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Dermatology SEO

Who ranks for dermatologist searches in 20 cities, and where your practice can win.

A practice owner's guide | 2026 edition

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SECTION 01

The short answer

01

Search "dermatologist" plus any big city and you might expect Zocdoc listings, med spas and national chains. We pulled the top 10 Google results for that search in 20 cities and found something else. Dermatology practices held 76% of the results, and med spas held none. The private equity platforms that have bought practices across the country did not hold the #1 spot in any of the 20.

What to do about it:

1

Build Mohs, provider and cost pages first.

The fields are smaller and the searchers are looking for a surgeon, not information.

2

Give every provider a profile and a page.

Each public-facing practitioner can have a Business Profile, and every provider needs a page that could stand on its own.

3

Treat condition content as support.

Health systems and reference sites own "eczema treatment." Answer it inside your service pages.

4

Lead with the specialty, everywhere.

AI tools describe a generalist when the care you want to be known for is buried.

WHERE THE DATA COMES FROM

A Brown Bear pull of 34 Google results pages from Semrush on October 18, 2026: 20 "dermatologist" plus city searches, 4 Mohs surgery searches, 3 cosmetic dermatologist searches, 4 condition searches and 3 cost searches. Where a point is Bryan's own observation rather than measured data, we say so.

Who this guide is for

Physician-led practices covering medical, surgical and cosmetic dermatology: independent owners watching a national group open across town, Mohs surgeons who want surgical patients to find them, and marketing leads for groups with several offices. A stand-alone med spa is better served by our med spa SEO guide.

SECTION 02

The Dermatology Page-One Map

Top 10 organic results, map pack and ads not counted.

02

We sorted every result by type: health system, private equity platform, other practice, single-doctor site, med spa, directory or media, and everything else. Private equity labels cover only publicly reported backing, so that count is a floor.

Search type	Who holds page one	What it means for you
Dermatologist plus city	Practices 76%, health systems 18%. Practices held 43 of the 60 top-three spots.	→ Winnable, but these terms carry Semrush difficulty scores of 42 to 71.
Mohs surgery plus city	Practices 71%. Sites named for one surgeon were 16%, four times their share of the general searches.	→ Small, open and specific. Build it first.
Cosmetic dermatologist plus city	Practices 77%, but academic centers held three of the top four in New York.	→ Hard terms. Lead with the dermatologist, not the treatment menu.
Condition	Health systems plus reference, brand and drug-price sites held 35 of 38. Practices: 3, none in the top three.	→ Don't make these your first target. Answer them inside service pages.
Cost	Practices 13 of 30, alongside CareCredit, Sidecar Health and GoodRx. A practice page held #1 for Mohs surgery cost.	→ An open lane most practices skip.

11 of 20

cities had a practice at #1. In the other 9, an academic medical center such as Mount Sinai or Penn Medicine held it.

11 of 196

general results went to directories: Zocdoc, Yelp, city magazines and the AAD's Find a Dermatologist tool.

Source: Brown Bear dermatology SERP study, top 10 organic results from Semrush, US, October 18, 2026.

Independent practices vs private equity groups

13 of 20

cities had a private equity platform somewhere on page one for "dermatologist" plus the city.

6 of 60

top-three spots went to platforms, and none of the #1 spots on general dermatologist searches.

Source: Brown Bear dermatology SERP study, October 2026. PE labels cover publicly reported backing only.

Our read is that Google ranks the page that best matches "dermatologist" in that city. The local practice at #1 usually brings years of reviews, a local name and pages about its own doctors. A platform page that reads like a template for any city has less to show. The one #1 a platform held was a Mohs search: U.S. Dermatology Partners for "mohs surgeon houston."

If you're an independent practice

Your edge is depth in one market: a page per provider, a location page per office, and reviews that name your doctors. Don't try to match a platform's footprint.

If you're part of a platform or acquiring group

Keep each acquired practice's local reviews and history working, with its own location page and Business Profile. Folding a site into a national template? Redirect every old page to its new match first.

