



Online Tools for Practitioners: **Supplement Dispensaries**

One technology-based solution that can improve patient outcomes and the success of your practice

North American consumers show a growing realization of the importance of diet, nutrition, and lifestyle to their overall health and wellness. They now clearly indicate a strong and growing interest in alternatives to traditional pharmaceutical solutions and seek practitioners who focus on functional medicine and integrative health protocols. While this has led to a fragmented health care landscape, the changes are also creating opportunities to improve patient care, and practice revenues for many practitioners. Naturopathic physicians and chiropractors, are at the forefront of this space, although alternative physicians and non-physician providers, are now also meeting the demand.

But addressing these gaps in the health care system has created broad challenges for practitioners, who are looking for new solutions to make their practices more efficient while also providing effective and personalized patient care. They're turning to technology in record numbers to provide comprehensive and secure communication with patients, compile medical records, track protocol results, and create new revenue. More than 80% of physicians have now adopted the use of electronic medical record (EMR) systems.¹ Use of this technology is slightly lower for alternative and holistic practitioners, but at least 50% now use these systems and that number is higher for those under age 50.²

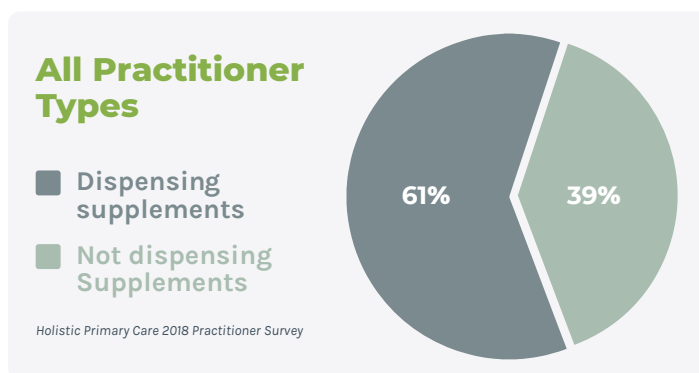
As practitioners of all kinds adopt alternative practice models, they're also relying more on nutrition and prevention-based protocols, which is bolstering the already growing acceptance and usage of supplements among North American consumers. According to data from *Nutrition Business Journal*, sales of supplements through practitioners is the fastest growing supplement sales channel, with a compound annual growth rate of 8.3 percent reaching \$3.7 billion in 2016. The segment now accounts for 9 percent of all supplement sales.

Given this consumer interest, it's not surprising that a majority, near 80 percent, of all types of practitioners, including NDs and DCs, as well as conventionally trained MDs and DOs, are now discussing supplements with their patients, for a wide range of health conditions from immune support and gastrointestinal issues to sleep problems.³

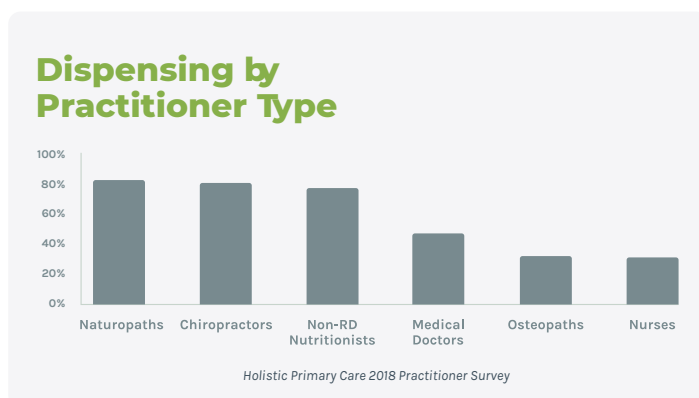
According to the *Holistic Primary Care's* 2018 Practitioner survey, more than 60 percent of practitioners now dispense supplements to their patients in some way, and this has nearly doubled from 34 percent in 2013.⁴ Dispensing nutritional supplements is certainly more common among holistic practitioners, although about one-third to half of the more conventionally trained practitioners are now dispensing these products through their practice as well.

Practitioners who are actively prescribing supplements understand that quality, efficacy, and patient adherence to nutritional protocols are essential for successful patient outcomes. They also know it's a challenge to ensure that patients are getting the specifically formulated products they prescribe if they're purchasing them elsewhere. Most of

these products are not found in local pharmacies or health food stores, and even if they were, there is no way to track whether patients are fulfilling these recommendations. As a result, many practitioners have long been forced to offer an onsite supplement inventory to help ensure patient compliance.



