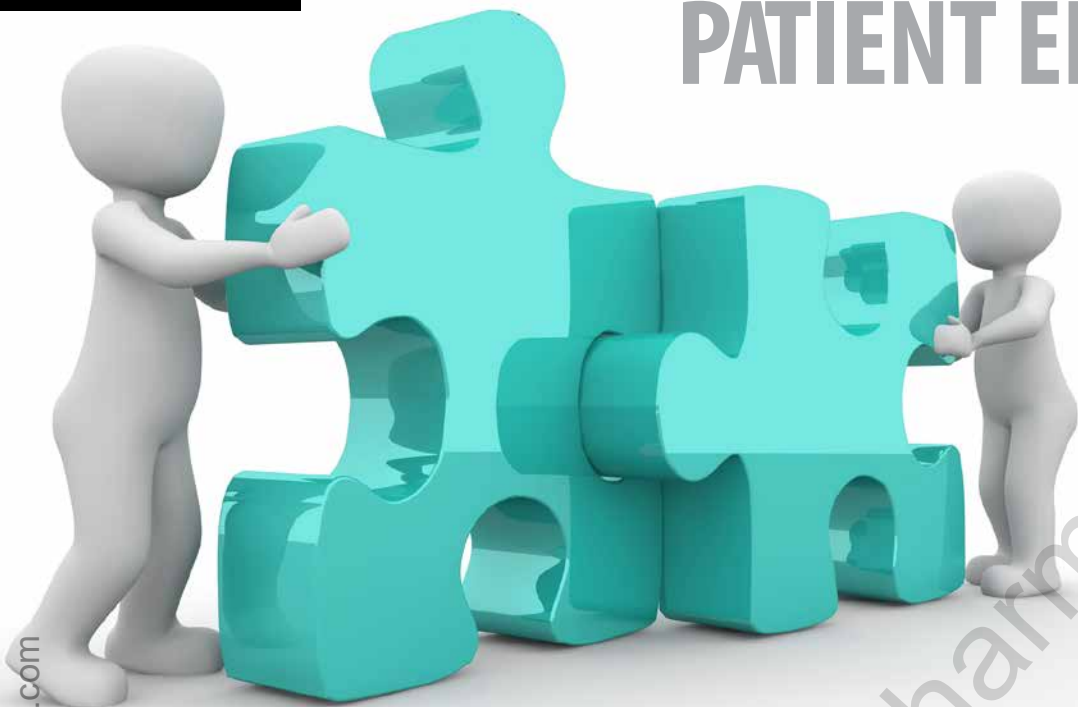


Robin Robinson

PATIENT ENGAGEMENT: *NOT JUST FOR* PHYSICIANS ANYMORE

The pharma industry has a responsibility to drive better patient engagement.



When Pfizer wanted to engage with people living with chronic pain, it used an online crowdsourcing model and social media campaign that connected thousands of people, from patients and caregivers, to nurses and doctors.

In what was the first initiative of its kind by a pharmaceutical company, Pfizer collaborated with patient advocacy groups to launch a photo-sharing initiative using Flickr and encouraged chronic pain patients to share photos representing their pain and to tell their stories. The campaign also used Facebook, Twitter, and a social cause site Care2 to empower patients to share their feelings using their preferred channels. Patient advocacy groups partnering with Pfizer integrated the campaign's social media channels as widgets onto their own websites and digital platforms to give the initiative maximum reach among patients.

Pfizer's approach was a break from convention for pharma in the digital environment because it was not designed to attract patients to a campaign website, but rather to engage them via the social media channels they were already using.

While the pressure is on physicians to engage patients through digital means (see digital bonus copy on Meaningful Use and proposed changes to the requirements), pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies also

need to get in the game of using technology to improve patient engagement.

Pfizer is continuing its efforts to drive better patient engagement, and patient engagement — not surprisingly — needs to center on patients, their needs, and their behaviors, according to Vera Rulon, director, external medical communications, Pfizer Medical, Pfizer. However simple that concept may seem, the industry has been product-centered for a long time, and has been slow in shifting gears to be truly patient-centric.

FAST FACT

THE GLOBAL PATIENT ENGAGEMENT MARKET IS ESTIMATED TO GROW AT A CAGR OF 20% FROM 2014 TO 2019, REACHING \$13.7 BILLION BY 2019.

Source: MarketandMarkets.

“To drive patient engagement we must include patients and caregivers in development of any solution, treatment, or digital strategy that is to be patient-centric,” Ms. Rulon says. “Often, new products are created or healthcare delivery process changes without incorporating patient input. This

can lead to a solution that is not helpful to patients.”

