

## ProviderMatch for Consumers & Search Engine Optimization

### Introduction

While the number of digital marketing strategies needed to stay competitive online is growing rapidly, organic search continues to be a huge source of traffic for health systems. Research shows that over half of all consumers look online for information about providers, with 59% of online consumers reporting that they start their search in a search engine.<sup>1</sup> To capture these consumers, it is critical for health systems to optimize their presence in search engines, known as search engine optimization (SEO). ProviderMatch for Consumers plays a critical role in SEO, and this document aims to help our customers get the most out of their solution. Topics include:

- SEO Overview
- How ProviderMatch boosts health systems' SEO for organic Google searches
- Best practices to further improve search engine rankings
- Tactics and tools for measuring impact

### ProviderMatch for Consumers and New Patient Acquisition

As marketers aim to increase patient acquisition and connect patients with the care they need within the network, SEO is a key tactic for attracting online consumers. However, inaccurate or incomplete data impedes the effectiveness of find-a-providers for both patient acquisition and demand conversion. For example, if a provider has availability, but a health system's website does not reflect this, online consumers may seek care elsewhere—potentially outside of the network. ProviderMatch supports patient acquisition by offering an:

- ✓ **Accurate digital provider catalog** to attract consumers searching for care and help them find the right providers for their needs and preferences. Centralized provider data management makes it easy for key stakeholders to update information in an ongoing way.
- ✓ **Ability to improve search engine rankings** for your find-a-provider site and provider profile pages. ProviderMatch supports key SEO tactics out-of-the-box,

such as rich metadata and dynamic page titles, so you can focus on digital marketing campaigns to further boost SEO.

- ✓ **Ability to boost web traffic** from organic searches on leading search engines. ProviderMatch supports rich features proven to drive search engine clicks, such as the ability to include patient ratings and reviews in the search engine result meta descriptions, and rich patient demand analytics to track website activity.

What's more, a strong online presence helps to retain patients long-term: modern, branded interactions that will keep your health system top of mind when future care needs arise.

## SEO Overview

SEO encompasses several methods—both technical and creative—to increase awareness about your website for search engines, improve search engine rankings, and drive traffic to your site. A high ranking in search engines is critical for new patient acquisition, particularly in competitive markets. In fact, 40% of online users click the first link in a Google search, while 9/10 users do not go beyond the first page of Google results<sup>2</sup>.

SEO has many components, from page load times to the number of websites that link to yours. As you plan your SEO strategy, keep in mind that every consumer search is driven by intent—to find, learn, solve, buy, treat, fix, or understand. Search engines aim to fulfill that intent and use content in your website to understand if you meet the consumers' search inquiries. To serve consumers the most suitable content for their search, search engines look for two key things in a website: relevance and authority.

- **Relevance** is how close a page's content is to a search phrase, such as a cardiology page appearing in a search for "cardiologists near me."
- **Authority** measures the site's credibility. For example, a page can gain credibility with search engines if several sites link to it.

To meet these criteria, health systems must invest in digital strategies to become the go-to source for provider information in your area.

## How ProviderMatch Enhances SEO

Kyruus has developed best practices surrounding SEO based on industry knowledge of consumer behavior and successful ProviderMatch implementations. These learnings are incorporated into the product and support higher search engine rankings in the following ways:

### **ProviderMatch as a Sub-Domain**

While Kyruus hosts ProviderMatch, the consumer-facing website is embedded into a health system's website through a sub-domain (e.g., *www.doctors.healthsystem.org* as a sub-domain of *healthsystem.org*), and can boost authority to your main website.

### **301 Redirects**

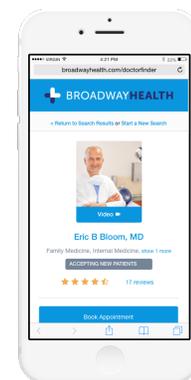
A 301 redirect is a permanent redirect from an old website to a new one, helping to maintain a website's old search engine ranking power to the redirected page. During a ProviderMatch implementation, Kyruus works with the health system to set up 301 redirects from its prior find-a-provider to the new ProviderMatch site, including provider profile pages.

### **Page Content**

Provider profiles are designed to make it easy for consumers to hone in on key information and leverage headers and tabs to help search engines understand the content on the page. For example, ProviderMatch uses page headers for the criteria that consumers care most about, such as "Insurances Accepted," by tagging the header with an `<h>` html tag. This helps search engines readily match the contents of the page to consumers' searches.