In-house dispensaries have traditionally been the method of choice because there were no other viable options to dispense supplements. But practitioners who have been in this space for any length of time know that there are a variety of challenges in managing an in-house dispensary. It's a costly and time-consuming effort, taking hours of practitioner time to vet formulas for the exact ingredients and specific dosages. It also requires dedicated staff time to manage logistics such as inventory and the expense of expiring products, tracking and shipping prescriptions, and record keeping. Not surprisingly, most practitioners would prefer to devote that time and energy to what they do best: patient care.



Despite the challenges, there are numerous upsides to dispensing supplements. Beyond the essential patient adherence and improved outcomes from professional supplement products, dispensing supplements is a key source of revenue that is increasingly important for many practitioners. Nearly half (47 percent) of the respondents in the *Holistic Primary Care* 2018 survey call revenue from dispensing very important to their practice (29 percent classify this revenue as very important and 18 percent classify it essential to their practice). What's more, dispensing these products can contribute to patient satisfaction, convenience, and the growth of a practice.



With new technology platforms now increasingly important for most practitioners, online dispensaries have also become a viable solution to address the challenges of supplement dispensing. Practitioners are taking note. According to the *Holistic Primary Care* survey, more than 40 percent now use online dispensaries, and this upswing is likely to continue given that more than half of younger dispensing clinicians are now using online platforms.⁵

Online dispensaries are making it easier than ever to prescribe supplements in a patient-friendly and efficient way. The benefits of working with an online dispensary tool include:

- **Saving time and money:** Advances in online supplement dispensaries allow practitioners to simplify their dispensing needs to spend more time and energy on patient care.
- **Maximizing efficiencies:** Dispensing becomes a part of the practice workflow: It's now possible to integrate these online dispensaries with leading EMR and EHR platforms, like Power2Practice, and CHARM EHR.

- **Improving patient adherence:** Improved patient communication and refill reminders lead to greater patient satisfaction and more successful patient outcomes.

- **Providing a means to effectively compete with other retail channels:** Online retailers offer convenience and, to a lesser degree, price (most professional brands actively monitor and police MAP), but most do not exclusively sell supplements so they have little focus on vetting products for quality and efficacy. Online dispensaries focus on supplements only and vet products to offer trusted, quality brands as an authorized reseller.

Capturing revenue: Instead of sending patients to a local retailer or pharmacy, practitioners can cost-effectively add supplements to their revenue stream. This can also recoup lost revenue—patients are more likely to purchase refills from their practitioner if it's convenient and easy, rather than buying an inferior product online or at their local market.

“Fullscript has helped practitioners improve patient adherence by at least **58%**”

Choosing the right online dispensary

An online dispensary can be an inexpensive virtual employee and an extension of the practice. Instead of managing multiple manufacturer relationships, inventory, and shipping phoned-in orders, practitioners can address these common pain points and leverage efficiencies with an in-office dispensary.

However, not all online dispensaries provide the same features and efficiencies. Here are a few considerations when choosing an online dispensing tool.

Does it offer an extensive catalog and advanced search? Health care practitioners have a lot to choose from when it comes to dietary supplements. While a majority of those who dispense supplements consistently say that professional brands are made to a higher quality standard,⁶ there are still many professional brands offering hundreds of products in the United States alone. With so many formulas to choose from, an online dispensary should offer an extensive brand catalog and optimized search functions to make finding the right products fast and easy. For example, a practitioner should be able to search by brand, formula type, and condition as well as more specific criteria such as allergens and use of particular ingredients. If they require a dairy free supplement for a patient, the search function is advanced enough to filter based on such specifications.

Is it an authorized reseller? It is critical to make sure that an online dispensary is an authorized reseller of practitioner grade brands. This helps ensure that products are warehoused and shipped using manufacturer guidelines. For example, if a supplement requires refrigeration, the reseller must abide by the guidelines and deliver accordingly. What's more, there is a real concern that a significant number of supplements sold online, including some professional brands, are counterfeit.^{7,8}

Does it streamline workflow for your medical practice? Since 2008, the number of health care practitioners who use EMR systems to improve practice efficiencies has jumped from 42% to 87%.⁹

Fullscript—a best-in-class, tech-based solution

For practitioners seeking to check off all the criteria above, Fullscript is the answer. A pioneer in the space, the company developed the first online dispensing platform for nutritional supplements and now offers hundreds of brands and thousands of products to power digital dispensing across the U.S. and Canada.