Creation Healthcare developed that first successful engagement campaign for Pfizer by conducting a comprehensive analysis of social media conversation taking place among patients and caregivers in public social media, so that the company could understand how patients talk about their pain and the channels they use. By sharing these insights with patient advocacy partners, the agency was able to design a campaign tailored to patient engagement behaviors and unmet needs.

“For pharma to successfully engage with stakeholders online, whether they are patients, caregivers, or nurses and doctors, it is essential to first understand the current digital behaviors of those stakeholders,” says Daniel Ghinn, founder of Creation Healthcare. “In Pfizer's initiative, by listening to patients first, we were able to shape engagement around those patients' needs and help Pfizer create a campaign that advocacy groups were proud to be part of.”

Ms. Rulon says it is easy for the industry to forget that there is more to a person's well-being than a pill they may take for their condition. There are many aspects, such as social factors and quality of life, that must be considered when developing a therapy.

“Most importantly, we need to understand what patients' expectations are and what good outcomes mean to them,” she says. “There really is no one strategy for driving patient

(c) PharmaLinx LLC. Rights do not include promotional use. For distribution or printing rights, contact mwals@pharmavoice.com

engagement; it's a combination of listening to patients, leveraging digital communications, and finding solutions and treatments that meet their needs."

Defining expectations can only come from a thorough investigation of each step of the patient's involvement, says Kathleen Bonetti, VP of marketing, Rx Edge. There are many opportunities to engage the patient along the various stages of treatment decision and beyond. Once these have all been identified, each place can be a rich and significant touch for patient engagement. This can be challenging, because the stages are not so much a linear progression as they are a process with multiple twists, turns, falling back, moving forward.

"In spite of those challenges, there is an opportunity to meaningfully connect with patients at every juncture," Ms. Bonetti says. "That means creating strategies that are based on reaching patients when and where they are searching for solutions, motivated to take action, want education and information, and are willing to focus attention."

Patient engagement and medication adherence are key drivers for pharmaceutical market success, says Tracy Foster, president of Lash Group, a part of AmerisourceBergen. With 22% of U.S. patients taking less of the medication than is prescribed, the industry needs to get to the bottom of what is causing patient drop-off. Next, says Ms. Foster, the industry needs to identify who is at risk for medication non-adherence and determine how best to reach those patient types, for example a spectrum of reminder devices, digital tools, mobile apps, personalized telehealth interactions, refill synchronization, etc.

"Based on that information, then we can determine the best strategy forward," she says. "The goal is to build on foundational marketing approaches designed to maximize awareness and access and then develop adherence and engagement strategies to address patient-specific barriers that achieve optimal health outcomes."

Patient engagement solutions should incorporate a patient's real-world behavioral needs and facilitate the skills and motivation necessary to optimally self-manage a condition on a daily basis. Additionally, programs need to go beyond a one-way push or collection of information, says Jessica Brueggeman, senior VP, health behavior group, MicroMass Communications.

"To be relevant in value-based care,



Mobile health technologies, EHRs, and online patient engagement platforms are driving improved patient engagement like never before.

DAVID AVITABILE
Mana



There are many opportunities to engage the patient along the various stages of treatment decision and beyond.

KATHLEEN BONETTI
Rx Edge



Technologies such as automated services and Web portals offer a safety net, and high-touch services close the gap to ensure patients get the healthcare support they need.

TRACY FOSTER
Lash Group, a part of
AmerisourceBergen

life-science companies must deliver the best outcomes at the lowest possible cost and a successful strategy for patient engagement will leverage evidence-based approaches that go beyond a disease-centric or clinical perspective," she says. "Programs should offer interactive, skill-building experiences that leverage health coaching and motivational interviewing techniques to support patients in reaching their personalized health goals."

Some of the drivers that are pushing the industry toward more patient-centric engagement include the fact that patients as general consumers are experiencing customer service practices in other industries that tailor to their specific needs and behaviors — think Amazon. Patients expect that same experience from the healthcare industry. Also, the recent government-driven initiatives to get patients involved with their own healthcare by having access to their medical records and improving access to health insurance are creating more empowered patients. But most importantly, the technology is now available to make this all happen easily and seamlessly.

