

Navigating the Healthcare System: Advocating for yourself & your loved one

Amanda Yanzek, LCSW
Center for Healthy Aging

September 11, 2024

MARIST

CLS Presentation



TODAY'S AGENDA

- How to find the right providers
- Effective Communication Strategies
- Advocating for your needs
- Managing your team (Primary & Specialty Care)
- Understanding Advance Directives
- Questions?

Finding Healthcare Professionals

- Increasingly difficult to establish care with new providers in a reasonable amount of time.
- Combination of Factors: ¹
 - Staffing Shortage
 - Healthcare Organizations struggling with expenses
 - Population Growth & Aging
 - Rural areas really suffering

THE HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS WHO LEFT THE WORKFORCE FROM 2021 THROUGH 2022

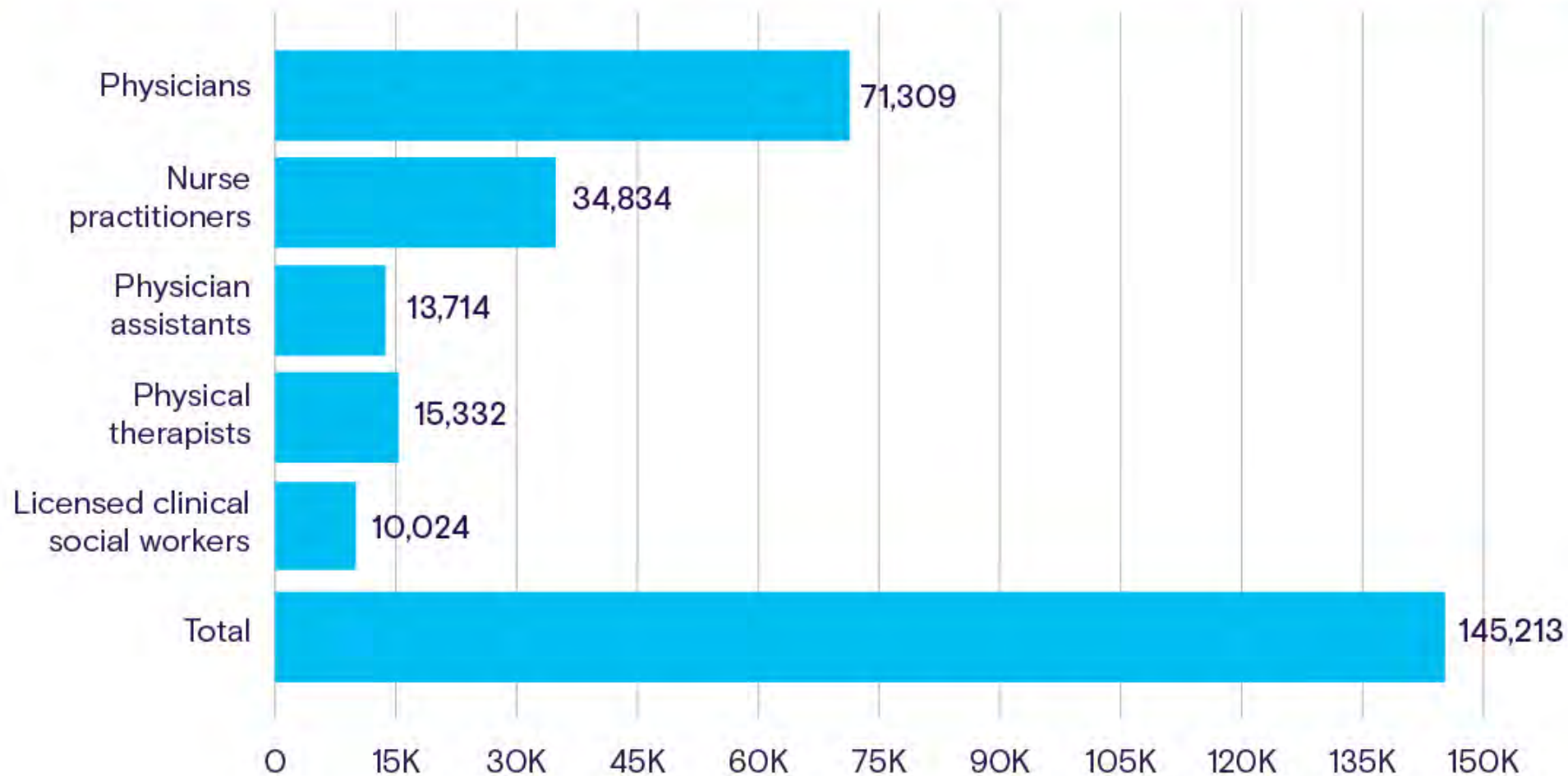


Fig. 1 Analysis of data from Definitive Healthcare's [Atlas All-Payor Claims](#) and [PhysicianView](#) products. Data sourced from a stable panel of billing organizations from Q1 2021 through Q1 2023. Physicians deemed as dropped out practiced in 2021 and ceased activity by Q4 of 2022. Some providers may still be practicing, but not filing claims. Data accessed September 2023.

PEOPLE 65 YEARS AND OLDER (MILLIONS)

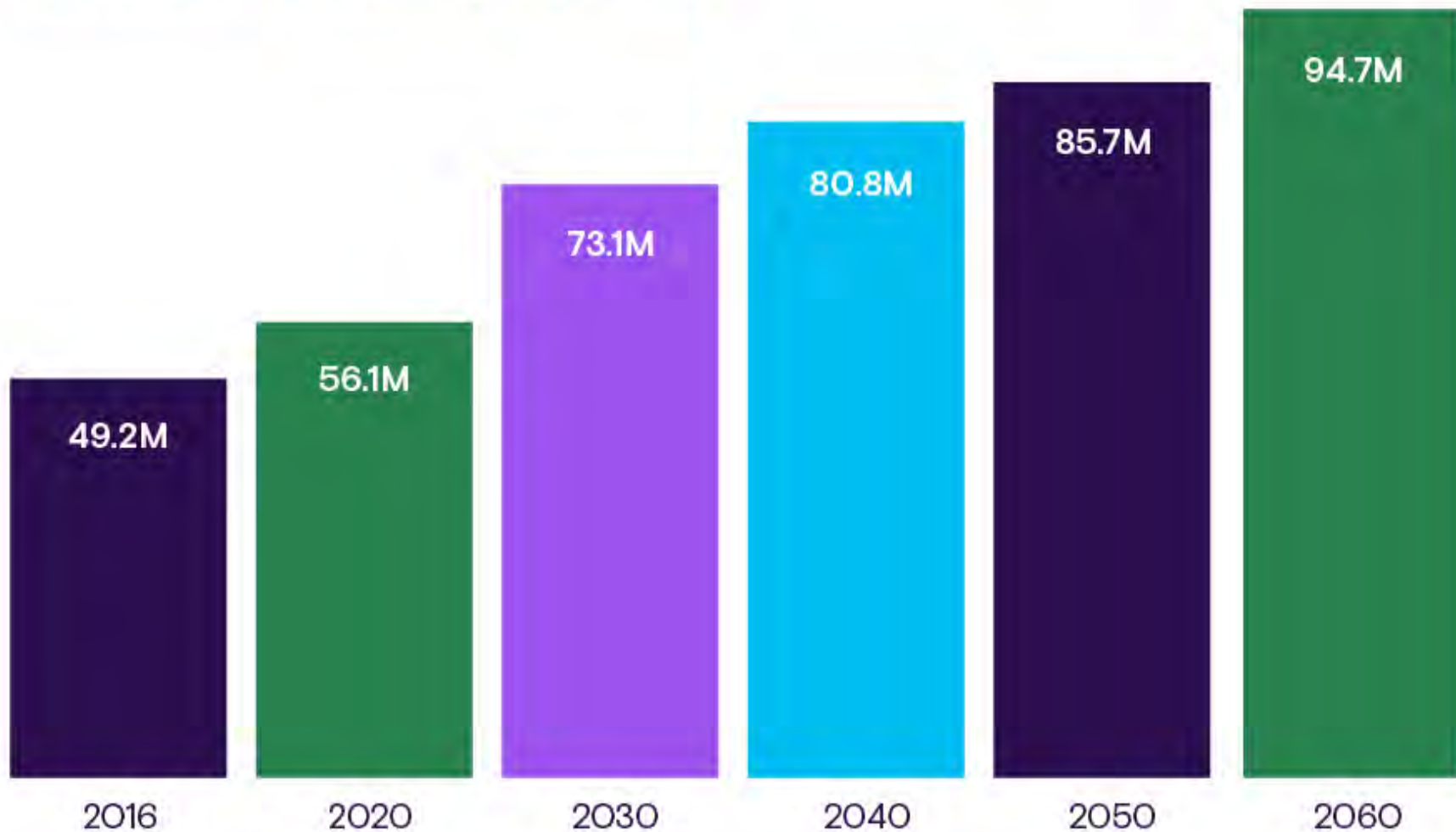


Fig. 4 Data is sourced from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 National Population Projections.