Online dispensing platforms like Fullscript can substantially improve both patient and practice outcomes. Here are some of the statistics on practice benchmarks from North American practitioners utilizing the

Virtual nutraceutical dispensing platforms similarly create time- and money-saving efficiencies in a practice and help patients effortlessly purchase the high quality, efficacious supplements prescribed. An ideal supplement dispensary platform will have a staff software development team, regularly developing additional features to enhance their system, based on user feedback. (Apple is a perfect example of this mindset—their team is constantly evolving the technology to improve user experiences—every new iOS system is better than the previous version). A technology platform with that same philosophy and core competence is essential.

Is the platform patient-friendly and does it support patient privacy?

Patient privacy is critical and required by law when it comes to health care. So when practitioners utilize technology, they also want it to be secure. More than three in four physicians have adopted the use of certified EMR systems¹⁰ that meet at least minimum standards for security and functionality as determined by the Secretary of Health and Human Services. Sixty-four percent of physicians want an EMR system that is capable of providing secure communications with patients.¹¹ It's just as important for online dispensaries to meet these standards and be HIPAA compliant to allow for safe and secure communication of personalized information and prescriptions.

Does it provide strong customer support? As with any tool or software system, questions and issues will inevitably arise. A system with a responsive customer support team can address technical questions and facilitate orders for practitioners and assist with shipping inquiries for patients. This is an essential service that saves practitioners time and resources.

Who is using the dispensary? Colleagues are a valuable resource in evaluating online dispensaries, providing the pros and cons of available platforms and offering a peer review to help make an informed choice.

Fullscript online dispensing platform:

- **Improved patient adherence by at least 58%**
- **Increased supplement sales by 52% within six months and by more than 90% within 12 months**
- **Improved refill rates by as much as 40%**

Fullscript is focused on solutions

Ultimately, an online dispensing platform can address many problems for practitioners and patients. Here are a few examples of how Fullscript solves common issues associated with supplement dispensing:

Problem: Practitioners need a cost-effective and convenient option to provide supplements for their patients throughout the entire treatment plan.

Solution: While it is sometimes tough to convince patients that cheaper isn't always better, this is less about cost and more about convenience for the patient. Online dispensing provides ways to purchase supplements online through a verified and trusted distributor. It doesn't require the hard work of finding the right products at a reasonable price. Refill reminders and home delivery also contribute to patient adherence to the full treatment protocol, which can often be 90 days or more.

Problem: Creating revenue from supplement sales and refills is too much work.

Solution: Two-thirds of practitioners are now seeking new revenue streams for their practice and for many holistic practitioners this revenue is essential.

Fullscript handles all the details while providing a variety of revenue options. The platform offers a new evolution of dispensary management by tracking in-house orders, as well as online revenue and re-orders. For example, practitioners can utilize online ordering of supplements for patients as much or as little as needed. They can also evaluate new items at wholesale without committing to large quantities. Automatic refill reminders help improve revenue from patient re-orders.

The system creates easy-to-understand sales and accounting reports to track the impact of this business on the practice. It even handles sales tax remittance, which can create a lot of work and headaches at tax time.

Problem: Online dispensaries are typically one-size-fits-all and are not HIPAA compliant.

Solution: An online dispensary platform like Fullscript offers a highly customizable approach to dispensing. Practitioners can:

- Choose from two business models: A for-profit account allows practitioners to select the margin on products sales based on their practice and patient needs; or a non-profit account that offers patients a discount of up to 10%.
- Select the look and feel of the landing page, add a logo, and choose preferred verbiage (say patients versus clients, prescriptions versus recommendations, as preferred or as required by state certification board).

- Personalize patient messages by adding instructions for a meal plan, notes from the appointment or attaching a workout routine. And it's all HIPAA compliant, so there's no need to worry about the safety of personal patient medical records.

Problem: In-office dispensaries create inventory challenges. It can be near impossible to balance a complete inventory and deal with expiring stock.

