



Introduction to the Physician Information Program (PIP) Boost your business in 4 steps

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Welcome to the Physician Information Program (PIP)

It is Phonak's vision to help hearing care professionals (HCP) like you to connect with physicians by providing valuable information about hearing loss. A physician refers his patients to a variety of specialists all the time. He wants to be sure to send them to a trusted partner who helps him to take care of his patients. A specialist like you!

Building a strong relationship requires planning and effort and will lead to benefits for the patient, the physician and for you, the HCP. Phonak will help you on this journey by providing you with the PIP-Tool-Box, which includes various files like presentations, key-facts etc. to support your approach to the physician. The PIP-Tool-Box is available as a set of downloads.

Materials can be customized to meet your individual needs and at the same time provide you with core content to help you communicate efficiently, leaving you with time to look after your customers. The PIP-Tool-Box will be regularly updated with new materials. Have a look at the PIP-Matrix, which always maps out the current list of tools and their audiences.

¹ Kochkin S. BHI physician found to increase use of hearing healthcare.
The Hearing Journal. August 2004; 57(8).

We know that many patients do not get a referral or a recommendation from their physician to visit an HCP and hence lose precious time until the fitting of their first hearing aid. On the other hand, patients who get a physician's recommendation are 5 times more likely to get a hearing aid.¹ Therefore the PIP provides an excellent and much needed awareness campaign for physicians to help more patients have their hearing loss managed.

These are the 4 steps to becoming a trusted partner with your physicians:

1. Know your physician (collect data, set goals, etc.)
2. Approach your MDs (first contact)
3. First meeting (sell yourself)
4. Become a trusted partner (stay top of mind)

- **Note: Always stay in the boundaries of your country's legislation.**
- **Tip: Whatever you do to become a trusted partner, be sure that it is genuinely YOU!**

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Step 1: Know your physicians

Make a list of up to 15 general practitioners (GP) and ear-nose-throat (ENT) specialists in your area who you want to target. You may already have contact with them or there may be others you wish to contact. You can find their details on the internet and in the local phonebook. Don't forget your patients: they may be a great source of information, too. Also, your personal GP might be prepared to introduce you to his colleagues.

Using your list of target physicians, start a simple database to collect data about the physicians:

Hard facts: name, clinic, address, email, phone, name of staff, common patients, last visit/contact

Further information: hobbies, spouse, children, birthday, car type, sports team, cultural background, likes & dislikes

■ **Note:** Ask your customers for permission to contact their physician, get a written consent. (a draft of such a patient consent form is available on the PIP-Web)

● **Tip:** Try to team up with the physician that takes care of the local home for the elderly.



Step 2: Approach the physician (first contact)

Physicians are very busy people. They receive multiple mailings that can end up in the trash, unopened.

The best way to start a communication with your target physicians is to send a letter in which you introduce yourself and state your intention to contact him again with further information.

Make your follow-up call in about a week. This gives him time to digest your letter or maybe to become active himself. Your first letter should at least contain the following statements (find a sample with standard phrases in the "Opening Letter" tool on "PIP-Web"):

- Reference to common patients (if applicable)
- A brief overview of hearing problems and the risks of patients not receiving adequate rehabilitation (hearing aids)
- Describe why you are the perfect partner for him: your services
- Make a proposal for a meeting in person in the near future, to get things rolling
- Announce your follow-up call

- If you are the spontaneous type, drop by the physician's practice and talk to the staff (and maybe the physician) in person.
- In your follow-up call/visit refer to your mailing and schedule the presentation meeting
- Create a database where you can record every call/visit, content outcome and next step.

■ **Note: GPs and ENTs have different needs. Consider that when formulating your letter.**

● **Tip: Make key staff your friends. They are the gate-keepers, deciding who gets to talk to or see the physician, whose letters he reads and whose he does not!**



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Step 3: First meeting

Sell yourself! But concentrate on information rather than making a sales pitch.

Remember, physicians have limited time. Don't squeeze your meeting in between two patient consultations or you will never have the physician's full attention. Schedule your meeting before or after work. Or even better: organize a lunch meeting. Ask how many participants there will be and bring some good food and drinks – a rewarding investment.

Don't be shy! Tell them that you would love to provide additional hearing care to patients which the physician feels could benefit. Ask openly for referrals.

Present yourself as a trustworthy partner with common goals and go into detail about your work and your services. Phonak has created a PowerPoint presentation template (on "PIP-Web") that you can personalize and adapt for each physician you see. Keep it as short as possible and leave time for questions. Remember that many referrals come from the staff. They may also be willing to distribute your flyers and business cards to potential patients.

Leave some materials (your own and PIP material) to be placed in the waiting room and to hand over to patients.

Invite the meeting participants to a second meeting in your practice. Show the physician and the staff your office, show how professionally you treat their patients. Demonstrate unfamiliar equipment: for you it is daily work, for them it's super-hi-tech. Involve them!

■ **Note: Keep it short and simple!**

● **Tip: Ask them questions about their practice, make it personal. Ask about hearing problems in their families.**



Step 4: Become a trusted partner

At this stage, you have received your first referrals.
Congratulations!

Be sure that you keep the physician in the loop: provide information he needs to look after his patients. Phonak has developed standard phrases (see "Assessment report") to help you create your own feedback letter to the physician. Send a letter or email whenever you see one of his patients. In this way the physician will feel he is part of your professional team.

Note: Get your patient's written consent to allow you to share his audiology data with his physician.

Phonak will regularly update the PIP-Tool-Box and provide you with new tools for GPs, ENTs and their patients, allowing you to keep up active contact.



Other ways to stay top of mind:

- Offer a free audiology test for staff and their family members
- Training for staff: an extra value for physicians that deepens your personal relationship with staff
- Yearly feedback rounds
- Visit the practice from time to time to say "hello" and ask about news
- Organize a screening day/morning at the physician's practice where you screen all interested patients
- Inform about suitable compensation schemes for patients (depending on your country)
- Write articles in local newspapers

■ Note: Always keep your database up to date.

- Tip: Be remembered by customizing your tools and your mailing cards by adding color, flavor, originality.