, they ask:

And AI-driven search, voice assistants, and even social media are responding, often without sending them to your website. You're not just missing out on traffic, but revenue, too.

For healthcare marketers, this shift means traditional SEO isn't enough anymore. Your provider profiles, service line pages, internal links, and third-party listings have to work together to be found and trusted in this new search ecosystem.

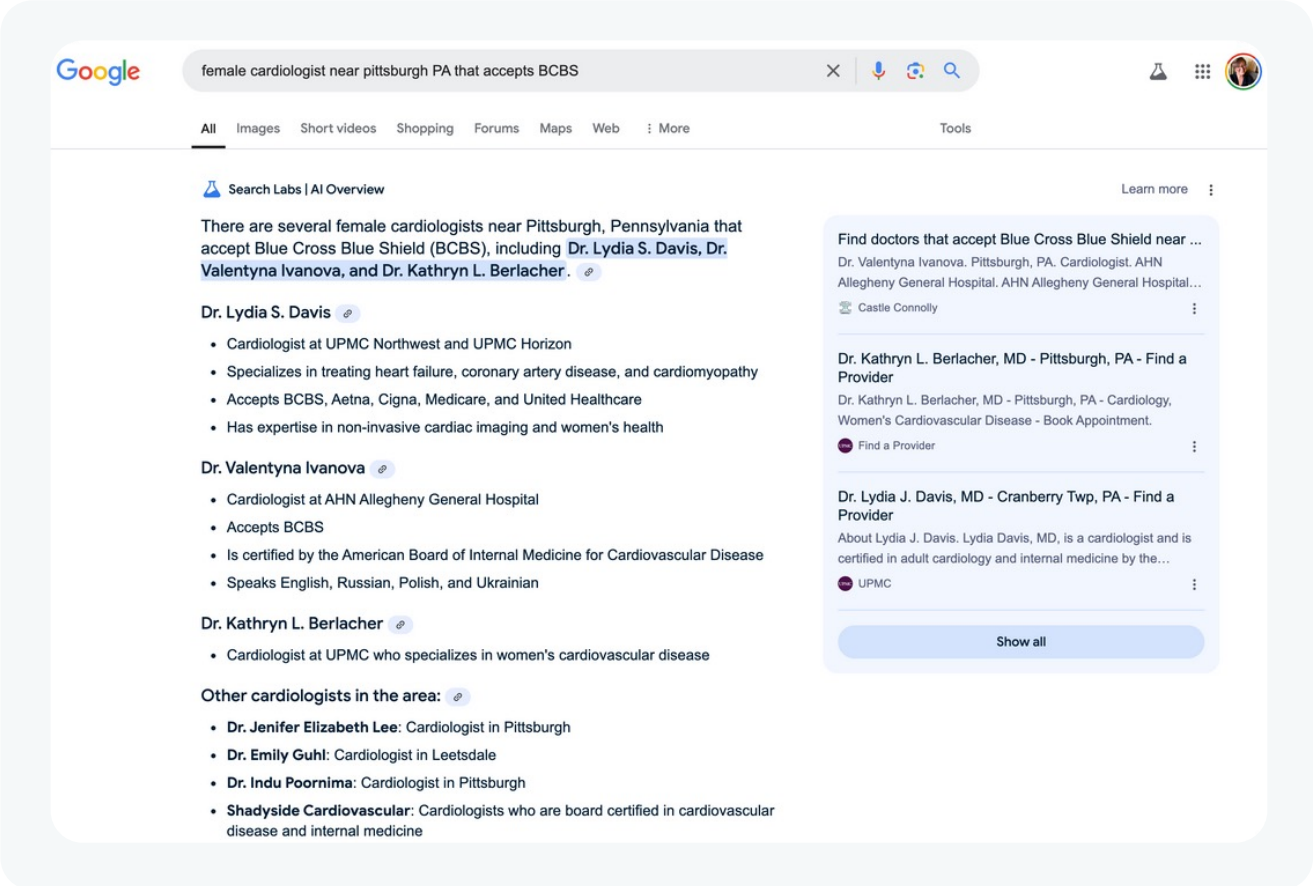
The good news? Search algorithms reward structured, well-written, patient-first content. By focusing on clear, credible content and data structure, healthcare marketers can take control of how patients discover their providers and services.

How Patient Search Behavior Is Changing—And What It Means to You

Patients aren't only searching differently—they're making faster decisions based on AI-generated summaries, voice searches, and social media recommendations.

What's Changing?

- **Patients expect direct, immediate answers:** Search queries are now longer, question-based, and conversational. ("Who is the best sleep apnea specialist in my area?")
- **Voice search is growing:** Patients use Siri, Alexa, and Google Assistant for immediate answers without visiting a website.
- **Social proof matters more than ever:** Patients trust testimonials, reviews, and provider videos when choosing a provider.
- **AI-powered search is filtering results:** Perplexity, Google's AI Overviews, and SearchGPT summarize key information before linking out.