"Technologies such as automated services and Web portals offer a safety net, and high-touch services close the gap to ensure patients get the healthcare support they need," Ms. Foster says. "Empowering patients to be engaged in the process and to use a model that leverages both high-tech and high-touch ap-

Survey Points to Patient Portals for Effective Patient Engagement



According to the fourth annual HIMSS mobile survey, more than 200 healthcare provider employees reported leveraging a variety of mobile tools, including app-enabled patient portals (73%), telehealth services (62%), and text communications (57%). Of these technologies, 36% of respondents believe the use of app-enabled patient portals is the most effective tool in patient engagement to date.

proaches provides an important and intelligent balance and allows for the ability to provide coordinated care through a model that will continue to be relevant."

Bringing a holistic understanding of the patient's journey together with new possibilities enabled by advances in digital technology, such as augmented reality and remote patient monitoring, will create a new set of breakthroughs in patient engagement, according to Greg Rotz, partner, Strategy&.

"Our research has shown those patients

(c) PharmaLinx LLC. Rights do not include promotional use. For distribution or printing rights, contact mwals@pharmavoices.com



A successful strategy for patient engagement will leverage evidence-based approaches that go beyond a disease-centric or clinical perspective.

JESSICA BRUEGEMAN
MicroMass
Communications



There is no one strategy for driving patient engagement; it's a combination of listening to patients and finding solutions and treatments that meet their needs.

VERA RULON
Pfizer

who are most committed to their treatments have three things in common: their condition matters to them, they take it seriously; they value their doctor's recommendations; and they believe their treatment is making a difference," Mr. Rotz says. "These three commonalities can be turned into standards for defining a good patient engagement strategy."

Therefore, an effective patient engagement strategy will have a compelling approach for helping the patient understand the importance of his or her condition, he adds, and it should also help to ensure the physician-patient interaction is an experience that builds commitment. And most importantly, the strategy needs to create positive patient experiences, including transparency on what results to expect by when and how to know if the treatment is working.

"Mobile health technologies, electronic health records, and online patient engagement platforms are driving improved patient engagement like never before," says David Avitabile, founder, Mana. "I think technology, more than anything else, is the most successful pathway."

And with Apple's HealthKit now coming online, the industry has entered the era of Patient Engagement 3.0, especially when it comes to life-sciences companies being able to

connect directly with patients to collect data, conduct research and evaluate outcomes, he says. (For more about HealthKit and how it is shaping clinical trials, read *Wearables in Clinical Trials* in this issue.)

Despite HIPAA and other data security concerns that may arise from all the data living in the cloud, Mr. Avitabile doesn't see the risk as a major hurdle for digital and mobile health and expects the industry will adapt, much like the financial services and banking industries have adjusted to overcome data breaches.

"Technology allows us to extend care offerings and not simply communicate across more channels, including mobile, but to offer more personalized content and support," says Matthew Stumm, principal, creative and media strategy, BBK Worldwide. "The most effective engagement strategy is a multi-channeled approach and one that addresses the needs of all stakeholders — patients, caregivers, and providers."

The right communications can alter or change behaviors and encourage better ones — and engaging on topics that include health, lifestyle, and general wellness is mutually beneficial for all involved. Beyond-the-pill approaches offer value beyond the medicines themselves and treating patients effectively is critical to addressing rising healthcare costs.

"The upside is that doing right by patients is not only the right thing to do, but it also is very good business," Mr. Stumm says.

While the ability to engage patients more holistically is rich with opportunity to increase medication adherence and create benefits for both pharma and patients, payers are also coming onboard to this approach. Interest is growing for initiatives targeting specific therapeutic areas, including oncology, MS, and rheumatoid arthritis.

"Market research conducted by Xcenda, a part of AmerisourceBergen, shows growing payer interest in manufacturer adherence and patient engagement initiatives," Ms. Foster says. "When asked if they would be willing to partner with a manufacturer to provide services to high-risk populations within their plans to improve and report on compliance and persistency, nearly half of payers participating in the survey said they would have interest in such programs."

Increasing Importance of Patient Engagement

Although the concept of patient engagement has been around for years the capabilities of technology, the increased knowledge and empowerment of patients, and the goal to decrease healthcare costs through improved patient compliance and adherence are all creating a new and more crucial role. The principle of connected patients has evolved, although not always clearly, and will continue to drive efficiencies within the healthcare system.

"The way we communicate and share information has changed profoundly with the increased use of digital and mobile technology," Ms. Rulon says. "The best solution to bettering the healthcare delivery system is to improve communication between patients, caregivers, and their providers, including new sources of data to inform them in shared decision-making."

This is especially valuable when it increases adherence to medications. In the United States alone, nonadherence is estimated to cost the healthcare system between \$100 billion and \$289 billion a year, according to an Agency for Healthcare Research & Quality study.