### **Mobile Responsiveness**

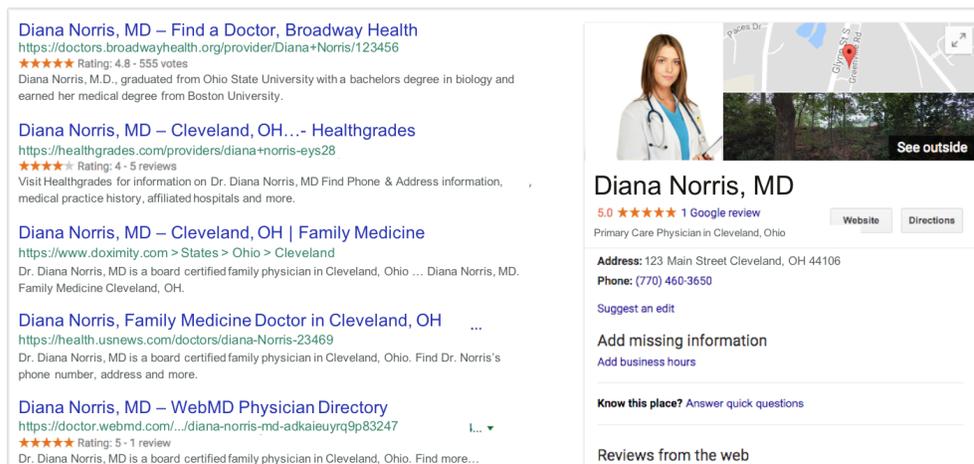
ProviderMatch is fully mobile-responsive, a key criterion for search engines that aim to serve mobile users an optimal user experience. ProviderMatch is accessible on both desktop and mobile screens, ensuring that the application can fit seamlessly into your organization's websites and mobile applications, while benefiting from the consumer-friendly user interface and SEO best practices designed by our product team.



## Structured Data (Including Reviews and Knowledge Panel)

Structured data is a schema that website code adheres to readily identify what type of page it is to search engines. Structured data improves SEO by helping search engines better understand the content of the page and present the most relevant and accurate data in search engines.

ProviderMatch profile pages leverage the Physician structured data schema to identify them as provider profile pages. Structured data also enables search engines to present robust data for additional features, such as the Knowledge Pane and rich snippets in the results below:



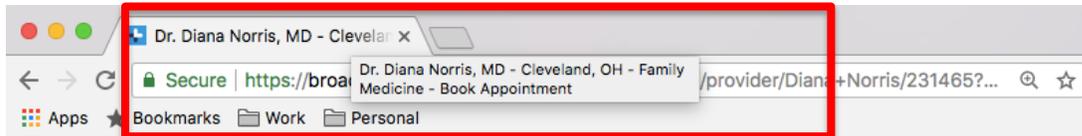
*Search Engine Results (left) and Knowledge Panel (Right)*

Metadata information available through the schema includes provider name, professional statement, location, and when enabled, patient ratings and reviews. It is worth noting that Kyruus partners with many patient review companies (e.g., NRC, Binary Fountain, Transparently) to enable Press Ganey / HCAHPS survey for display in ProviderMatch and search engine results.

## Page Titles & URLs

Provider profile pages generate dynamic page titles based on the content of the page, including each provider's name, specialty, and location. Many consumers search not only for a specific provider (e.g., "dr jane smith"), but often by location and/or a specialty (e.g. "doctor jane smith cardiologist" or "dr jane smith boston ma"); including the specialty and location in the page title ensures that ProviderMatch profile pages rank highly across different types of user searches.

Each provider profile has a unique URL with the provider's name. Search engines are wary of too many keywords in URLs, so our best practice is to limit the URL to the provider's name.



*Provider profile page title*

### **Specialty and City Pages**

ProviderMatch includes Specialty and Specialty/City URLs that boost search engine optimization when consumers search for care without specifying a provider. Each top-level specialty (e.g., cardiology) has a dedicated page that displays relevant providers (similar to standard search results pages) and a location page for each specialty (e.g., cardiology near Boston). Each specialty/location combination has a URL that can be "crawled" by Google and other search engines. Example URLs for specialty pages and specialty/city pages are:

- <https://customerpmc.org/specialty/Cardiology>
- <https://customerpmc.org/specialty/Cardiology/near/Boston>

The URLs and provider results are dynamically created and included in the sitemap (see below for more details on sitemap management), ensuring that health systems don't need to manually update provider results or top-level specialty names over time.

### **Canonical Tags**

ProviderMatch leverages canonical tags to link URLs for the same profile page to improve SEO for individual profile pages. Each unique provider profile web page can contain different URL parameters based on how the user navigates to the page. A URL example for a provider profile page is *https://doctors.broadwayhealth.org/provider/Alton+G+Smith/227839*. If a user searches for a provider from within the ProviderMatch app, search parameters are included in the URL: *https://doctors.beaumont.org/provider/Alton+G+Smith/225219?name=Alton+G+Smith&sort=relevance*. With canonical tags, search engines know that traffic and metrics for these pages are the same content, but have different URLs, and should be attributed to a single, "canonical" URL.