Three practice types, three plays

PRACTICE TYPE 1

Practices that also run a med spa

WHAT THE DATA SHOWS

Med spas did not appear once in 264 local dermatologist, Mohs and cosmetic dermatologist results.

WHAT TO BUILD

Keep the dermatologist at the front of dermatology pages. Give spa treatment, pricing and membership pages their own section.

The two sides stop competing.

PRACTICE TYPE 2

Cosmetic dermatologists

WHAT THE DATA SHOWS

Academic centers held three of the top four in New York. In Los Angeles, #1 was one dermatologist's own site.

WHAT TO BUILD

Center the board-certified dermatologist's name, training and results, with treatment pages under that name.

Lead with the doctor.

PRACTICE TYPE 3

Mohs surgeons

WHAT THE DATA SHOWS

For "mohs surgery dallas," practices held 9 of 10 results. Searchers are usually looking for a surgeon.

WHAT TO BUILD

A page, a cost page and a Business Profile for your Mohs surgeon before anything else.

The most practice-friendly lane.

SECTION 03

Where to aim first

03

Condition searches bring huge volume, but big authority sites own them. That matches what Bryan sees in plastic surgery. The local and cost searches still open the door for a practice.

Search	Monthly searches	Semrush difficulty	Verdict
acne, eczema and psoriasis treatment	about 1.5 million, 90,500 and 60,500	63 to 81	→ Support content only
dermatologist near me	about 368,000	75	→ A year-long project
mohs surgery cost	about 880	17	→ Build early
dermatologist visit cost	about 720	6	→ Build early
Mohs surgery plus city	50 to 140 per city	Small, open field	→ Build first

HOW TO USE CONDITION CONTENT

Put a short, clear answer to "what is eczema" on your eczema treatment page, written or reviewed by your dermatologist. Then spend the page on what only you can say: how your practice treats it, which providers see it, whether you offer biologics or phototherapy, and how insurance usually handles it.

How long each lane takes

Lane	Competition	Realistic timing
Mohs, provider and cost pages	Thinner fields, searchers looking for a surgeon	→ Movement within a quarter
Dermatologist plus a major city	Difficulty 42 to 71, "near me" at 75	→ A year-long project

If you need "dermatologist" in a major city, plan on a year. Anyone who promises it in 90 days is guessing.

SECTION 04

Business Profiles for several providers

04

Local search is where most dermatology visits start, and the Google Business Profile drives the map pack. For a practice with several providers, Google's guidelines for representing your business set the rules.

1

One profile per public-facing practitioner

Titled with only the practitioner's name. The office keeps its own separate profile.

2

Solo dermatologist at a branded office

Shares one profile, named "Practice: Doctor Name."

3

No profile per specialty

Your Mohs surgeon gets one profile, not one for surgery and one for cosmetics.

4

Departments that work as their own business

A separate entrance and a different primary category can earn a listing. That is the test for a cosmetic suite or in-house med spa.

PICTURE THIS

Four dermatologists, two physician assistants and a cosmetic suite, all under one office profile. Every review and every "near me" match lands on one listing that says "Dermatologist" and nothing else. A profile for each public-facing provider, with reviews from that provider's own patients, gives the practice more chances in the map pack and gives the Mohs surgeon's specialty a place to show.

Keep the basics identical everywhere

Use the same practice name, address and phone number on Google, Apple, Bing, Healthgrades, Zocdoc and your site. In Bryan's AI visibility audits, odd variations of a practice's name, address or phone number are the most common actual error he finds, and the easiest to fix.

SECTION 05

Service and provider pages

05

The pages that win local dermatology searches are specific: one page per service, written for your city. "Mohs surgery in Plano" beats a general "Skin Cancer" page.

Every service page answers, near the top

- Who the treatment is for, and when to see someone else first.
- Which of your providers performs it, with their credentials.
- What the visit or recovery looks like.
- For medical care, how insurance and referrals usually work. For cosmetic care, the price basis and any package or membership rate.
- How to book, with the phone number and form near the top.