"Mobile health technologies provide an opportunity to help improve adherence rates, but not without the patient's involvement and commitment in using these tools," Ms. Rulon says. "As patients continue to be more aware and incentivized to use new tools to achieve their healthcare





If only changing patient behavior were this easy.

But it's not. Changing behavior requires a specialist like MicroMass.

More than 20 years ago, MicroMass introduced the idea of using evidence-based behavioral strategies to shift attitudes, build skills, and improve patient outcomes for pharma brands. Our award-winning creative translates behavioral science into compelling programs that change the lives of patients.

Why trust your patient marketing to anything less than a specialist?

Email Jude today at Jude.Kelly@micromass.com to find out how our specialized expertise can lead to more effective patient support and marketing initiatives.

micromass
COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

WeAreSpecialists.com



Sound Bites

There are many challenges to providing effective patient engagement facing the industry, including the fact that there is no one-size-fits-all model. Each pathway must be appropriately matched with each patient and physician segment. Thought leaders in the space offer tips to better customize patient engagement.



SUPRIYA DESAI, M.D.
 Director of Medical
 Safety Operations
 Sciformix

The phenomenal reach and use of social media have revolutionized how patient-centric models can be effectively deployed. Social media presents channels for patients to submit health and product-related complaints, adverse events, and for companies to disseminate information related to health and safety.

Harmonization of healthcare and safety advice with specific patient needs, preferences, and abilities enables effective, informed participation of patients in their own healthcare and safety. The right patient engagement model involves flexibility, accessibility, and affordability, allowing open communication between industry, patients, and healthcare providers. This helps build public trust and deliver improved health outcomes and quality of life to patients.



KATRINA FIRLIK, M.D.
 Chief Medical Officer
 and Co-Founder
 HealthPrize
 Technologies

We have to offer multiple solutions — and then try to figure out which patients need which solution — or offer a multifaceted solution. If we employ a simple reminder tactic, we would target patients already motivated to fill and take the medication, but who occasionally miss a dose, the least worrisome facet of the adherence problem. If a motivational barrier is at play — patients at risk of not filling at all, or of quitting therapy — it will take more than a reminder. We would do better to combine rewards, education, and gamification as a motivational boost, all in one solution.



MELYNDA GEURTS
 VP of Operations, DAC
 Patient Recruitment
 Services
 Imperial, CRS

Clinical trial participants are no different from consumers. They have expectations and want to feel that their contributions are valued. Patient engagement can be greatly enhanced if the industry takes the time to truly understand the patients' perspective and what ultimately motivates them or prevents them from participating in clinical trials. As an industry, we have a wealth of knowledge regarding the behavior of clinical trial participants. Now it's time to listen.



MATT RAMONDOS
 Executive VP,
 Director of Operations
 Remind-A-Cap

The foundation to meaningful patient engagement is building solutions based on conditions and disease states, then customizing programs to engage that specific patient's needs. A patient with hepatitis C, who suffers from brain fog may not respond well to a daily phone call, yet could see a drastic uptick in compliance if given a medication log. By researching conditions and learning more about the patient perspective, we can create tailored programs that better suit them. The challenge is in recognizing that more programs do not mean better engagement.



ASHLI SHERMAN
 VP, Client Services
 Ogilvy CommonHealth
 Behavioral Insights, part
 of Ogilvy CommonHealth
 Worldwide

With rapid changes in today's healthcare market, patient engagement strategies are a must, and they begin with understanding basic psychology and unique patient behaviors. Ogilvy CommonHealth's Behavioral Insights and Digital Services collaborate using a new form of digital forensics to generate our key insights and observations. Our linguists and behavioral science experts analyze data from public forums and online communities. We identify core aspects of conversations, posts, and digital artifacts to provide a comprehensive report that depicts a deeper understanding of how both populations' and individual patients' illnesses impact their lives and how they cope with consequences as they make their way along their disease continuum.