## **Sitemap**

After Go-Live, Kyruus manages the sitemap for ProviderMatch and submits it to Google for crawling and indexing. As we continue to enhance and develop our product, such as adding specialty and location pages, we will submit updated sitemaps.

## **SEO Best Practices**

In addition to the out-of-the-box features above, here are some tips for optimizing SEO for ProviderMatch:

### **Cross-Linking & Specialty/Location Pages**

Cross-linking between sites (e.g., your main health system website and ProviderMatch) is a key strategy for boosting SEO. Popularity of a site is one of the main ranking factors used to determine relevance, so health systems can improve SEO by creating cross-links.

#### *Tips*

Create other pages on your website that cross-link to provider profile pages (e.g., from a Featured Providers page) and to the specialty & location pages. Do you have a "Meet the Team" page? Create a link to the specialty page with a call-to-action to "Book an appointment with nearby Cardiologists".

Another strategy is to create informational landing pages on your website for the services you want to promote, such as an FAQs page in a Q&A format for maternity services, which will increase the likelihood of being featured in Google's featured snippets and quick answers. You can also cross-link these category pages to relevant provider profile pages.

### **Meta Description**

Meta descriptions contained in search engine results—providing consumers a brief preview of the page—do not directly impact search engine rankings. However, it does influence user behavior and can persuade consumers to click the link. In ProviderMatch, meta descriptions are typically pulled from a provider's professional statement (i.e., the "About Me" section). If a professional statement is not available, we include information about a provider's specialty and practice location.

### *Tips*

Identify keywords to include in each professional statement that match consumers' most common searches. For example, consumers typically search for specialties such as "cardiology" and often use the word "doctor": consider a template for providers that incorporates critical keywords, so consumers know the result is relevant to what they are searching for.

### **Social Media**

Search engines consider social sites to be authoritative, so external links from social media sites are beneficial for your SEO strategy. Plus, your own social sites will show up for branded searches, increasing the real estate owned by your health system for relevant searches.

### *Tips*

Create digital marketing campaigns to promote providers. For example, engage an orthopedic provider and get a quote about how to prevent ankle fractures, linking to the provider's profile from Facebook.

### **Duplicative Pages:**

If two pages have similar content, such as similar page titles and meta descriptions, Google may hide one of the pages under the assumption that it's a duplicative page. This is most likely to impact academic medical centers that often have provider profile pages on their find-a-provider as well as separate faculty pages.

### *Tips*

As you build out your web strategy, be careful not to repeat key website content, such as page titles and meta descriptions, as Google has been known to suppress pages even if they are on completely separate domains.

Whether you're dynamically populating page titles with the specialty and location of a consumer's search inquiry, or considering keywords to include in your copy, remember Google's advice: "Create content primarily for your users, not search engines." There's a strong reason for this: if you appeal to consumers with compelling content, they will understand, click, and share your content, improving your chances of earning top rankings in search results.

## Measuring SEO Impact

There are several software solutions for measuring SEO impact. A few recommendations include:

### **ProviderMatch Analytics**

Our in-app analytics solution delivers insights to health systems to help them understand access channel activity, boost service to patients, and optimize their provider networks. Health systems can derive patient demand insights, such as common search terms and filters applied, to inform SEO and digital marketing strategies (e.g., most in-app searches are searching for PCPs; how do we perform in primary care-related search engine results?).

### **Website Ranking for Consumer Searches by Keyword**

SEO tracking software, such as [Moz](#), enables you to track the ranking for your website for keyword searches and track changes over time. Since Moz has keyword limits, large multi-state health systems may find their keyword tracking licenses limiting. Rank Tracker offers an unlimited number of keywords as well as information on SERP features (see below).

### **Web Analytics Software**

Web analytics software, such as [Google Analytics](#), allows you to track website activity, including traffic sources, conversions, and percentages for new and returning visitors. Many website platforms also offer analytics.

### **Search Engine Results Page (SERP) Features**

In 2018, tracking SEO effectively includes more than rankings for organic searches. Google search results are much richer now, providing consumers additional ways to locate content. Additional search engine ranking opportunities outside of organic search rankings are called SERP features. The most common ones are:

- **Rich Snippets** add a visual layer to an existing result (e.g., review stars)
- **Paid Results** purchased by bidding on keywords (e.g.,)
- **Universal Results** that appear in addition to organic results (e.g., images)

### **Additional Resources**

There are several SEO starter guides available online for instructions and tips: check out [Moz](#) for a great introduction or [Google's SEO Starter Guide](#).

<sup>1</sup> Kyruus, Inc. 2017 Patient Access Journey Report. 2017

<sup>2</sup> Brian Halligan and Dharmesh Shah. Inbound Marketing, Revised and Updated: Attract, Engage, and Delight Customers Online. Wiley. 2014.