

Make Informed Choices, Convert More Patients

Augusta University Health employs a broad portfolio of marketing tools to drive growth for its neuroscience service line

Faced with budget cuts and increased demand for results, Augusta University Health turned to Healthgrades to help maintain and grow patient volume for neurosciences.

Situation

Based in Augusta, Georgia, home of the annual Masters golf tournament, Augusta University Health has a long-standing commitment to serving the needs of the community. Its history began 188 years ago, when the Medical Society of Augusta founded the Medical Academy of Georgia to address a need to train new physicians. Since then, the academy has taken on new roles and expanded its capabilities through new services and facilities, and a consistent focus on delivering comprehensive, systematic care. In the past six years, Augusta has evolved further through rebranding to better align the hospital with its mission and community. In 2015, in response to the needs of the community, the system (previously GRHealth) changed its name to Augusta University Health. This was done to acknowledge the academic medical center's unity with Augusta University and to highlight the advantages an academic hospital has in delivering better care and quality outcomes.

Augusta University Health operates in a very competitive healthcare market. Within a few miles of its main facility are numerous competing hospitals, each vying to attract patients to their physicians, specialty practices, and emergency rooms. To break through the multiple marketing messages being broadcast into the community, Augusta knew it needed a partner to help reach its audience cost-effectively while achieving strategic goals.

KEY GOALS:

1. Use lower-cost alternatives with higher return and measurement capabilities
2. Effectively target those patients most likely to need care
3. Measure campaign results



Augusta University Health is a not-for-profit corporation that manages the clinical operations associated with Augusta University.

- 478-bed Augusta University Health academic medical center
- 154-bed Children's Hospital of Georgia (region's only Level IV NICU)
- More than 80 outpatient practice sites
- Critical-care center housing Level I trauma center
- Over 4,000 employees

Program Key Results

CRM

- 345 new patients to neuroscience service line
- Over \$757,000 in contribution margin
- Percentage of new patients commercially insured grew from 50% to 60% since launch

Healthgrades Premium

- Over 343,000 searches for Augusta physicians
- Over 16,500 calls to call center
- 50% of calls transferred to physicians' offices

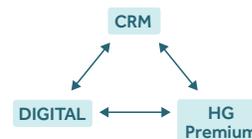
Digital

- 407,000 impressions
- Conversion rate higher than 3.8%
- 86 appointments

Strategy and Solution

Historically, Augusta University Health was perceived like many hospitals: referral-based with a reputation for indigent care, and a place where patients went only when gravely ill. Targeting of at-risk populations was virtually nonexistent, leaving payer mix and the health system's profitability profile to market forces.

In 2009, Augusta partnered with Healthgrades to meet the challenge of increasing profitability and delivering on strategic objectives. Augusta had evaluated several alternatives, but found the unique capabilities of the Healthgrades CRM solution



exceeded the competition. Once the decision was made to partner with Healthgrades, Augusta needed a smooth and successful implementation to ensure early-stage success. The Healthgrades implementation team aligned with the Augusta marketing team to allow the quality, depth, and breadth of Healthgrades data to shine through in their first campaign. This cemented the relationship and set the foundation for future growth.

Like most hospital systems, Augusta University Health employs a lean staff to deliver marketing programs with optimum results. Augusta also faces the challenge of needing to increase performance with ever-shrinking marketing budgets. Faced with budget cuts and a rising demand for results, Augusta teamed with Healthgrades to plan and execute campaigns using CRM and Healthgrades Premium (then known as Patient Direct Connect), as well as to implement strategies (direct mail, email, digital) to reach potential patients where they were. The Healthgrades portfolio helped Augusta align marketing initiatives with organizational priorities and achieve positive ROI and meet targets at their point of decision. Best of all, with the support of the Healthgrades team, Augusta was able to measure effectiveness of the implemented solutions, and this went a long way toward ensuring the support of executives, as well as physicians.

Insights

Augusta University Health System began its partnership with Healthgrades by implementing customer relationship management (CRM), but evolved into using Healthgrades Premium, as well as digital outreach strategies.

CRM

Healthgrades CRM provides a robust tool for Augusta to use to understand its market, along with the potential alignment with its specialties and ancillary services. The data powering CRM includes client data, third-party data, behavioral data, and data supplied by Healthgrades. The solution looks over a three-year time horizon to identify the most attractive market segments for targeting. This insight allows the user to visualize results and use real-time analytics to quickly identify service line opportunities. These sources provide the foundation for the Healthgrades solution, which Augusta used to identify the opportunity for neurological services. Once the opportunity was identified, Augusta was able to specifically target those customers most likely to need its services, thus lowering the marketing investment required to reach the right consumers.