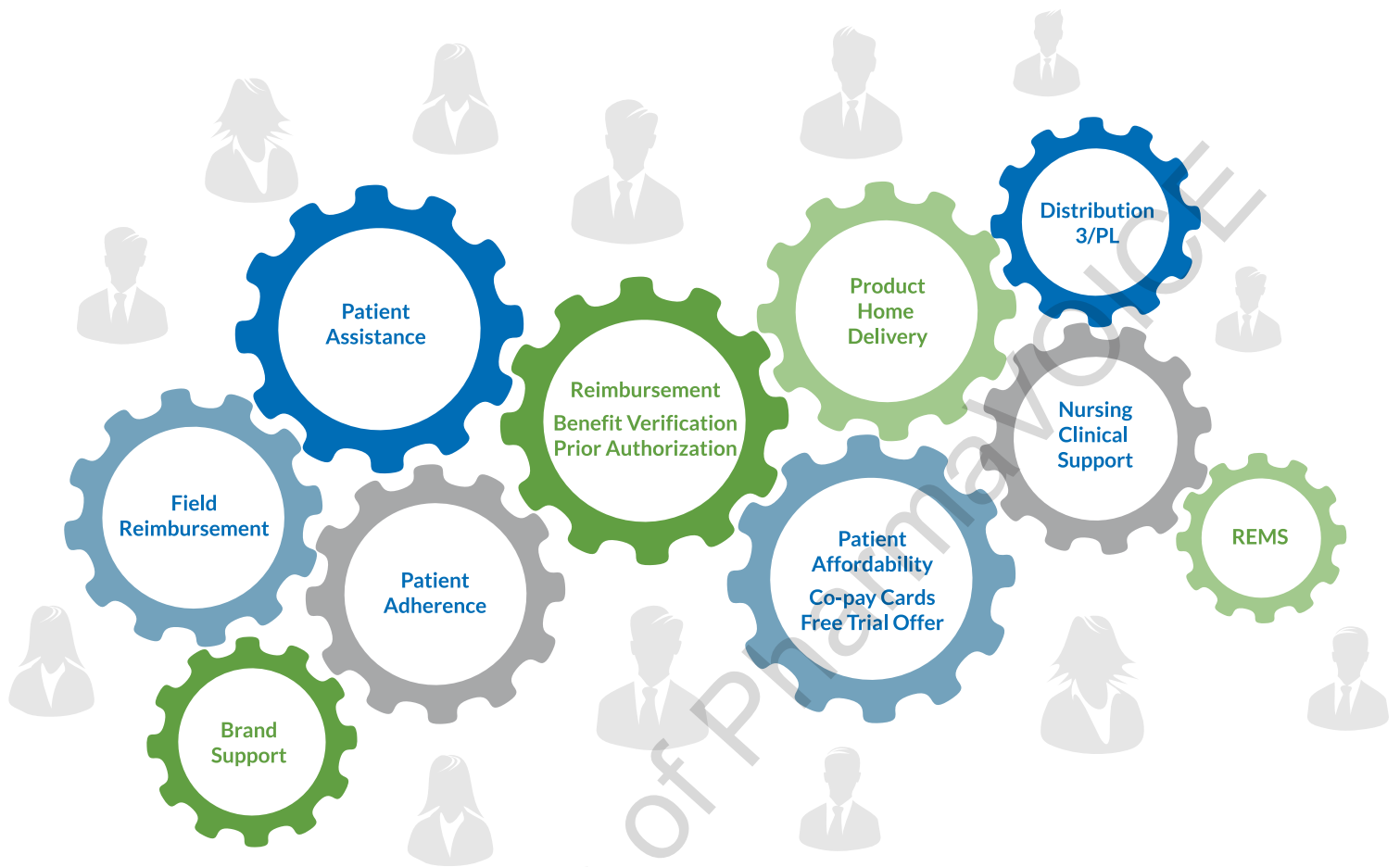


ANNE STROUP
 VP of Strategy
 Alliance Life Sciences

Data-driven marketing and stakeholder collaboration are critical components to patient engagement. Data-driven marketing creates and sustains a self-directed customer experience that supports a patient through the customer journey. From disease awareness to adherence, all stakeholders — manufacturers, health advocacy organizations, providers, and healthcare management companies — must collaborate to deliver the patient-education and behavior-management tools that support improved outcomes.

Collaboration includes value-add product and service development, deployment, and on-going management. Collaboration enables the solution diversity needed in this new paradigm. Data-driven marketing connects the right patient with the right resources when they are searching for them.

With **EXPERT** management...



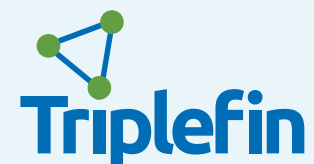
we'll keep all the wheels turning.

Looking for a better solution to manage patient access, reimbursement and adherence challenges? Triplefin provides a single point of entry to support and streamline the patient experience and speed therapy initiation using an integrated hub model approach. A full suite of services. One solution.

Your brand will run like a well-oiled machine.