Where to look?

- Online Directories: Healthgrades, Zoc Doc, Vitals
- Insurance Networks (Confirm with Medical Practice)
- Word of Mouth (friends, family, nextdoor apps, HV Magazine Top Docs)



Preparing for the Appointment

BRING:

- An updated med list including dosages and frequency
- Documentation (recent test results, scans, visit notes from other providers)
- Copy of your Health Care Proxy & MOLST
- Organized list of questions

Questions for the list:²

- What could be causing my symptoms?
- What tests will I need to dx my condition?
- Do I have an official dx?
- What are my tx options?
- What are the risks vs benefits of each option?
- How long is tx? Side effects?
- Is this conservative or aggressive?
- What meds are you prescribing and what do they do?
- Any lifestyles changes to make?
- Where can I find reliable info about my condition?
- Is this acute or chronic?
- What should I do if my symptoms get worse?
- How should I take these meds?
- Any interactions with current meds?
- What can I do at home to manage symptoms?

You're there...now what?

- Be honest & open
- Provide accurate info about your health, lifestyle, and any difficulties you're facing (You want your doc to understand your circumstances. They need to know the whole story).³
- Don't hesitate to discuss sensitive issues even if it's embarrassing. It can matter and affect the course of tx.

You're there...cont'd ⁴

- Review your med list with the provider. Talk about changes/possible side effects.
- Ensure clarity on treatment plans and next steps.
- Request written summaries/instructions for future reference.
- Schedule follow up & review any referrals (Specialists, Physical therapy).

Communication between providers

This is never easy & you're the one stuck in the middle.

So, what can you do about it?

Be Prepared & Ready to Take Action⁵

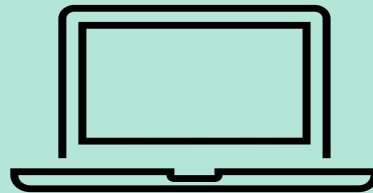
- Bring documentation (recent test results, scans, labs, visit notes).
- Review new meds that other providers may have prescribed.
- Ensure your PCP receives all reports from Specialists.

Be Prepared & Ready to Take Action

cont'd₅

- Make sure you come prepared with full names & contact info of all providers.
- Ask providers to communicate (sounds simple enough, but...)

EMBRACE THE PORTAL!!!



You will gain access to:

- Clinical notes from office visits
- Med Lists
- Test/Procedure Results (bloodwork, x-rays, MRIs, ultrasounds, EKG, path reports)
- Immunization Records
- Upcoming Appts
- Providers



Requesting your medical records is as easy as 1-2-3

Complete a request from your smartphone, tablet or computer – anytime from anywhere!

1 Access patient request

Go to nuvancehealth.org or scan the QR code

- Click Patients and Visitors
- Click Patient Portals and Medical Records



2 Complete online request

You'll be guided through every step of the process

3 Review + sign + submit request

You're done!

Your records are delivered right to you – no need to go and pick them up!



Electronic delivery

You'll get an email with instructions for retrieving your records. To keep them secure, you'll need a PIN that is sent in a separate email.



Mail delivery

Records will be mailed to the address you entered in the request.

Questions? (203) 739-7218

TTY: (800) 842-9710

Medical record services provided by **datavant**

Understanding Healthcare Directives



- **Health Care Proxy (HCP)**
- **Living Will**
- **MOLST**
- **Power of Attorney (POA)**

Health Care Proxy:

A legal document that allows you to appoint someone you trust- a health care agent- to make health care decisions on your behalf if you are no longer able to do so.⁶

- Simple to complete- only need your signature and that of 2 witnesses.
- The person you appoint should know about it!
- Talk to your HCP about your wishes.
- Make copies for yourself, your HCP, and medical providers.
- List of Surrogates comes into play if you don't appoint an agent before losing capacity.