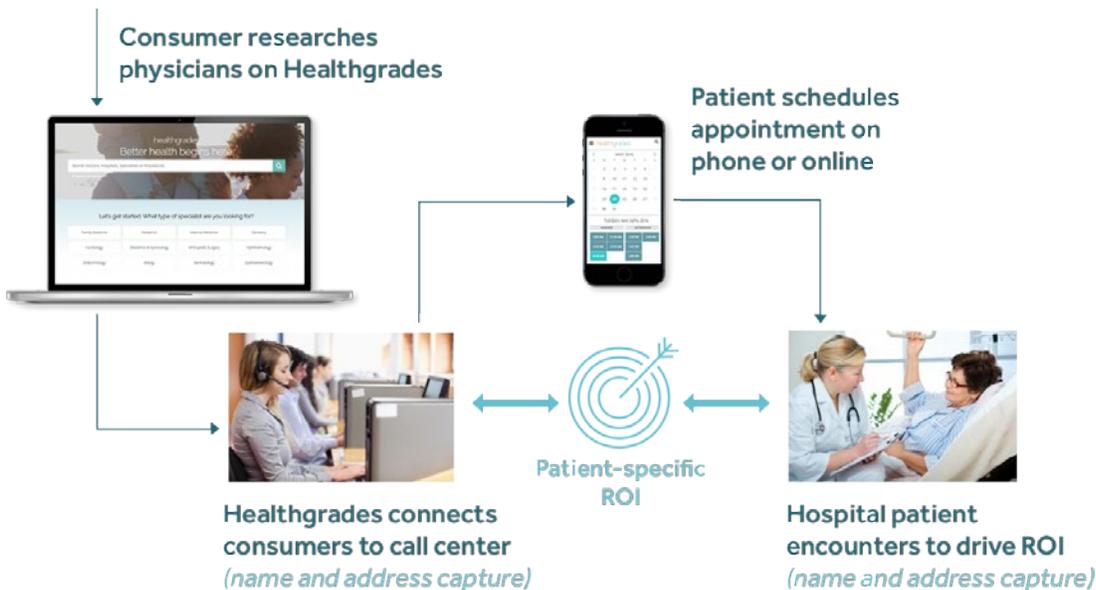
HEALTHGRADES PREMIUM

Another Healthgrades tool that Augusta has leveraged is Healthgrades Premium, formerly known as Patient Direct Connect. Featured listings placement for physicians is one of the key features of Healthgrades Premium. When consumers come to healthgrades.com looking for a physician to book an appointment with, Healthgrades presents that consumer with choices of other physicians who fit the consumer’s needs. These featured choices represent an intercept opportunity that results in an average 4% conversion rate for consumers who would have otherwise chosen another doctor. This unique intercept helps Augusta capture patients who would have set appointments with the competition, driving an increase in online physician searches, calls, and appointments — all resulting in higher contribution margin.

Additionally, consumer calls are routed through a call center that helps connect the consumer with their physician selection. As part of this process, the call center agent captures demographic information, including name and address, that allows matching of Healthgrades Premium calls to patient encounters and associated revenue, helping Augusta identify specific revenue streams.

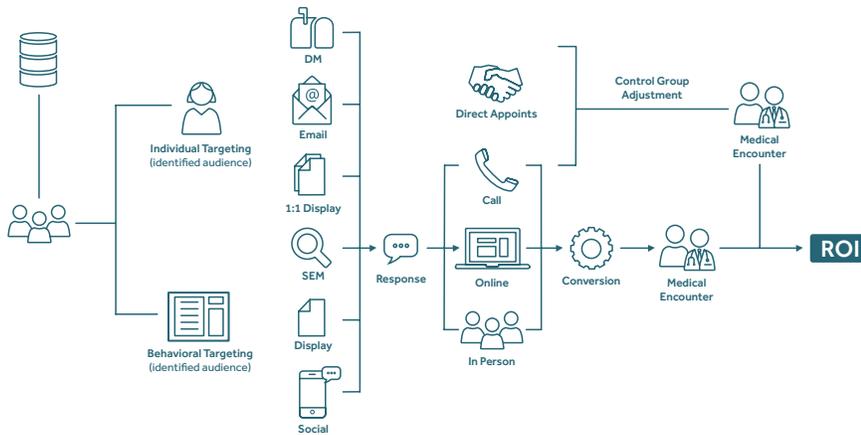
Augusta University Health Firsts

- First treatment of documented sickle-cell disease
- First hysterectomy performed in the U.S.



DIGITAL

In addition to traditional methods of learning about their health and potential providers, consumers are increasingly turning to online sources. Healthgrades digital marketing has been an effective tool for Augusta in deploying scarce marketing dollars. The solution suite for Augusta flows seamlessly from consumers searching for healthcare information on healthgrades.com, to online appointment scheduling, to hospital solutions that enable providers to target at-risk populations and measure results of their marketing efforts. This integrated use of digital data helps Augusta continually increase online impressions, conversion rates, and appointments.



Results

By using the Healthgrades solution in concert with its HG account team, Augusta University Health identified neurosciences as a strategically important, profitable service line with available capacity. The Augusta marketing team built programs to support their efforts to reach potential patients encompassing traditional and digital marketing methods. Using traditional marketing, Augusta has brought in 345 new patients to neuroscience, who have generated \$757,000 in contribution margin. To date, the Healthgrades Premium program has produced 343,000 searches for Augusta physicians, over 16,500 calls to the call center, and over 8,300 transfers of calls to physician offices (50% transfer-to-call rate). The digital program has produced quantifiable results as well. This portion of the neuroscience campaign covered multiple channels — including pay-per-click, display, organic, and direct — and generated 407,000 impressions, a conversion rate of 3.87%, and 86 appointments.

Conclusion

Augusta University Health was able to solve the problem of identifying a market opportunity and developing a plan to penetrate it by partnering with Healthgrades. The suite of tools that Healthgrades offers enabled Augusta to attract new customers to a profitable service line — one that aligns with its strategic goals. Prior to partnering with Healthgrades, Augusta was unable to effectively target segments of the community that were commercially viable. The new capabilities that Healthgrades provides enhance the health system's ability to reach consumers and deliver on the promise of caring for the community that began nearly 200 years ago.

To learn more about how Healthgrades solutions can engage and align patients and physicians, call **855.254.6519** or visit **healthgrades.com/crm**

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