Visit **Triplefin** to learn more about our capabilities and to schedule a brand workshop to evaluate your brand's needs.

triplefin.com | connect@triplefin.com | 855.877.5346



Removes barriers. Connects patients.
Grows brands.

goals, we have a greater opportunity to improve adherence: a well-informed patient is more likely to take action on his or her health.”

The industry has yet to gain confidence in how well patient engagement works, Ms. Brueggeman says, characterizing it as “a cloudy concept in pharma.” In reality however, the work of behaviorist Judith Hibbard demonstrates a direct link between patient engagement and improved clinical and economic outcomes.

“These empirical data establish a business case for patient engagement that has attracted attention from many stakeholders, including payer and provider organizations seeking innovative ways to improve outcomes and lower costs,” she says.

Despite the lack of clarity around the business benefit, both pharma companies and physicians are starting to use wearables, personal devices, mobile apps, and patient portals to communicate with the patient.

“While this new world order presents some additional challenges, these new technologies and data streams allow us to know more throughout the entire treatment process, which is all critical to improving patient engagement, finding better medicines and achieving better patient outcomes,” Mr. Stumm says. “Effective healthcare communications have always played an important role, but today’s health-conscious, digital consumer demands thoughtful and consistent communications and prefers content that is delivered across multiple devices and channels. And we know that a more engaged consumer is almost always a healthier consumer.”

One of the biggest changes over the years is that patient engagement is no longer a one-way street where patients get on board at the appropriate time and pharmaceutical brands start connecting with them from that point. Instead, patients are doing their own engaging and on their own terms. Gone are the days of automatically following doctor’s orders, Ms. Bonetti says. People are now researching medications, learning more about conditions on their own, seeking increased value, and expecting personalized experiences that are relevant to their own particular situation.

“Importantly, they normally do not want to engage with pharmaceutical products or be confronted with information about drugs and illness unless they or

a loved one have a need in the form of symptoms, general concerns, or a current known condition,” she says. “Only then will they take notice and only then will purposeful engagement take place.”

The deployment and adoption rates of technology such as ePrescribing, ePrior Authorization, and EMR/EHR integration will significantly increase the time providers can spend on patient care, and reduce the industry’s reliance on manual and time-consuming processes, Ms. Brueggeman says.

As the healthcare landscape continues to evolve, manufacturers will need to provide support services that result in a higher level of patient engagement. Technology and automated services make the process more efficient and easier for patients to stay connected.

“Pairing automation with high-touch approaches to interaction with patients ensures that we are reaching them on multiple levels to empower the patient and encourage behavioral changes that may result in continued adherence and successful health outcomes,” Ms. Brueggeman says.

While this new world order presents new challenges, technologies and data streams allow us to know more throughout the entire treatment process.

MATTHEW STUMM
BBK Worldwide



For pharma companies to successfully engage with stakeholders online, they must understand the digital behaviors of those stakeholders.

DANIEL GHINN
Creation Healthcare



As the result of the Affordable Care Act, patients are paying a much larger percentage of their own healthcare costs than ever before and because of this, they will become more engaged.

“Value becomes much more of a priority when self-interest is involved,” Mr. Avitabile says. “We’re starting to see a similar shift with regard to value-based pricing models driving greater physician engagement. When reimbursement is tied to certain objectives being met, and treatment outcomes being achieved, the importance of value, rather than volume, increases exponentially, and everybody becomes far more engaged.”

With the increase of patients paying for their own care, healthcare is becoming more of a retail market, Mr. Rotz says. By 2020, 45% of employees will be in high deductible health plans vs. 26% today. An increasing number of individuals are shopping for their own health plan on public and private exchanges.

“The consumerization of healthcare is here to stay,” he says. “This means we can expect patients to change how they seek healthcare. For example, patients will increase their use of lower-cost settings of care, such as retail minute-clinics, and they will increase their expectations for cost-effective therapies that demonstrate results quickly.”

Strategy&’s recent research survey shows pharma companies are making many investments to improve patient engagement, such as above-brand services and new digital tools. However, executives report mixed results of these programs thus far, including real disappointment in areas like digital.

