

AI-Driven Automation

Boosting Patient Retention and Bottom Line Success at Dermatology Practices

A multi-practice case study on automated patient reactivation, improved follow-up adherence, and operational efficiency at scale.



Every empty appointment slot in your dermatology practice represents more than lost revenue. It could be a melanoma screening that didn't happen, an isotretinoin patient missing their monthly monitoring, or a psoriasis patient lapsing on biologic therapy. The clinical and financial risks are real: research shows only [28% of post-melanoma](#) patients remain consistent with annual skin checks. Yet most practices focus their marketing dollars on acquiring new patients, while an estimated 80% of revenue opportunity sits in their existing patient base.

There is a better way. Three dermatology practice leaders share how AI-powered patient reactivation transformed their operations, delivering ROI in 30 days or less.

Prioritizing Patients

Yes, practices are seeing an ROI with Bonsai Health in the first month in many cases. But first and foremost, let's focus on your patients — especially those at higher risk for worse outcomes. Are you making sure they come in for timely follow-ups?

“We've got patients walking around unaware that they need to be seen. Skin cancer and skin diseases are one of the most treatable conditions in medicine. And it's important that we catch these things on time and early,” says Trent Renta, Chief Operating Officer at Olansky Dermatology & Aesthetics in Atlanta. “And there's a liability risk for sure. If you miss one of these melanoma patients, that creates a huge liability for the practice.”

Some patients need monitoring every 3 months or every 6 months. “But even delaying patient care for 6 to 12 months can have catastrophic effects on some people,” Renta adds.

Before partnering with Bonsai Health, Brandon Wells, Executive Director of Operations at DSH: Dermatology & Skin Health in Dover, New Hampshire, had to prioritize efforts to retain and reactivate patients manually. Staff focused on cancer patients first but also tried to engage people overdue for a consultation.

“We were pretty much always playing catch-up,” Wells says.

And even when they did reach out to thousands of patients at a time, their EHR was unable to sort out those patients who already had a future appointment. “Let's say we contacted 9,000 people.

Practice Snapshot

Olansky Dermatology & Aesthetics

19 Providers

115 Staff members

4 Locations

Leadership

Trent Renta
Chief Operating Officer

Treatments

General dermatology, surgery, and aesthetics

“We were pretty much always playing catch-up,” Wells says. And even when they did reach out to thousands of patients at a time, their EHR was unable to sort out those patients who already had a future appointment. “Let’s say we contacted 9,000 people. Well, 4,500 of those could already have appointments that I’m sending mailers to or reaching out to, and the system didn’t know that.”

Switching to an AI-driven retention platform allowed Olansky Dermatology & Aesthetics to prioritize patients beyond the highest risk. Tracking the practice’s 30,000 active patients can be challenging without augmentation from AI, Renta adds. “In today’s world, it’s easy to forget about preventative care. But it’s super important in dermatology,” Renta says. “We want to be able to focus in on every type of patient, from acne to psoriasis to those with skin cancer.”

Tracking existing patients more closely makes sense, says Jonathan Banta, CEO of The 44 Group, a comprehensive healthcare consulting firm in Dallas and leader of a dermatology Executive Roundtable. During his tenure running dermatology practices, “I would track total patient encounters every month for the last decade, and out of those patient encounters, I can see that 20% of those patients were new patient acquisition.” Efforts to attract new patients were costly, including money spent on advertising.

In contrast, “Bonsai communicates with the 80% of patients who are already in your practice,” Banta adds. “It’s much easier to maintain that and less costly to do so than going to get new patients.”

Going it Yourself?

Even if you recognize that 80% of revenue comes from existing patients, many practices try to handle their own retention at first. It might be possible for a smaller practice to manually control the process, Renta says. “But when you’re seeing upwards of 400 patients a day at multiple practice sites, it quickly becomes untenable.”