What This Means for Your Strategy

- **Your content has to answer real patient questions:** Provider bios and content won't rank in AI results if they lack clear, natural language.
- **Accurate, structured data is essential:** Schema markup and internal linking help AI search tools recognize and prioritize your providers.
- **Trust is everything:** Patients are skeptical of AI-generated content and look for authentic, credible, well-maintained information.

TAKE ACTION

1. **Update provider bios** to focus on expertise and patient-friendly language.
2. **Implement schema markup** so AI-driven search tools can easily identify provider details.
3. **Incorporate videos, reviews, and testimonials** to reinforce credibility through social proof.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Patients aren't just looking for care—they're looking for trustworthy, immediate answers.

Your content needs to deliver both, in a format optimized for both AI search tools and patients.

Structuring Provider Profiles For Search & Patient Engagement

Provider profiles aren't just static directory listings. They're a critical touchpoint in both AI-driven search and patient decision-making. To be effective, bios must balance structured data (for AI) with compelling storytelling (for patients) while ensuring accuracy across all channels, not just your own website.

What AI Values vs. What Patients Need

- **Robust, accurate provider profiles:** Search engines and AI tools rely on consistent, well-formatted provider details (specialties, locations, insurance, videos, and more).
- **Maps and location management:** Often patients aren't searching for a specific provider but rather a convenient location for them to get to. Getting this information right is key for location-based "near me" searches.
- **Third-party listings and review platforms (e.g., Healthgrades):** These sites have increased prominence in AI-powered search results and help aid in patient decision making by promoting trust.

TAKE ACTION

1. **Enrich provider profiles** with what matters most: appointment slots, accepted insurance, and engaging media.
2. **Prioritize SERP features** through service pages linked to providers, local SEO tools, and multimedia for enhanced rich snippets.
3. **Amplify your digital presence** across third-party channels and enable direct appointment scheduling from external listings.

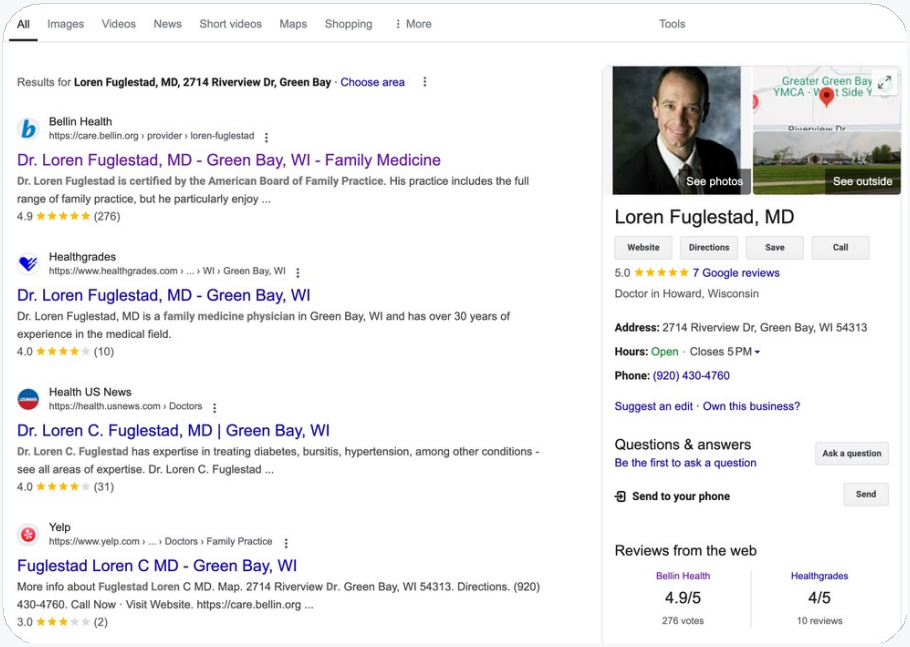
KEY TAKEAWAY

Provider profiles are more than search listings—they bridge AI-driven search and real patient connections. Make them accurate, compelling, and structured to serve both.

