

A Return to Healing Podcast - Episode 49 - Feb 8 2026

Andy Lazris: Hi, it's Sunday morning with Alan and Andy, and our Return to Healing topic of the day is going to be dermatology, which,

Andy Lazris: is interesting because... here's the thing, Alan, dermatology is about the hardest residency to get into. And if you look at these statistics of people who rank

Andy Lazris: medical professions. Our profession, primary care, is ranked as the most difficult and lowest paid. We have the honor of having two things like that. Dermatology is ranked as the easiest profession and the highest paid.

Alan Roth: One of those, Pete, you're exactly right.

Andy Lazris: They have the higher... the ratio of how hard you work to how much you get paid. Dermatology wins that battle. And the funny thing is, back in the 1980s, they were more like us.

Andy Lazris: You know, they were lower paid. They were among the lowest paid. It wasn't hard to get a residency, because they were just cutting things off. But then they did something that other specialties have done since. They hired a publicity agent.

Andy Lazris: and they hired, people to go lobby in Congress. And what they did is create this idea of

Andy Lazris: Skin cancer epidemic. And that... and all the ads came out. There's a skin cancer epidemic. See the dermatology, get your screening.

Andy Lazris: Get your annual screening. And the screening became a ritual. And they also merged, which we should talk about, with the sunscreen industry.

Andy Lazris: to say, we need everyone to have sunscreen on, stay out of the sun, you got cancers, we gotta cut them off. Then they invented this procedure called a Mohs procedure, which, basically what you and I could cut off in the office.

Alan Roth: In one minute.

Andy Lazris: One minute, they... for \$30, I think, is what we charge. They go in and have this \$30,000 test, which accomplishes the same thing, other than putting people at risk. So how do we get this profession that claims to save people's lives? Oh, one more statistic I want to throw out, Alan.

A Return to Healing Podcast - Episode 49 - Feb 8 2026

Andy Lazris: Is that since this happened in the 1980s, skin cancer deaths have not improved one bit.

Alan Roth: So, a few things you brought up, and you know, when we decided to do this topic, I just started getting angry, because it's such an example of how our healthcare system is effed up.

Alan Roth: You know, so number one, the dermatologists were really smart back then, okay? They came out with the publicity campaign, like you said, but they've also limited their residency slots, so only X number of dermatologists come out per year.

Alan Roth: And I could tell you the average, you know, dermatologist works, you know, 3 days... some will work 4 days a week, alright? No evenings, no weekends, no access to care.

Andy Lazris: No hard decisions, either.

Alan Roth: Right, you know, their patients don't die, you know.

Alan Roth: take it off or not, or here's my choice of low-potency steroid, moderate, and high. They probably got upset when they came out with these biologics like dupixin, because they actually had to think about these drugs, and, oh, I have to write a real drug now, and like, what am I gonna do?

Alan Roth: But they limited their field, and the 95% of dermatologists are making a half a million dollars a year, or more.

Alan Roth: to a million, and they're cosmetologists. Like, you might as well be an aesthetic person, go to the state and get a license to do eyebrows and nails and lashes, because that's what they do.

Alan Roth: And they inject Botox and stuff like that, and it's just a crack of crap. It's amazing how they've allowed this field to develop, that these people are making a half a million to a million or more, if they're in a fancy Manhattan practice, and people are paying for things they think they need.

Alan Roth: I crack up, because it's almost once a week.

Alan Roth: I get a patient saying, oh, my sister said I should get a referral to a dermatologist for my annual skin exam, and I'm like...

A Return to Healing Podcast - Episode 49 - Feb 8 2026

Alan Roth: Alright, take your shirt off, I'll look, I'll give you the one for free, it'll save you, you know, parking, and a co-pay of a specialist, and all that. I said, it's ridiculous. I said, I've been doing dermatology since,

Alan Roth: a resident.

Andy Lazris: This is part of what we do. But also, it's also really important to know that there are different kinds of skin cancer. So when they created this, you know, skin cancer detection base, I remember I was like this young doctor, you know, I'd just started, I moved down to Maryland, and I had this, I decided, okay.

Andy Lazris: I've been a... I was a lifeguard. I probably am at high risk. I'm gonna go see a dermatologist and get my annual skin test.

