



The Next Frontier for Pharma

Buckle Up: 2019 is Going to be a Year of Transformation



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This time of year is typically filled with white papers and blog posts predicting the next big trend for the year ahead. And while I don't think 2019 is the year of virtual reality—although artificial intelligence (AI) will further establish its foothold—I do think it is going to be a year of transformation in healthcare. The past few years [have laid the groundwork](#), and I think the stars are starting to align.

As we enter into the new year, healthcare delivery is in the midst of rapid upheaval because digital transformation is sweeping the industry. Telehealth is going mainstream; data strategy is empowering novel brand strategies; and AI solutions are accelerating diagnostics, improving treatment outcomes, and increasing patient adherence.

But what has me most excited are the emerging and evolving therapeutic and treatment categories that will continue to grow in 2019 and beyond. These emerging categories are big—with even bigger potential for growth. This sort of potential hasn't been seen since the launch of new diabetes treatments over 5 years ago.

Take, for example, cannabidiol (more familiarly known as CBD). CBD products are expected to show the single largest market increase since the tech boom of the 2000s. As recently as 2014, CBD consumer sales barely topped \$100 million. In 2020, it is estimated that CBD consumer sales will total around \$1.15 billion¹, largely due to a growing demand for therapeutic cannabis products.

And NASH? A virtually non-existent liver disease category today, Non-Alcoholic SteatoHepatitis treatment will top \$21 billion globally by 2025.²

The NASH drug pipeline is loaded with dozens of potential treatments for the tens of millions of diagnosed and undiagnosed Americans.

Because these growing categories impact so many patients and healthcare providers (HCPs), they have the potential to truly redefine the healthcare experience across the board.

What can you expect when you combine unprecedented innovation in mass therapeutic categories with unparalleled transformation in the digital healthcare supply chain? An exciting year ahead.

2019 is going to be a year of transformation in healthcare.



So, what should we keep our eye on as the year unfolds for these major category launches? There are **3 key factors** that will be vital to the successful launch of NASH and CBD brands. And these same factors can be applied to any brand that enters this transformative landscape:

1

Coverage and Access

Navigating patient access in new and evolving markets is always fraught with challenges. However, for categories like therapeutic CBD and NASH, it's the key to success. And while each have unique market opportunities, we see 2 primary indicators of success to watch for in 2019 when it comes to patient access. First, note how early access evolves and which therapies establish themselves as front-line favorites. Second, keep a close eye on how drug manufacturers expedite the time until the start of treatment by automating and digitizing the prior authorization and approval process. Both factors can lead to brands establishing unique experiences in competitive categories.

2

Target Audience Identification

With large emerging categories like NASH, one of the most critical differentiators for early launch success will be identifying the largest, most strategic HCP and patient segments and activating those segments with targeted communications. The number of people currently looking for information about NASH is small, but the number potentially affected by this type of liver disease is large—which means brands will need to work harder to segment their audiences and develop a strategic targeting strategy to set them apart from the competition. The category famously ran into recruitment issues across

dozens of clinical trials due to the challenges in finding a significant volume of patients under specialist care. In 2019, as market development efforts ramp up for NASH, it will be important to understand how brands differ in their gastro/hepatologist and patient profiling, and how they use non-traditional data partnerships to drive more efficient identification.

3

Delivery Differentiation

At the beginning of 2018, telehealth services were a novelty, increasing in use but still not quite mainstream. We close the year knowing that these services are no longer optional. As we start 2019, virtual care services will be widely supported by most major insurance plans and hospital systems. Will CBD and NASH provide the opportunity for pharma companies to integrate telehealth services into their drug launches? There's no denying telehealth has become a powerful resource that enables the distribution of healthcare delivery, and it's the perfect vehicle to circumvent some of the category challenges that launch brands will face in 2019, such as patient access, affordable care, geographic disparity, and treatment urgency. It's highly likely we'll see the CBD category rely heavily on virtual health services for both diagnostics and prescribing. NASH brands can also benefit from the delivery of connected, coordinated care that telehealth services offer in order to activate a stagnant patient population.

2019 is sure to be an exciting year ahead, and Evoke will be there for all the twists and turns along the way! If you want to start a conversation about transformational opportunities for your brand in 2019, reach out today.

This is the second article in a three-part series about business transformation in healthcare from Britt Thompson, EVP, Business Transformation. The business landscape is shifting quickly, and we want to help you compete, innovate, and grow. For more, see [The Digitization of Healthcare the Industry](#).

1. Total U.S. cannabidiol (CBD) consumer sales from 2014 to 2022 (in million U.S. dollars). <https://www.statista.com/statistics/760498/total-us-cbd-sales>.

2. Nonalcoholic Steatohepatitis (NASH) Market Size is Projected to be Around US\$ 20.0 Billion By 2025. <https://www.marketwatch.com/press-release/nonalcoholic-steatohepatitis-nash-market-size-is-projected-to-be-around-us-200-billion-by-2025-2018-06-27>.