THE COST PAGE MOST PRACTICES SKIP

Say you run a skin cancer practice outside Atlanta and add "What Mohs Surgery Costs at Our Practice": what Medicare and the main local plans usually pay, what a patient owes, why some cases take more stages, and how to get a written estimate. It is the only page in that search written by the people who do the surgery.

16%

of Mohs results went to sites named for one dermatologist, four times their 4% share of general searches. In Los Angeles, three of the top five.

13%

of cosmetic dermatologist results went to single-doctor sites, including #1 in Los Angeles.

Source: Brown Bear dermatology SERP study, October 2026.

Every provider page could stand on its own

- **Board certification**, stated the way the certifying board states it, plus any Mohs fellowship. Patients can check it with the American Board of Dermatology.
- **Focus areas**, linked to the matching service pages.
- **Reviews** from their own patients, and a real photo.
- **For PAs and NPs**, their license and supervising dermatologist. Solo or two doctors? Your name is your strongest brand.

SECTION 06

Trust, technical and AI search

06

YMYL standards

Dermatology is a health topic where bad advice can hurt someone. Show the dermatologist's name and credentials on clinical pages, a reviewed-by line with a date, and claims that match medical consensus.

Reviews that name care

Ask every patient the same way, at the same point after the visit. Ask for reviews that say "Dr. Patel" and "my skin check," not just "nice office."

HIPAA in replies

Respond, but never confirm the reviewer is a patient or mention any treatment. A reply about "your mole removal" is a disclosure.

TWO RULES WITH TEETH

The FTC's rule on fake reviews took effect in October 2024. It covers buying reviews and suppressing negative ones, so a gift card for a five-star review is off the table. And HHS has fined dental practices for disclosing patient details in replies to online reviews. The same HIPAA rule applies to dermatology.

Technical basics

A sound dermatology site loads fast on a phone, shows its main content without waiting for scripts, and has one clean URL per page. Before-and-after galleries, booking widgets and chat tools can be weak spots, because they add JavaScript. Vercel's late 2024 analysis found that OpenAI's crawlers, ClaudeBot and PerplexityBot did not render JavaScript at all. Bryan's view is that schema is worth keeping tidy, but the bigger levers are crawlability and pages that are easy to pull apart: a heading, a direct answer, then the detail.

AI search

- **Lead with the specialty.** The most common finding in Bryan's AI visibility reviews is not wrong information. It is that the care a practice wants to be known for is buried, so AI tools describe a generalist.
- **Match your homepage to your best care.** A fellowship-trained Mohs surgeon behind "comprehensive skin care for the whole family" gets described exactly that way.
- **Tend the third-party sites.** Review sites, directories, local news and hospital affiliation pages shape what AI tools say about a practice.
- **Keep it one project.** The AI layer is the same listings, reviews and specific pages, kept consistent everywhere a patient or a crawler might look.

SECTION 07

Cost, payback and hiring

Published pricing varies widely. One dermatology-focused vendor lists local SEO packages from about $899 to $2,499 a month and puts mid-level programs from traditional agencies at $2,000 to $5,000. Where you land depends on how many offices and providers you have and how crowded your market is.

Bryan's plastic surgery rule of thumb: a $1,500 to $2,000 monthly retainer over a year costs about the same as two procedures from organic search. In dermatology, a new medical patient and a new cosmetic patient are worth very different amounts, so run your own numbers.

Payback worksheet

1. **Total investment** = monthly SEO fee x number of months.
2. **Blended patient value** = medical share x first-year collected revenue per medical patient, plus cosmetic share x first-year collected revenue per cosmetic patient. Multiply by your contribution margin if you track one. Use collected revenue, not billed charges.
3. **Break-even patients** = total investment / blended patient value, rounded up.
4. **Monthly target** = break-even patients / months. Judge the program on the full term, since early months usually bring less than later ones.

Four things to ask an agency before you sign

1

A page-one review

Of your top five services in your city, showing who ranks and why.

2

A Business Profile plan

One per office, one per public-facing provider, with categories.

3

Booked-appointment reporting

By service, medical and cosmetic separately, not just traffic.