Andy Lazris: And this was a long time ago, right? In the 80s, or whatever, 90s, I don't know. And I went to Hopkins, because that's in my backyard, and the guy looks at me and says, what do you want me to look at? I said, I got nothing in particular.

Andy Lazris: He said, so you want one of those skin tests so I could figure out if you have cancer? He said, yeah. He said, let me tell you, you're a doctor, right? I said, yeah. He said, those are worthless. He said.

Andy Lazris: We have, we have some...

Andy Lazris: studies showing that people who get skin tests like that every year do worse than people who don't get skin tests. It certainly hasn't reduced any skin cancer deaths, and we're gonna look for stuff that you might as well never remove. Removing squamous cells and basal cells typically is not necessary. All my older patients are riddled with that stuff.

Alan Roth: Huh?

Andy Lazris: And there's studies that show when you cut it off, there's a 20% risk of injury from the procedure, whereas if you leave it alone, no one dies from these cancers. You can... and let me make a caveat, because I once said that, and someone said, well, my brother-in-law died from... okay, there are some that spread.

Alan Roth: Melanoma. That's it.

A Return to Healing Podcast - Episode 49 - Feb 8 2026

Andy Lazris: melanoma. That's what we're looking for, and it's very rare when you get older to have a melanoma anyway, but you'll notice a melanoma. Some melanomas show up in your... under your nails, in your gums, you know, in your eye, which you can't tell, but the screening doesn't

Andy Lazris: it doesn't change the outcome. And that's the whole point. Any screening test

Andy Lazris: like anything, whether it's mammograms, colonoscopies, or PSA, if it doesn't change the outcome, if you're gonna die at the same rate, but you will be put at risk from the procedure to remove this.

Andy Lazris: this phantom cancer, that's a problem. And they're really preying on old people where I am, and we end up... I end up... one of my old people said, well, you said this was normal, but it turns out to be a cancer. Right. I said, I just said it wasn't dangerous. I never said it was normal.

Alan Roth: Right, right.

Andy Lazris: Things like that.

Alan Roth: And we call these cancers in medicine, I didn't term it, I don't know who termed it, turtles. You know, they're not going anywhere, they're not gonna hurt you, and they just sit there, moving a little bit every day. And...

Alan Roth: Removing them is the harm. Infection, and even more than that, people are permanently scarred when they have benign things removed from their body for no reason. People think

Alan Roth: That, you know, plastic surgeons and dermatologists are magicians, like, they point, and it's gone. Like, that's not the reality. You take things off someone's skin, the best plastic surgeon in the world, there's gonna be a scar. Like, that's just how skin heals. It's absurd.

Andy Lazris: Well, then you could go to the dermatologist to have these laser procedures to remove the scar, right? It all just gets... it reminds me of the cartoon that I saw that said, you know, a cured patient is a lost customer.

Andy Lazris: But not in our medical system, because the cure creates new problems, and then you're... you're actually more of a customer the more you see people like...

A Return to Healing Podcast - Episode 49 - Feb 8 2026

Alan Roth: Exactly, and while you're there, you know, you could get your tattoo removed, you know, that you got when you were drunk, for some stupidity, you know?

Andy Lazris: Right, and then get drunk and get another one, and then it's a cycle. But yeah, people really think their lives are being saved by going to these dermatologists, and the dermatologists, through their campaigns, their advertising campaigns, and it's still on TV. You could see these ads all the time.

Andy Lazris: That, you know, we are saving your life. There was, you know, there was a funny Seinfeld episode about it, if anyone remembers when he was dating the dermatologist.

Andy Lazris: And she says to him, you know, what does Seinfeld know? She says, well, I am actually a lifesaver. I save people from skin cancer. I'm like, really? Because I... when I need something cut off that I can't do, I skip the dermatologist. I send them to a surgeon, you know?

Alan Roth: Absolutely, I agree. If I think someone's got a melanoma, sometimes I'll biopsy it, but most of the time they're not, so I do biopsy them, and they're not. But I've had a couple in my career, and in 40 years, I did have one patient die from a melanoma. Melanomas can be aggressive, we know that.

Andy Lazris: Right.

Alan Roth: But, you know, they have... there's very few non-pigmented melanomas, but, you know, you'd have to take off 50,000 skin lesions to pick up one if you weren't smart in what you were doing. And people aren't smart. So I laugh. In New York, they've popped up like roaches. They're called the dermatology specialists.

