



# what's my line?

Many physicians are independent and innovative, apt to assess a situation and think, "There must be a better way." That's certainly the case when it comes to skin-care products. Ben Johnson, MD, for example, believed that exfoliation might not be the best antiaging strategy. Loretta Ciraldo, MD, FAAD, thought there was a lack of technologically advanced formulas that also enhanced a physician's bottom line. In these two cases, and four more featured in this article, the physicians followed in the footsteps of well-known dermatologists and skincare experts, such as Zein E. Obagi, MD, and Howard Murad, MD, FAAD, by developing their own skincare lines.

By Jackie Summers

## What's My Line?

Dr. Obagi shared his skincare philosophy with *MedEsthetics* when he opened the Obagi Skin Health Institute in Beverly Hills, California, where he still practices. “The problems we see on the surface of the skin correspond to cells underneath that aren’t working properly,” said Dr. Obagi, who created the Obagi Nu-Derm System along with other experts in 1988; the company’s name was changed to Obagi Medical Products nine years later (obagi.com). “Brown spots indicate melanocytes that aren’t functioning as they should. Wrinkles appear because cells producing collagen and elastin stop performing efficiently. Women need to start using products that keep cells in top working order early in life. It’s like building a house: You start with the foundation.”

For Dr. Murad, launching his own skincare line (murad.com) came from the knowledge and insight he acquired over the years treating patients with every conceivable skin condition. “My job as a doctor is to help people become healthier,” said Dr. Murad. “It is this belief that inspired me to develop topical and internal skincare formulas for my patients. I was a pharmacist before becoming a dermatologist, and after starting my own practice, I listened to what my patients were requesting. To help them with their needs, I created formulas to address their specific skin concerns, and this was how it all began.”

Thanks to these pioneers, doctors and patients have an exciting range of options when it comes to choosing skincare products, including the following relatively new formulations from physicians!

### Alessi Skincare

Created by David Alessi, MD (Los Angeles, alessiskincare.com)

#### *Philosophy:*

*“I believe there needs to be science behind beauty claims.”*

A scientist and former chief of the division of head and neck surgery at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, Dr. Alessi runs a thriving plastic surgery practice in Beverly Hills, California.

Over the years, Dr. Alessi found himself frustrated with what he felt were the unsubstantiated claims of existing skincare products. “To study drugs, for example, you need to perform double-blind and controlled studies,” he says. “I noticed this science wasn’t behind most skincare products.” Since he had an undergraduate background in biochemistry, he often worked with chemists to formulate certain compounds for his patients, and finally realized they were “pretty darn good.” With the help of his wife, he launched Alessi Skincare in 2006.

Idebenone, an antiaging compound with proven efficacy through double-blind and controlled studies, is the focal ingredient in Alessi Skincare creams, which also include

Dr. Alessi’s proprietary compounds Retroformin and Hydroformin. “Sun exposure, toxins, stress, even makeup; there are many ways that oxidation can occur,” says Dr. Alessi.

“So I believe there have to be many forms of antioxidants.”

The current line features Wrinkle Reduction AM and PM Creams, Starblaster hydrating and clarity-correcting formula, and Age-Reversing Eye Serum, which will soon be joined by the new Alessi Signature line extension. Focused on proven results and not “marketing hype,” the creams are designed to reduce fine lines and wrinkles and effectively reverse the signs of aging.

The proprietary Alessi Skincare products are available to physicians and selected skincare professionals. Five percent of the proceeds from all profits are donated to Face Forward (facela.net), an organization founded by Dr. Alessi to provide facial surgical reconstructive services for women and children who have been victims of violence through gang aggression or domestic violence.

### CosMedical Technologies

Created by Loretta Ciraldo, MD, FAAD (Miami Beach, Florida, cosmedicaltechnologies.com)

*Philosophy: “When a patient goes to a doctor with a condition like psoriasis, he expects medications that will offer significant improvement in a reasonable time. We designed our skincare products to deliver the same type of visible improvement within the first two weeks.”*

Dr. Ciraldo has been practicing cosmetic dermatology in Miami Beach since 1982. She also runs the Cosmetic Dermatology Department at the University of Miami. In the early 1990s, as a dermatologist about to turn 40, and with skincare product formulation still in its early stages, Dr. Ciraldo was hard pressed to find products she was comfortable recommending to her patients. In medical school, she had logged many hours as a research assistant—some of the studies involved cosmetic sunscreen formulation and percutaneous absorption. She reasoned that as a practicing professional with a background in product research and as a woman with concerns about her own skin, she had the insights to create a product line.



