# Expanding CME/CE Reach: Assessing the Impact of a Podcast Series on Clinician Engagement

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# Background & Objectives

Based on expressed learner interest in short-form CME activities coupled with the rise in popularity of podcasts, Pri-Med introduced podcasts as a new learning format in 2017. With this research, we aimed to assess if launching a podcast series could effectively engage clinician learners who have not previously participated in our traditional educational formats. Specifically, the research question was: Can a podcast series serve as an effective educational format to engage learners and expand the reach of our CME/CE courses?

Since launching our podcast series "Frankly Speaking About Family Medicine", we have amassed almost 5 million downloads for the Pri-Med podcast channels. This series is produced in collaboration with Frank Domino, MD, who also serves as the host for each episode where he interviews family physicians about practice-changing clinical research and covers patient-focused best practices in Family Medicine.





To explore whether podcasts can effectively engage learners and expand CME/CE reach, we conducted a structured assessment of our podcast series, "Frankly Speaking About Family Medicine". This process included analyzing baseline data, implementing targeted changes, and evaluating their impact, detailed as follows:

#### 1. Audience Analysis and Outreach Strategies

#### What We Did

We conducted baseline assessments of learner engagement on pri-med.com across traditional CME/CE formats and distributed annual surveys to identify preferred educational formats. The most recent study was fielded in December of 2024.

#### Why We Did It

This helped us understand how podcasts compared to other learning modalities and informed us of our decision to prioritize podcasts as a focus area.

#### **Key Findings**

The study revealed that 42% of clinicians prefer podcasts for on-demand CME/CE education, second only to video-based webcasts. Podcasts surpassed text-based activities, board-style questions, simulation-based activities, game-based learning, and adaptive learning.

#### Enhancements

We introduced targeted Pri-Med Podcast email campaigns which deploy to 140k learners and have an average 42% open rate. This open rate is higher than average for our digital emails, indicating learner interest. We also leveraged social media networks (Pri-Med, Dr. Frank Domino, and guest faculty) to maximize reach.

#### 2. Content and Format Refinements

#### What We Did

Based on listener feedback and data analysis, we optimized episode structure and standardized lengths to 15–20 minutes to align with preferences for short-form education. Topics were selected using performance metrics and trends in clinical practice.

#### Why We Did It

This change validated if concise, actionable content and relevant topics improve engagement and learner outcomes.

#### **Key Findings**

Episodes featuring timely and impactful topics, such as "Preventing Overdose Deaths with Naloxone," saw significantly higher engagement (20,828 downloads for one episode). This is a much higher engagement rate than other web-based activities hosted on our website.

#### Enhancements

- Included real-life case studies and journal references in episodes as well as resources available to clinician learners.
- Created a consistent format with brand music, summaries, and actionable practice pointers at the conclusion of each episode.

### 3. Technology and Delivery Enhancements

#### What We Did

Enhanced accessibility by integrating transcriptions, switched platform providers (from Libsyn to Podbean), and expanded distribution to Spotify and Amazon Music. Additionally, we experimented with video podcasts and improved audio quality through upgraded recording equipment.

#### Why We Did It

To broaden our audience, increase accessibility, and maintain high production standards.

#### **Key Findings**

Improved accessibility and distribution channels increased audience reach and engagement.

#### Enhancements

- Transitioned to higher-quality recording tools including consistent microphone/ headsets for all speakers.
- Expanded content distributions platforms to allow more listeners to access the podcast.

## Conclusion

In 8 years, we achieved 4.7 million downloads from learners across three podcast channels. After creating an account, 16% of new pri-med.com members in 2023 completed a podcast as their first course. Data also indicates that this is the "stickiest" product type (when a new learner completes a podcast as their first product type, a high percentage go on to take more courses and have a high average of course completions).

Over time, we have made countless enhancements and process improvements which have allowed us to publish more than 400 episodes and keep going strong.





## Frank Domino, MD, participates on Pri-Med's CME/CE Advisory Board, is Course Chair of Pri-Med East, and is Professor and the Pre-doctoral Education Director for the Department of Family Medicine and Community Health at the University of

Massachusetts Chan Medical School.

"The goal of Frankly Speaking is to take complex medical research and make it highly useful in clinical practice... We aim to include different members of the clinical team on the podcast team so that all audience members can hear from peers and better identify with a range of clinical topics."

Frank Domino, MD

## Podcast Components

- All episodes are hosted by Frank Domino, MD. Having a single partner who creates content and provides clinical expertise has allowed for consistent "feel" across episodes and allowed this project to continue on a regular cadence
- Six guest experts rotate. \*Episodes are discussion based, often focused on a recent article, study, or guideline update
- Episodes are recorded remotely using Riverside. To enhance future planning of episodes, faculty records up to eight episodes at one time
- A consistent weekly release schedule every Monday ensures that content is relevant and up to date for listeners

- Standardized episode lengths are approximately 15-20 minutes
- An engaging introduction with brand music
- Cited real-life case studies and/or reputable journal articles while also providing these resources if applicable
- A closing summary with practical tips we coined "practice pointers"
- Listeners can consume via their phone, tablet, or pri-med.com and can claim CME credit at their convenience

## Top Ten Most Downloaded Frankly Speaking Episodes

- . 2022 CDC Clinical Practice Guidelines: What's the Update on Prescribing Opioids for Pain?
- 2. Preventing Overdose Deaths with Naloxone: Harm Reduction vs Encouraging Use
- 3. Forget About Weed
- 4. Statins for Cardiovascular Disease—It's All Relative
- 5. As We Wave Goodbye to the Waiver!

- 6. The Best Evidence for Treating Fibromyalgia
- 7. Is Less More When Treating BP in Older Adults?
- 8. Pneumococcal Vaccines Simplified!
- 9. Walking and Osteoarthritis of the Knee: A Simple Strategy to Slow Cartilage Loss
- 10. Risks of Long-Term Use of PPIs