Alan Roth: So they literally opened up one, I cracked up, next... right next to one of our safety net hospital, urban, inner city.

Alan Roth: Medicaid clinics, essentially, that's the people we take care of. They opened up right next door, and I was like.

Alan Roth: what are these people, crazy? Like, they're opening a for-profit practice right next to a Medicaid clinic. Are they expecting to get the patients from there?

Alan Roth: And I looked in there, I went in there one day, and I said, you know, is the doctor in? Can I speak to them? Oh, we don't have a doctor here. They have a nurse practitioner, you know? And what does it take to teach a nurse practitioner or a PA how to remove a lesion? Well.

A Return to Healing Podcast - Episode 49 - Feb 8 2026

Alan Roth: You clean it with a little betadine, you give a little injection of local anesthesia, you take a knife or a skin curette, you scoop it out, and you take an electrocorder and burn it. I could teach someone to do that in 5 minutes, and they're now the dermatology specialists!

Andy Lazris: And those specialists are walking around nursing homes, Seeing everybody.

Andy Lazris: And these, you know, 90-year-old demented people have a squamous cell sitting somewhere that they've had for 20 years.

Andy Lazris: And they cut it off. And they got paid big bucks for this. The reimbursement for you and I to do it is far lower than for them to do it, which is another thing we could talk about, how, like, if I read an EKG and a cardiologist reads an EKG, they're two different payments for the.

Alan Roth: Absolutely. And the same with the dermatologist. But I laugh, so when I take off a skin lesion, I don't need to be bad, but, you know, a little bit, I hope, maybe it is a skin cancer, because if I take off a benign mole on someone, we get, like, \$25, and if it's a squamous cell.

Alan Roth: or a basal cell carcinoma, again, neither of which will kill you, I get, like, 125. I'm going rich there. It's like, alright.

Andy Lazris: Better to find the stuff, the benign stuff. Yeah, we were talking before we got on about when we used to be at the Loun conference, which was the big think tank, it still is, big think tank in Boston that looks at overuse, over-treatment, but they used to have an annual conference we went to.

Alan Roth: Andy, they're gonna have one this year, we gotta talk about that.

Andy Lazris: Oh, that we could go to?

Alan Roth: Yeah.

Andy Lazris: Oh, wow. That would be excellent. But... but they... because they were the best conferences. Honestly, they had the best people talking. But there was this one guy who was a dermatologist. He used to be in Hawaii, and he moved to Vermont, I think, and he did a study showing...

Andy Lazris: In a single practice, the... the rate that the... each dermatologist billed Medicare for basically removing

A Return to Healing Podcast - Episode 49 - Feb 8 2026

Andy Lazris: Either through cryosurgery, which is freezing, or scalpeling these skin lesions. And he was, of course, the lowest biller. He was, like, I don't know, \$10,000 a year. But there were people in his practice over the same period, which was a year, making a couple million. And... and... because they just did everybody.

Andy Lazris: And he said the outcomes were exactly the same, in terms of skin cancer death, which is really the only measurable outcome we care about. But they don't... they don't care about that. So, even when we remove... because melanomas...

Andy Lazris: The ones that are ultra-aggressive, will have spread before you even see them. Yep. Removing them is useless. And the other ones aren't ultra-aggressive. So, that's what this guy said, too. This guy from Hopkins. I said, well, melanoma will kill everyone.

Andy Lazris: He said, that's what they'd like you to believe. He said, but the aggressive ones will kill you.

Andy Lazris: And there's nothing we could do about that. They're spread. He said, but all... he said most melanomas don't kill you. He said, they're like the other things. He said, so, is another... he said, another lie from my profession, is what he said. You can see this guy was honest and angry, you know, and the fact that I walked in there was... really fired him up.

Alan Roth: Well, that's like us, two angry schmucks.

Andy Lazris: We're two angry schmucks, because we see this blatant abuse of people's trust. And at the same time, this salesmanship job that has succeeded.

Andy Lazris: And let's talk about a second part of this, Alan, which irks me even more. This same guy I talked about signs his emails, united in the battle against sunscreen. So.

Andy Lazris: Sunscreen... the sunscreen industry has basically, jumped on the dermatology industry's idea of how to advertise.