## What's My Line?

Fifteen years later, CosMedical Technologies offers more than 50 products, and Dr. Ciraldo's son, Daniel Ciraldo, the company's marketing director, says that the line is available in more than 1,000 physician's offices. The Ciraldos work with chemists to create products for aging, acne, hyperpigmentation, rosacea, sun protection and more.

CosMedical Technologies is a private labeler, which means that an individual physician can personalize the line with his or her own name and brand. "The doctor's profit potential is unlimited," notes Daniel Ciraldo. "There is no competition and a patient can't compare prices." So a doctor in an affluent area like Beverly Hills, California, for example, can mark up a product 600% if that is what the market will bear.

CosMedical Technologies supports customers with free labeling, online "webinar" training covering product knowledge and marketing ideas, monthly promotions, in-office training, sales force visits and collateral material, including brochures and newsletters.

### Episciences

Created by Carl R. Thornfeldt, MD (Boise, Idaho, epionce.com)

**Philosophy:** "I formulated these products because they help me be a better doctor. I can say with confidence that they work. They help slow skin diseases and they work cosmetically too."

Dr. Thornfeldt received his medical degree from the University of Oregon Health Sciences Center, spent three years in family practice in the U.S.

Navy and completed his dermatology residency at University Hospital in San Diego, California. He launched his dermatology practice in Fruitland, Idaho, in 1983, where more than a quarter of his patients travel an hour or more to see him.

He is also an assistant clinical professor of dermatology at the University of Oregon Health Sciences Center.

The region of the country where Dr. Thornfeldt practices is known for its arid climate. Noticing that patients were not responding to

Dr. Thornfeldt's products feature patent-pending formulas proven in clinical studies to reverse signs of aging.



Dr. Ciraldo's skincare line includes products to treat a variety of skin conditions.



certain treatments, he began studying the effects of dry skin on other skin conditions. "I wondered if we could prevent psoriasis, dermatitis, rosacea and seborrheic dermatitis by optimizing skin's own function and structure. Could we develop a nonprescription solution that was safe and easy to use that also optimized stratum corneum barrier function, prevented inflammation, reversed damage and prevented skin diseases and skin aging?"

With Epionce, Dr. Thornfeldt is confident that he has succeeded. The 19-product line features patent-pending formulas proven in independent, double-blind clinical trials to reverse and prevent certain skin diseases and signs of aging. The products contain a blend of highly purified, triple-extracted botanicals, including date extract, a highly potent antioxidant, and flax, which is high in omega 3 and omega 6, and moderates inflammation. According to Dr. Thornfeldt, the products result in 94% barrier closure as opposed to the 15% to 18% barrier closure achieved by many commercial moisturizers.

Epionce products are sold exclusively to physicians and medical spas. Currently, the company supplies about 400 customers in North America and the UK, and will be entering the Japanese market this fall. The company offers extensive training "because we have a complex story," says Dr. Thornfeldt. "Epionce is breakthrough technology and we want professionals to understand how to create the best regimens for patients. That requires time and expertise."

### Osmosis Pur Medical Skincare

Created by Ben Johnson, MD (Evergreen, Colorado, osmosisskincare.com)

**Philosophy:** "Do no harm. It is not necessary to first damage skin to heal and improve it."



Dr. Johnson's skincare products are all natural, water-soluble and plant-based.



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Before completing his residency in sports medicine,

Dr. Johnson pioneered the medspa concept with Cosmedix, one of the first medspa chains. At the same time, he launched the Cosmedix skincare line, which was based on the concept of chirally correct ingredients. He shuttered the medspas and sold his interest in his original skincare company in 2003 and in 2007, he launched Osmosis, combining "all that he knew to be true" as a result of his previous experience and ongoing research.

Dr. Johnson's strategy for Osmosis centers around three distinct conclusions drawn from his research. The first is that artificial ingredients such as colors, fragrances and preservatives create inflammation that makes it harder to repair the skin. The second is that because it dehydrates and increases UV sensitivity, exfoliation actually causes the skin to age more quickly. And finally, he believes that most skincare products only penetrate by about 2%, which considerably diminishes potential efficacy. Osmosis skincare products are all-natural, water-soluble, plant-based and contain up to four times as many active ingredients per product as other skincare lines. Dr. Johnson claims that Osmosis' advanced delivery system—phosphatidylcholine liposomes—is proven to increase penetration by 1,000%. The company uses eight different dermal stimulators and 17 antioxidants to increase circulation and nutrient supply, and to reduce free radicals. Osmosis offers products for a range of skin conditions, including aging and dry skin, acne and oily skin, hyperpigmentation, photodamage and rosacea.