Prior to launching with Bonsai Health, Joe Atzenbeck, Chief Executive Officer and Administrator at The Clinic for Dermatology & Wellness in Medford, Oregon, assigned an educated and experienced staff member to manually track patient engagement and retention full time. This effort lasted just one month.

Practice Snapshot

DSH: Dermatology & Skin Health

19 Providers

86 Staff members

8 Locations

Leadership

Brandon Wells

Executive Director of Operations

Treatments

General dermatology, Mohs surgery, and cosmetic procedures

*“That process of running a report manually and managing that report manually was an incredible burden. That was really, quite frankly, **unachievable** by a human doing it full time.”*



Joe Atzenbeck, CEO
The Clinic for Dermatology & Wellness

At around the same time, Atzenbeck learned what Bonsai Health had to offer at a major tech conference. “I liked their pitch because it was exactly what I was trying to do.”

Without Bonsai Health now, it would take a minimum of 5 full-time staff people to achieve the same successful patient retention, Atzenbeck estimates. “I’d have to have a full call center doing this.” Asked the same question, Renta estimates he would have to pay the salaries for a dozen full-time employees to attain the same level of patient retention for a practice the size of Olansky Dermatology & Aesthetics.

ROI Is King

With the former vendor reaching out to patients, The Clinic for Dermatology & Wellness had an 11% rate for patients to respond to reminders and book an appointment. When they switched to Bonsai Health, that rate doubled. “That level of ROI is staggering,” Atzenbeck says.

The Clinic for Dermatology & Wellness recouped its initial investment with Bonsai Health within the first month. Atzenbeck adds, “That’s just shocking to me.”

That’s not the only practice seeing this kind of return. Seven dermatology practices participating in the Executive Roundtable each saw Bonsai Health’s platform pay for itself in the first 30 days. In addition, “the practices are all getting 30 times to 40 times the return on that investment,” Banta says.

Practice Snapshot

The Clinic for Dermatology & Wellness, LLC

5 Providers

29 Staff members

2 Locations

Leadership

Joe Atzenbeck, CEO

Treatments

General dermatology, Mohs surgery

AI Automation Allows for Customization

An AI-driven patient retention platform replaces the Dear [Patient Name] generic reminders. The AI system sorts patients by priority, contacts them using a proven cadence that reminds but does not annoy, and tailors messages so they are more meaningful to people and their dermatologic condition.

“It’s not just ‘you’re late.’ It is more like, ‘Hey, one in five people get skin cancer. Make sure you come back in for your skin check,’” Wells says.

Renta agrees this is a more effective approach. “A practice that is actively engaging their patients with information about their health care will come off as caring. Obviously, this helps us on the revenue side as well, but the primary objective is to make certain that patients are well taken care of and not missing their skin exams.”

“Patients literally come in my door and tell my providers: ‘Thank you so very much for letting me know that this was a concern for me. It got my attention, and I made sure that this was a priority for me,’” Atzenbeck says. “We don’t hear those types of comments ever. To have a patient say thank you is just unheard of in medicine.” Renta adds, “If you’re not utilizing Bonsai, it’s a failure for your patients.”

Contact Frequency: Not Too Little, Not Too Much

There is a science behind the number of reminders that are effective without over-contacting patients. Bonsai Health uses this data-driven strategy for reminder frequency.

They also inform patients across different modalities — email, text, and eventually AI voice. “It gets the patient’s attention in the way the patient prefers to communicate,” Atzenbeck says. It also keeps their health and wellness top of mind until they respond.

Before Bonsai Health, Renta was concerned about overdoing it. “I didn’t want to see people massively unsubscribe just because of the amount of touch points we were doing.”

Practice Snapshot

Pure Medspa

3 Providers

11 Staff members

1 Location

Leadership

Joe Atzenbeck
Chief Executive Officer

Treatments

Aesthetic dermatology

That is no longer a worry for Renta or for Wells, who said before Bonsai Health about 2% of his patients complained about being reminded too often. “Some patients get really worked up about it,” Wells says. “The last thing we want is for people to think we don’t know what we’re doing, in a way, or to leave us a bad Google review.” “Since it’s been all Bonsai, I haven’t had a single complaint,” Wells adds.