Solution: Many practitioners struggle with the logistics of dispensing. A good online supplement dispensary provides access to thousands of professional grade supplements and removes the need to carry extensive in-house inventory. Fullscript offers hundreds of the leading professional brands and thousands of their products. The platform makes it easy to find specific brands and products with an advanced search function that can filter products by type or condition, or more specifically by ingredients and categories, such as allergens, form, or excipient considerations. For practitioners who need a little help, the Fullscript medical team curates products to provide suggestions complete with manufacturer product support materials. Practitioners can then save favorites, so searching for the same products over and over again isn't necessary. Fullscript also offers the ability to create a template for commonly used protocols, such as gut health or a prenatal first visit, and a new adherence feature to address occasional vendor back-orders. In the case of a back-ordered or discontinued product, the system can offer a suitable solution giving practitioners the ability to choose the recommended alternative or select from a wider product group. Either way, the workflows and treatment plans are not interrupted.

Problem: Dealing with new technologies is more trouble than it's worth.

Solution: Yes, it does take time to learn a new technology, but electronic medical records are now an essential part of an efficient practice and effective patient care. An online dispensary that is capable of integrating with leading EMR platforms makes handling patient prescriptions easy and efficient; it can streamline workflows, communicate treatment plans and track patient protocols. Fullscript is on the cutting edge of functionality (designed and updated to ensure ease of use for both patient and practitioner). The system is simple to use and integrated with leading EMR platforms including CHARM, Practice Better, Power2Practice, and Cerbo. Prior to this integration, practitioners had to write a full protocol on their EMR and then duplicate that for patients to receive a prescription. Now, practitioners can do it all in one view—view and update the patient record, protocol, and supplement record, rather than jumping back and forth between platforms.



“I love being notified when patients refill their order and it’s wonderful to know that my patients are still compliant months after I have last seen them.

Dr. Vincent Pedre — MD

Why Fullscript is different

Fullscript is different from other online dispensaries because it was created with the input of a naturopathic physician, Dr. Alanna Dymont, and built from the ground up by a team of technical experts, including Alanna’s husband, Brad Dymont, and his friend and colleague Kyle Braatz. Together, they created a simple solution—a direct-to-patient model that connects top professional brands, practitioners, and patients together in one place and platform, changing the face of supplement dispensing. In order to turn this idea into a full-scale supplement dispensing platform that could assist practitioners across North America, Brad and Kyle brought in Chris Wise, who helped build the technical foundations of the concept.

From the beginning, the team was single-minded about creating simple software that focuses on the best supplement dispensing experience

for practitioners and their patients. By designing seamless software in-house, providing the best customer support in the industry, and bridging (but never replacing) supplier-to-practitioner relationships, Fullscript has provided a quality practice tool that is changing the way health and wellness is prescribed.

In 2018, Fullscript took this to a new level by merging with Natural Partners Inc., a leading wholesale supplement distributor. The combined company brings the best wholesale and fulfillment network in the nutritional supplement industry together with the premier online dispensing platform to create a more efficient, effective and innovative solution for integrative practitioners and patients who seek holistic solutions for wellness.

Setting up Fullscript is a simple 3-step process:

1. Fullscript is 100% free and easy to use—practitioners simply need to verify their credentials (providing information on their license, certificate and/or degree depending on practitioner type) and add a few details for payment.
2. Set up a customized shop: Choose a landing page to align with their practice branding; build a custom catalog of all carefully selected products and filter products based on format, dietary restrictions, strength, and other criteria to help narrow searches.
3. Start prescribing. Fullscript ensures that patients can find and purchase the products their practitioner selects for them by writing a virtual prescription and sending it to them via email or text message; the order is then shipped directly to the patient’s home. The Fullscript platform calculates the timing for refill based on the dosage instructions inputted by the practitioner, and when it’s time to refill, sends the patient a personalized refill reminder so they can easily reorder.



“Working with Fullscript has been great! The set up was fast and easy and I was up and running in just a few minutes.

Mona Morstein — ND

Fullscript’s mission is to make health care easier for everyone involved in that care, especially patients. The company works as a true partner to its practitioners by providing full technical support. It has also created a useful community for practitioners with ongoing insights into clinical developments, practice management, and product and ingredient education. The company offers turnkey tools to help practitioners assist their

patients in understanding the importance of protocol adherence and supplement quality and efficacy.

Every decision the Fullscript team makes, every new feature or service it develops is driven by this mission—to take the hassle out of integrative health care. Fullscript is continuously working toward a future that will take these services and platforms even further to deliver on this goal.

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