Example

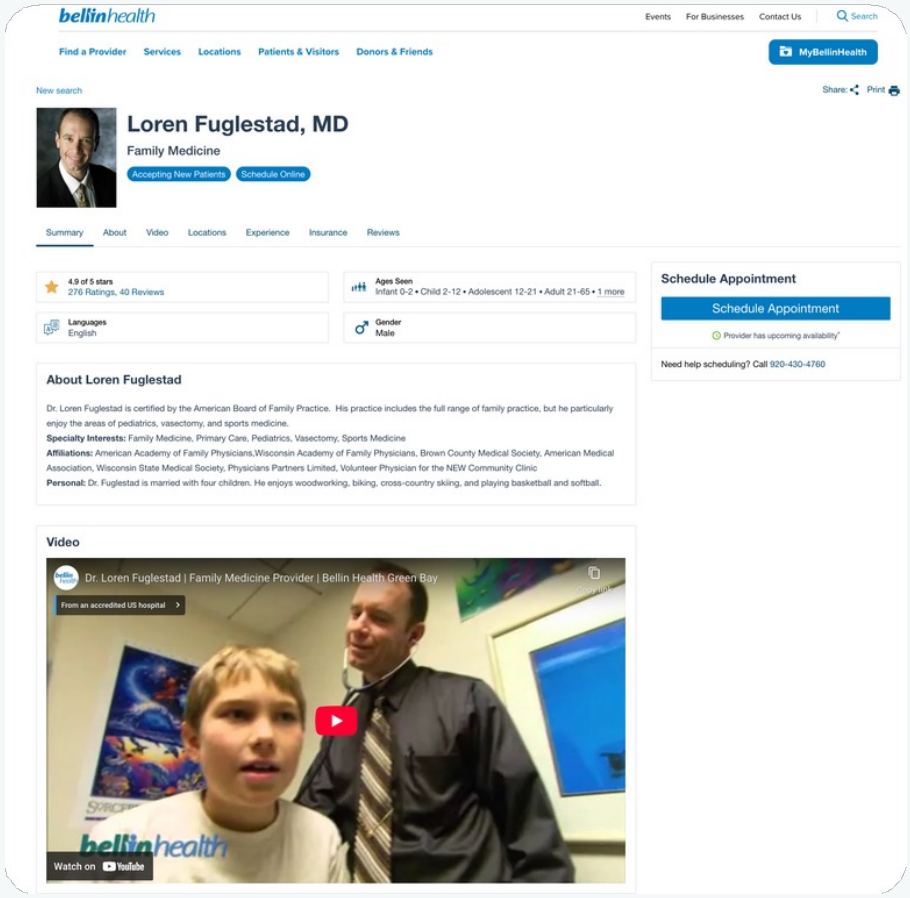
See how Dr. Loren Fuglestad shows up on Google.

His photograph is noticeable, his reviews are positive, and his contact information is easy to access.



Much of this information is pulled from his well-executed provider profile on the Bellin Health site, which is powered by accurate and rich data.

By providing the right mix of content and structured data, the directory is easy for patients to use and for Google to pull the information into the SERP.



Conversion—Website Strategies For Post-Search Patient Action

AI-driven search may keep more users on Google, but your website is still your most powerful tool. When patients do click, they need clear, compelling, and structured content that reinforces your expertise and guides them toward the right care. This is especially important in the age of zero-click searches—because patients who do land on your website are much more likely to act in some way, like scheduling an appointment.

Ensuring Your Website Is Transaction-Ready

- **Guide patients with actionable, patient-first content:** Your content should be structured, easy to navigate, and answer real patient questions while guiding them toward the next steps in their healthcare journey.
- **Capitalize on high-intent website visitors:** Clear, prominent calls to action throughout your website can help convert patients who are ready for the next step in their care journey.

TAKE ACTION

1. **Create a content strategy** that includes linking service line pages, blogs, and other content to relevant provider profiles.
2. **Display appointment availability** for providers and services within your find-a-doc, provider profiles, and on Google.
3. **Ensure placement of prominent CTAs** (like "schedule an appointment") in various spots throughout your website and across other channels that consumers frequent (health plan directories, Google).

KEY TAKEAWAY

AI search has raised the stakes for website engagement. A strategically structured, action-oriented digital presence converts informed visitors into scheduled patients by seamlessly bridging discovery and care delivery.

What's Next?

A strategic shift like this takes time and careful execution, but the payoff is worth it—better patient experiences, stronger provider visibility, and a competitive edge in an AI-driven search landscape.

To help you get started, we've distilled the key actions into 6 priorities.

Focus on one at a time, and before you know it, you'll have a provider directory that's optimized for both patients and search engines.

6 KEY IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

- ◯ Enhance provider profiles with rich, accurate data such as expertise, appointment availability, insurance information, and engaging media.
- ◯ Implement schema markup and local SEO to optimize visibility in AI-driven search and rich snippets.
- ◯ Create a content strategy linking service pages and blogs to provider profiles.
- ◯ Include testimonials and reviews to build credibility and social proof.
- ◯ Expand your digital presence across third-party platforms with direct scheduling capabilities.
- ◯ Place clear CTAs throughout your website and external channels for seamless conversion.

Make It Easier For Patients To Find And Choose The Right Care

Reach out to **Aha Media Group** for content and strategy support.

ahamediagroup.com

Reach ot to **Kyruus Health** for provider directory and listings management solutions.

kyruushealth.com