Setting the Stage to Scale Up

Even if your practice is getting by, spending enough staff and practice time and resources to keep up with manual patient retention now, what happens when you expand? If that is the case, you’re not preparing for success.

“We’re definitely in a growth phase here. Operations that we do here have to be scalable,” Renta says. “There is no way that any clinic can see the number of patients that we’re seeing ... could keep up with their entire patient population without something like Bonsai augmenting them.”

Dermatology & Skin Health, likewise, is expanding, having opened three new sites in the past year, with plans for more in 2026. Scaling up with Bonsai Health as a partner is reassuring, Wells adds, because “I know all these new patients are tracked successfully.”

It wasn’t scaling up that tested Dermatology & Skin Health’s retention strategy; it was seven providers out of 19 taking maternity or paternity leave in 2025. As a practice with 68,000 active patients, having AI assistance was critical. “We actually ended up increasing our patient visits from 2024 to the end of 2025,” Wells says. “We went up an additional 13%, despite having almost half of our providers out 12 weeks at a time.”

The True Cost of DIY Patient Retention

Before Bonsai Health, Wells might have run a campaign to get existing acne patients to come in for an appointment. That cost about \$50,000, but again his old system did not account for people already scheduled, which could be as much as half the patients. The amount he saved by using Bonsai Health to target the messaging more precisely saved his practice enough money to cover the annual cost of the software. And the acne campaign is just one of 15 campaigns.

The automation and precision afforded with Bonsai Health's AI-driven system replaced "an antiquated Excel spreadsheet we were using to keep track of these patients," Renta says. Because tracking patients is dynamic and can change moment to moment, he adds, it left a blind spot on scheduling. "We didn't know the patients that scheduled that day but a week later canceled for whatever reason. We didn't know to follow up with this person because we had them marked as scheduled for the future."

"There's just simply no way to make a spreadsheet as efficient as what Bonsai is doing," he adds.

How Bonsai Health Boosts Retention and Satisfaction

Dermatology & Skin Health, depending on the provider, sees 42 to 50 patients per provider per day. So going with Bonsai Health was a natural move. “We had as much as a 7% to 8% what I call total capacity loss rate or open spots on the schedule. Now, it's down to about 2%,” Wells says.

With Bonsai Health, the practice's skin screening reactivations have a 10.5% conversion rate. Before, the rate was approximately 2%. In addition, the cancellation and no-show rates before Bonsai Health were about 7%, and their reactivation rate ranged from 1% to 2%.

Why Choose Bonsai Health?

“It is the easiest lift by far to install Bonsai, with the biggest impact,” Renta says. “And the outcomes are significant — both patient outcomes and increased revenue.”

Wells agrees and endorses Bonsai Health compared to other vendors in the industry. “There's nothing else out there. There are a lot of people that say they can do it, and there are companies out there that will say they are the cream of the crop with proven data.” However, he adds, “I've talked to those companies and they're built on stilts. They're built on old platforms and are not utilizing modern technology.”

As time- and labor-saving as the Bonsai Health platform is, Wells chose to go with the company because of its leadership. “When I met with them, they were very truthful and honest with the data.” Wells came to the meeting prepared, fully aware of his own practice numbers. “It wasn't embellished versus other companies that came in and told me grand numbers that I knew never even existed.”

Bonsai has the right intent behind it and the direct involvement of their co-founders, which makes it a success on behalf of their clients, Atzenbeck says. “We don't just pick a vendor because they have some cool technology. We picked them because of the ongoing relationship and the ability to dynamically modify their product over time. As the industry continues to change, that's great.”

Testimonials

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Joe Atzenbeck, CEO
The Clinic for Dermatology & Wellness

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