List of Surrogates includes:⁷

- Guardian
- Spouse or domestic partner
- Son or daughter, age 18 +
- Parent
- Siblings, age 18 +
- Actively involved close friend, age 18 +

You can find an HCP form at:

<https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/1430.pdf>

Living Will:

A document that provides specific instructions about your health care decisions prior to becoming ill/incapacitated.⁸

- Only becomes effective if you have a terminal illness or are at EOL and you can't make your own decisions.
- Helps your HCP.
- Not a physician's order like a MOLST but a clear guide about wishes.
- Requires your signature & 2 witnesses.

A Living Will addresses:

- Cardiac resuscitation
- Mechanical Respiration
- Artificial Nutrition & Hydration
- Use of Antibiotics

You can find a living will form at:

<https://ag.ny.gov/sites/default/files/livingwill-template-fillin.pdf>

MOLST

(Medical Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment)

- Signed Physician Order that records your wishes regarding various medical interventions
- Traveling document that goes with you to whatever setting you're in (home, hospital, rehab)
- Hot Pink so it's visible in emergency situations

Appropriate for the following:⁹

- Terminal Conditions
- Nursing Home Residents
- One or more chronic conditions with a poor prognosis
- Two or more unplanned hospital admissions in the last 2 mos along with increased frailty & decreased functioning

The form covers:

- Resuscitation Status
- Respiratory Support
- Future Hospitalizations
- Artificial Hydration/Nutrition
- Use of Antibiotics
- Dialysis

Some thoughts:

- Don't feel pressured to complete it too quickly
- This might require more than one conversation with your provider
- It's not written in stone-your provider should review it with you periodically
- If someone lacks capacity, then their appointed HCP can complete it

You can find a MOLST form at:

<https://www.health.ny.gov/forms/doh-5003.pdf>

Power of Attorney:

Legal document that allows you, “the principal” to appoint an “agent” to act for you regarding financial matters.

POA can be used to grant any of the following:¹⁰

- Buy or sell your real estate
- Manage your property
- Conduct your banking transactions
- Invest your money
- Make legal claims & file lawsuits on your behalf
- Manage your tax and retirement matters

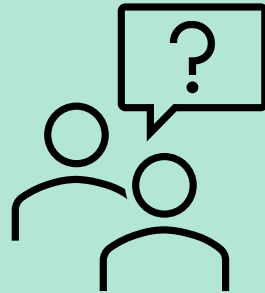
POA is:

- Used to plan for one's future incapacity or disability
- Must be completed while you still have capacity
- Does not require a lawyer
- Requires 2 witnesses plus a notary for both the principal and agent's signature

You can find a POA form at:

<https://nysba.org/products/power-of-attorney-2021-word/>

QUESTIONS?



Helpful Websites:

<https://www.nuvancehealth.org/locations/the-center-for-healthy-aging>

<https://compassionandsupport.org/>

<https://ag.ny.gov/publications/advance-directives>

Endnotes

¹Definitive Healthcare Report-Addressing the Healthcare Staffing Shortage. (2023). Retrieved August 19, 2024 from definitivehc.com

²Text generated by ChatGPT, Open AI, May 29, 2024, <https://chat.openai.com/chat>.

³Maissel, Gerda (2024). Invisible Life Challenges: When Doctors Miss the Life Circumstances of the Person in Front of Them. Retrieved 8/2/24 from The Foglight Issue #12. mymdadvisor.com

⁴ National Institute on Aging. (2020) How to Prepare for Your Doctor's Appointment. Retrieved 8/20/24 from <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/medical-care-and-appointments>

⁵ Text generated by ChatGPT, OpenAI, May 29, 2024, <https://chat.openai.com/chat>.

⁶NY Public Health Law section 2991. See United States Code title 42, 1395cc(f)

⁷Family Health Care Decisions Act section 2994-d. Article 29-CC of Public Health Law.

⁸Health Care Proxy Form. NYS Dept of Health, 2022, <https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/1430.pdf>

⁹Is MOLST Right for You. (2024). Compassion & Support. Retrieved 8/30/24 from <https://molst.org/how-to-complete-a-molst>

¹⁰Advance Directives: Making Your Wishes Known & Honored. (2024). Office of the NYS Attorney General. Retrieved 8/30/24 from ag.ny.gov/publications/advance-directives