4

Clinical sign-off

Who writes clinical pages, and how your dermatologists review them.

SECTION 08

Is your SEO built for dermatology?

08

Answer for your current strategy, in-house or agency. Each "no" is a gap. Fix Mohs, provider and cost gaps first.

Question	Yes	Partly	No
SEARCH TARGETING			
Do you know who holds page one for your top five services in your city?	☐	☐	☐
Are Mohs, provider and cost searches ahead of condition terms on your list?	☐	☐	☐
BUSINESS PROFILES			
Does every office and public-facing provider have one profile, with none per specialty?	☐	☐	☐
Do your name, address and phone match exactly on every listing and your site?	☐	☐	☐
SERVICE PAGES			
Does every service have its own city page that names the provider who performs it?	☐	☐	☐
Do you publish a plain-language cost page with self-pay rates and insurance steps?	☐	☐	☐
PROVIDER PAGES			
Does every provider page state board certification the way the board states it?	☐	☐	☐
Does each provider page carry that provider's own reviews and a real photo?	☐	☐	☐
TRUST AND REVIEWS			
Do clinical pages show the dermatologist's credentials and a dated reviewed-by line?	☐	☐	☐
Do review replies avoid confirming the reviewer is a patient or naming any treatment?	☐	☐	☐
TECHNICAL AND AI SEARCH			
Does your main content show without waiting for scripts to run?	☐	☐	☐
Do your homepage and listings lead with the care you most want to be known for?	☐	☐	☐

YES	PARTLY	NO
_____	_____	_____

SECTION 09

Frequently asked questions

09

Q What is dermatology SEO?

The work of getting a dermatology practice found, and then chosen, by patients searching Google and AI tools for a dermatologist, a procedure or help with a skin condition. It covers the map pack, the organic results and the AI answers above both. The goal is booked visits for the care you want to grow, not raw traffic.

Q Will a private equity group bury my independent practice?

Not on the evidence. Platforms showed up in 13 of 20 cities but held only 6 of 60 top-three spots and no #1 spots on general dermatologist searches. Depth in one market, with provider pages, location pages and reviews that name your doctors, is the independent's edge.

Q Should we target "eczema treatment" and other condition terms?

Not first. Practices held 3 of 38 condition results and none of the top three. Answer the condition briefly on your service page and spend the rest on how your practice treats it.

Q Does each dermatologist need a separate website?

No. Each provider needs a page that could stand on its own. Solo and two-doctor practices can lean on a personal site, while groups of six or more should keep everyone on the practice domain.

Q Can my in-house med spa have its own Business Profile?

Only if it works as its own business, with a separate entrance and a different primary category. Med spas did not appear in 264 local dermatologist, Mohs and cosmetic results, so keep spa pages as their own section.

Q How long does dermatology SEO take?

Mohs, provider and cost pages can move within a quarter. "Dermatologist" in a major city is a year-long project, with difficulty scores of 42 to 71.

Q What does it cost?

One dermatology-focused vendor lists local packages from about $899 to $2,499 a month and puts mid-level agency programs at $2,000 to $5,000. Use the payback worksheet to see how many new organic patients your fee needs.

SECTION 10

Next steps

10

1. **Run the self-audit** on the previous pages. Be honest.
2. **Map your page one.** Search your top five services in your city and note who ranks and why.
3. **Build the open lanes first:** your Mohs surgeon's page, a cost page and a Business Profile for every public-facing provider.
4. **Talk to someone who does this for medical practices.** A real look at where your practice stands on the searches that matter to you.

WORK WITH BROWN BEAR

Brown Bear Digital builds the page-one map for medical practices, then does the listing, page and AI search work that follows from it. brownbear.digital/contact | bryan@brownbear.digital

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bryan Passanisi is the founder of Brown Bear Digital. He has 15 years of experience across SEO, paid search, and AI search strategy, and received a 2025 Semrush AI Visibility Award with the QuickBooks team. He started Brown Bear to give businesses direct access to senior search expertise without the agency overhead.

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