Andy Lazris: And their basic view is, you know, if you use sunscreen, you will not die of skin cancer. Let's just get it right out there. That's not true. I mean, it's never been shown. I read this book, Anti-Fragile, recently, and if...

Andy Lazris: The guy... the guy who wrote it knows more about healthcare. He's a... he's... some... he was a day trader on Wall Street, but he figured everything out. Even... he was willing

A Return to Healing Podcast - Episode 49 - Feb 8 2026

to even say some really controversial stuff that's true, but he... he said, look, our skin has evolved over a long period of time.

Andy Lazris: to let in the right amount of vitamin D, other things that keep us alive. Our skin is incredibly important for our immune system. The things we activate from sun, are incredibly important to protect us against cancer, against infection. In fact.

Andy Lazris: Recent studies have shown, and you and I wrote an article about this, Alan, that the vitamin D you take by mouth

Andy Lazris: will raise your vitamin D levels, but it is inert. It doesn't work, it doesn't do anything. The only way to get vitamin D is to activate it through the skin.

Andy Lazris: So we are now covering our skin with this stuff that has not, again, not reduced skin cancer deaths at all, but has prevented the absorption of really important things, including activated vitamin D, that prevent cancer. So here's the great irony. We're putting this on to prevent cancer, and we're causing cancer.

Alan Roth: Absolutely.

Alan Roth: And it's never been shown to prevent melanomas, like.

Andy Lazris: Right.

Alan Roth: It's totally ridiculous, but it's a billion-dollar industry, and all this is billions of dollars in industry and wasted healthcare, and...

Alan Roth: you know, people don't talk about, you know, the negative things of having stuff done to you that you don't need. Whether it is an infection, or a scar, or just the worry, oh my god, I got basal cell carcinoma, like, I might die from this, like, you know, it might disfigure my nose. I want to tell a story. So, about 6 months ago.

Alan Roth: I have this woman come in, she's, like, 74 or 76 years old, in that range, and she's got a little dot on her nose.

Alan Roth: And she came back, and she says, you know, went to the dermatologist, they did a biopsy. I mean, literally, the dot was, like, a dot, and they said.

Alan Roth: They scraped it off, and it's a basal cell carcinoma, right here on the tip of her nose.

A Return to Healing Podcast - Episode 49 - Feb 8 2026

Alan Roth: And I'm going for Mohs therapy. So, you know, for the folks that don't know, Andy talked about it earlier, it's

Alan Roth: They literally shave off a microscopic piece, and then they go look at it under the microscope, so they could charge you \$20,000 to say that they're doing this, okay? And if they see two cancer cells, they're gonna scrape again, and then they're gonna go do it again.

Alan Roth: And so... The woman comes back, you know, 3, 4, 5 months later.

Alan Roth: And she looks like Bozo the Clown.

Alan Roth: She's got a red button on the tip of her nose, this round circle here. She literally looks like Bozo, that says, oh, I had the most, but they saved my life. I don't care I have that round circle on the tip of my nose, I'm alive, you know? It's... and this is what people think.

Andy Lazris: This is what it always is. I saved my life just in the nick of time. When I tell people, you know, you don't have to do that, and they go, they say, you know, you were gonna let me die.

Andy Lazris: I've had, actually, people tell me that, you're gonna let me die, but I'm like, this wasn't gonna kill you. I said, but now you look like Bozo the Clown, and it could be worse than Bozo the Clown, you could have part of your nose removed.

Alan Roth: And we actually didn't talk about the worst one yet. So the worst one, in my opinion, is actually actinic keratinin.

Andy Lazris: Oh, God's the worst one, yeah.

Alan Roth: So, for the folks online, akinic teratosis is, like.

Alan Roth: Most elderly people have it. I have some. You know, you rub your skin like this, and you go around, and you feel a little piece of sandpaper there.

Alan Roth: And you're like, oh, it feels like a little piece of sandpaper. Oh, that's an ectinic keratosis. That is, quote, premalignant. Like, you know, 1 in 10,000 is gonna turn into a basal cell carcinoma.

Andy Lazris: Which still won't kill you.

A Return to Healing Podcast - Episode 49 - Feb 8 2026

Alan Roth: But still won't kill you, but dermatologists are probably freezing and burning billions of dollars worth of something that is totally useless and has about a 90% one-year chance of just going away.