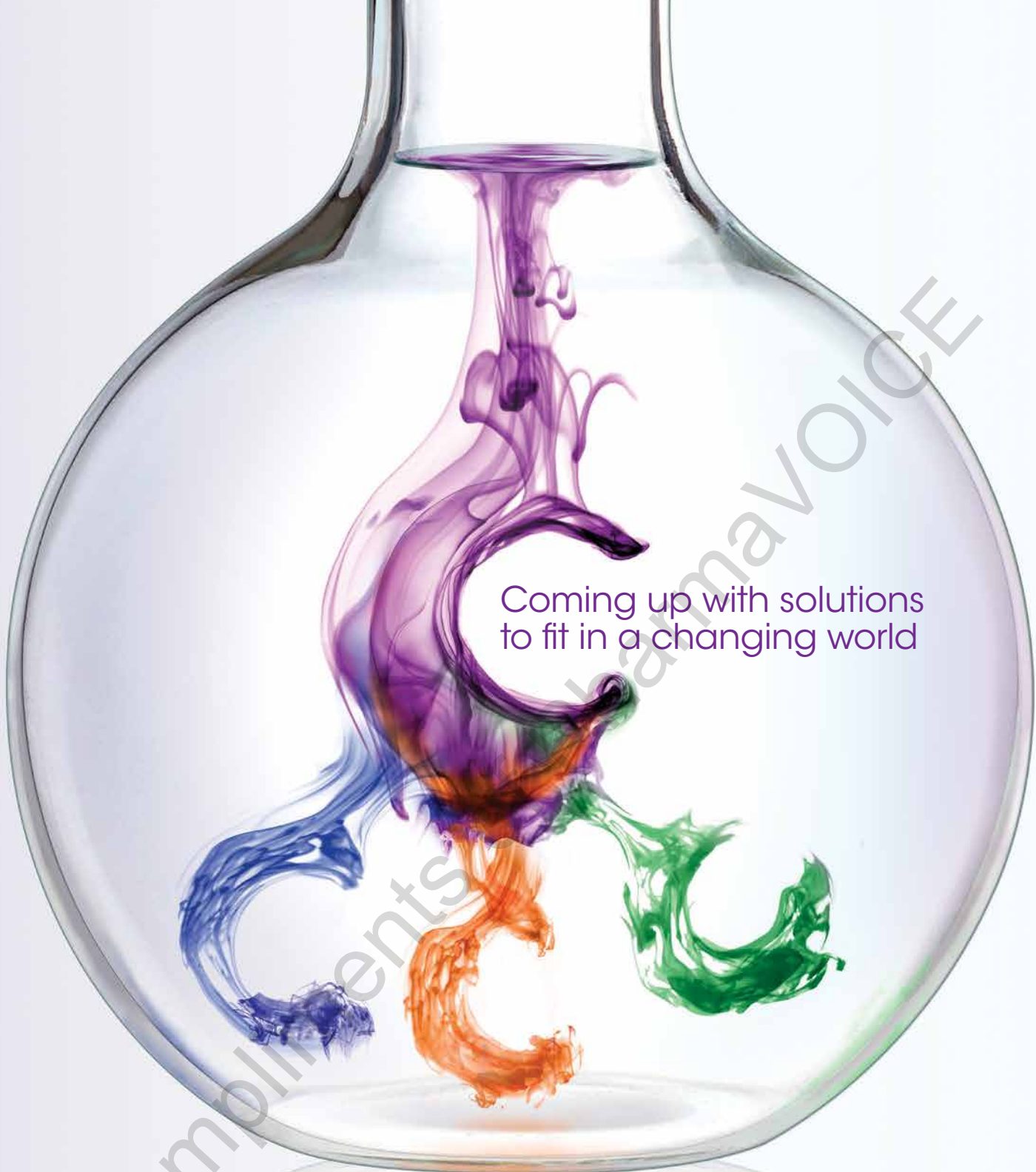
“To deliver better results, leaders in this space will take a step back to re-imagine the patient experience, then follow through with the offerings and capabilities that will truly make a difference for the patient,” Mr. Rotz says. ^{PV}

FOR BONUS CONTENT
USE YOUR QR CODE READER
OR GO TO
bit.ly/PV0615-PatientEngagement



(c) PharmaLinx LLC. Rights do not include promotional use. For distribution or printing rights, contact mwals@pharmavoices.com

(c) PharmaLinx LLC. Rights do not include promotional use.
For distribution or printing rights, contact mwals@pharmavoices.com



Coming up with solutions
to fit in a changing world

Centron now offers advertising, medical education,
public relations, and market access to make it easier
than ever for your brand to compete at the top.

Marcia McLaughlin
646-722-8902
mmclaughlin@centroncom.com




WILL REDUCING PROVIDER PATIENT ENGAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS IMPACT THE INDUSTRY?

Robin Robinson

While providers and hospitals might be pleased with the proposed change to MU Stage 2 requirements that CMS announced in April, not everyone is.