Osmosis supports customers with training at aesthetics and medical trade shows. In addition, the company offers three hours of video education on its website and is developing a six-hour medesthetics course on video. "We want to be on the cutting edge of video education," notes Dr. Johnson.

### Paphos Skincare

Created by Gary Weinberger, MD, FACS (Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, paphos-skincare.com)

**Philosophy:** "I'm a realist, and I know that the only way to avoid aging is to die young. But I believe that we can repair skin, keep it healthy, protect it from environ-

## What's My Line?

mental damage and help reduce the effects that aging has on the skin."

Dr. Weinberger came to skin care from a unique direction. He attended the University of Bologna School of Medicine in Italy and did a dual residency in surgery and urology at Millard Fillmore Hospital, Buffalo Children's Hospital and The Roswell Park Memorial Cancer Institute in Buffalo, New York. While in private practice in Manhattan, he became an assistant clinical professor at New York University School of Medicine, and later moved upstate to become an assistant clinical professor at the University of Buffalo School of Medicine.

An injury several years ago forced Dr. Weinberger to give up his surgery practice. At the suggestion of a friend who was the head of Dow Chemical in Italy, he began studying the European approach to skin product formulation. His research led him to conclude that there was a need in this country for all-natural, preservative-free skincare that is safe for patients with all types of skin conditions.

The result is Paphos Skincare, a collection of skincare products using a patented, European-developed process of "supercritical" carbon dioxide fluid extraction, which produces pure, solvent-free, biological-grade extracts.

The signature item in Paphos' Giovan2 professional line for medical spas is the Italian Therabrasion, an approach that combines microdermabrasion with

Dr. Weinberger's skincare system is safe for patients with all types of skin conditions.



## What's My Line?

acid resurfacing. The system offers a series of six weekly, 10-step treatments, supported by maintenance products, to optimize laser treatments, accelerate post-procedure healing time and produce smoother, younger-looking skin on all skin types.

Paphos offers customers a training DVD, but Dr. Weinberger prefers to visit each office personally for a hands-on training session. "I don't want this product 'hard sold,'" he says. "Instead, we want to come to your office, do a Therabrasion demonstration, and if you don't see incredible results and don't want to place an order, we will never call you again."



### Purigenex

Created by Susanne Bennett, DC, CCSP (Santa Monica, California, purigenex.com)

*Philosophy: "The line is all natural and highly effective."*

Dr. Bennett is a holistic chiropractor specializing in environmental medicine, allergies, clinical nutrition and chronic immune system disorders. She practices integrated health care, combining aspects of Eastern and Western medicine.

As a professional in the natural health field, Dr. Bennett objected to products containing fragrances and chemical additives, preferring all-natural, paraben- and dye-free formulas. A lifelong athlete, her own skin had incurred a great deal of sun damage, and when she turned 40, she was dismayed at the laxity and crepiness it was exhibiting. A search for natural skincare products left her unsatisfied, so when a new collagen discovery originally developed for bone

regeneration by researchers at Yonsei University in Seoul, Korea, caught her attention in 2007, she investigated.

Her research led her to the Purigenex purified collagen system, which offers two key elements: the ICM Ionized Collagen Mask and ICM Intensive Collagen Serum. The mask contains

only five ingredients, one of which is distilled water. Because it is bioactive, it must be kept at between 39 and 50 degrees Fahrenheit, which is why orders are flown directly overnight from Korea on ice. All Purigenex products are free of paraben, alcohol, dyes, fragrance, lanolin, hydroquinone and petrochemicals.

Ideal for post-procedural collagen replenishment and general antiaging, the mask features a unique bioactive collagen, formulated by removing the telo-peptides of porcine collagen, which makes it nonimmunogenic and biocompatible. What's more, negative ionization promotes deeper transdermal delivery. Fibroblasts are stimulated, leading to noticeable improvement in skin quality and texture. Dr. Bennett recommends weekly mask treatments in-office, supported by daily applications of the serum at home.

The Purigenex Advanced Skin Repair line includes products for repair, hydration and hyperpigmentation, plus a targeted eye formula.

The exclusive global distributor of this unique collagen concept, Purigenex offers its products to physicians, medspas and estheticians. The company provides a referral system, directing inquiries to local medical offices and spas, along with brochures, flyers and display materials. An instructional video for practitioners is in the works, and with the purchase of 12 or more kits, customers receive a free glass refrigerator for product storage and display, along with before-and-after case study look books. ■



Dr. Bennett's skincare line is ideal for post-procedural collagen replenishment and general antiaging.

*Jackie Summers is a beauty industry communications consultant and a freelance writer and editor. Contact her at [jsummers@west.net](mailto:jsummers@west.net).*