Alan Roth: And they're making billions of dollars, and people are dying from hunger, and obesity, and not getting the right care they need. But the American Cancer Society and the American Dermatological Society say, we're saving the world with Mohs therapy.

Andy Lazris: Well, that's the whole thing, and like I said at the beginning, this total abuse of trust, and really, it pulls us back in the medical world

Andy Lazris: to when people were just pushing these carts and promising the world, and they were snake oil salesmen and bat medicine salesmen, and they promised that they would save your life if you take this elixir. Why is it... the only difference now is that they are cons...

Andy Lazris: considered legitimate. Yeah.

Alan Roth: Degree!

Andy Lazris: Billions of dollars compared to these push cart guys who were not.

Alan Roth: They got a degree... they got a degree that they're making money on, and you know, read our book, A Return to Healing, you will see, you know, Snake Oil Salesman is one of Andy's favorites, but it's so true. It's so true.

Alan Roth: Most of these physicians, especially dermatologists and others in certain fields, are selling you snake oil, and people are buying it and spending billions of dollars, and it's adding to the healthcare system, and some of this stuff is paid for by insurance, because it's considered...

Alan Roth: kinic keratosis, and basal cells, and squamous cells, and there's, you know, a million treatments. It's just...

Alan Roth: Someone needs to wake up and say, we have one of the worst healthcare systems in the world, and we are hurting people more than helping people. Let's go back to the basics of primary care, and let's make people healthy, let's go back to lifestyle medicine.

Alan Roth: And stop with paying these specialists for procedures, and let's pay for primary care, and thinking

A Return to Healing Podcast - Episode 49 - Feb 8 2026

Alan Roth: And thinking about how to avoid spending all this money to make people more unhealthy and more worried for things that

Alan Roth: Is not gonna make a difference in their lives.

Andy Lazris: Yeah, yet another fake epidemic that they've created, and I always tell people that the basic business model of the medical system is to scare you to death, and then do crap to you that is going to harm you. But you think your life is saved just in the nick of time. And yes, if they didn't pay so much.

Andy Lazris: for these procedures, like Mohs and other things, then guess what? They wouldn't do them. It's a very simple financial math. It's a lot more... it's a lot more difficult to talk about lifestyle medicine and to help people through that, but we get paid nothing for that.

Andy Lazris: It's much easier to cut off a lesion. I always say, one lesion cut off could be a day of patience for me, in terms of reimbursement. And that's the sad reality, is our payment system...

Alan Roth: And how many people did you help in that day? You know, truly help.

Andy Lazris: It changed their lives. It truly helped. It truly helped, and it took a lot of brain power, and a lot of compassion, and a lot of focus for me to get through the day to help all these people. A labor of love.

Andy Lazris: But they just take out their knife and cut, and they're... they've just said... and then they say, I saved your life. We don't say that kind of... we don't lie like that, so we're just like the, you know, the guys out in the dirt helping people. But anyway, so... so we'll keep... there are a lot of other topics very similar to this one, where

Andy Lazris: People where these specialty societies have advertised and created this illusion that they are helping you

Andy Lazris: for their own profit, which they don't... no, they're saints, they're saints. So we'll talk about some of the other ones moving forward.

Alan Roth: And we know that all these pandemics we create is truly not a pandemic, it's just we're diagnosing things that have been there forever, like skin cancers, because they didn't kill anybody.

A Return to Healing Podcast - Episode 49 - Feb 8 2026

Andy Lazris: They left him alone in the past, they were smart enough to do that. I always wonder, Alan, whether the dermatologists are... like, the guy we know, we met, is, like, infuriated by what his colleagues are doing. Are these people just doing it because they believe it's helping people, or do they know the reality that they're just fooling people?

Alan Roth: My gamble bet is it's 50-50. I think there's some people that really think they're doing a good thing, and they believe, you know...

Alan Roth: you know, they bought the Kool-Aid kind of thing, and then there's the others that are just, you know, getting their Bentleys and Lamborghinis and stuff like that.

Andy Lazris: And they just gotta keep up with the other dermatologists.

Andy Lazris: Okay, Alan, well, have a good cold Sunday.

Alan Roth: You too. Keep warm.

Andy Lazris: Okay, you too. Take care.