The proposed CMS requirements would lower the current patient engagement requirement for physicians to prove they have 5% of patients who are accessing medical records and information digitally to just one patient who is.

The proposed rule changes several other reporting aspects, as well. We asked our thought leaders to discuss what they think the long-term ramifications of the change will have on the growth of future patient engagement efforts. 

CMS Proposes Drop in Patient Engagement Meaningful Use Requirement

CMS announced in April a proposal to reduce Stage 2 meaningful use requirements related to patient engagement. Instead of requiring eligible professionals to have 5% of patients electronically download, view, and transmit medical records, they would only need to have one patient do so. The proposed rule also would:

- ▶ Shorten Medicare and Medicaid meaningful use attestation for eligible professionals and hospitals to a 90-day period in 2015;
- ▶ Realign the reporting period starting in 2015 to allow hospitals to participate on the calendar year instead of the current fiscal year period;
- ▶ Reduce the number of meaningful use objectives to improve advanced use of electronic health records; and
- ▶ Remove redundant measures and those that have become widely adopted.



DAVID AVITABILE

Founder
Mana

Health systems, ACOs, individual medical practices, and doctors are all “drinking from a fire hose” to keep up with

all of the changes in the U.S. healthcare system. I see the CMS proposal to possibly drop the patient engagement requirement to meet Stage 2 Meaningful Use objectives from 5% to one patient simply as an acknowledgement that it is going to take more time to achieve patient engagement objectives. Improving patient engagement is in everybody’s best interests. We will see increased patient engagement as patients pay more for their own healthcare and as healthcare providers become better connected to their patient populations through cloud-based platforms.



IGOR BELOKRINITSKY

Partner
Strategy&

The CMS announcement about the drop of the consumer engagement component of Meaningful Use (MU)

came out right before HIMSS and made some waves.

The MU program was created to encourage providers to digitize their practices in order to create a portable medical record and federal dollars were given to physicians and hospitals to meet a set of government requirements — we are currently at version 2.0 — with the so-called MU2

standard. The standard has several components; the one being discussed here is the capability to allow the patient to download some of their data such as their test results. Despite hundreds of millions spent by the government, and even more by the providers, I believe the MU program to be only partly successful for the following reasons. First, we still do not have a portable medical record; in fact, most provider systems are not built to allow patients to easily take their data elsewhere. Second, the EHR solutions that have emerged to take advantage of the subsidy have been of mixed quality. Most physician practices are on their second one already. Many hospitals are also replacing their systems.

Third, many physicians have complained about the EHR solutions reducing their productivity and making them slave to the machine. A recent article by UCSF’s Bob Wachter in the New York Times mentions an Arizona hospital that advertises its lack of EHR as a way of recruiting physicians.

The reason why physicians and nurses don’t like the current EHR solutions, while the patients ignore them, is because these solutions were not designed for either physicians or patients. They were built for two purposes: to comply with the government standard to earn the subsidy and to enable hospitals to improve their revenue.

Coming back to the update around the patient engagement component of the Meaningful Use, you can see why it matters very little. Incumbents are not focused on consumer-centric design. If the requirement had been left in place, they would have done the necessary minimal amount to help hospitals comply, potentially resulting in a cludgy, non-interoperable, outputs. The solutions for con-

sumer engagement might not come from large EHR vendors instead, they might have to come from nimble, cloud-based, user-centric upstarts that excel at behavioral psychology, data visualization, consumer segmentation, peer-to-peer collaboration, and other capabilities. In summary, I believe this to be a non-event that underscores the challenges and the unintended consequences of MU.



JESSICA BRUEGEMAN
Senior VP, Health
Behavior Group
MicroMass
Communications

Unfortunately, most provider organizations take a check-the-box approach with patient engagement and leverage patient portals as the sole tactic to drive patient involvement in their care. Patient portals serve many positive functions. They provide access to data, ease of scheduling appointments, and increased continuity of care between providers. However, patient portals do little to change patient attitudes or behaviors and do not facilitate true involvement in day-to-day care. Lowering the engagement requirement may send a message that portals are good enough, deterring greater investment, optimization, and realization of benefits from patient engagement efforts.

TRACY FOSTER
President
Lash Group, a part of AmerisourceBergen



Although providers are struggling to meet these thresholds, patients are eager to access their patient records via patient portals and mobile technology. For example, the Department of Veteran's Affairs' Blue Button

Door, which began in 2010, enabled 88 million patients to download their health records from a portal where they could access information ranging from clinical notes and lab results to emergency notes and imaging reports. When surveyed, these patients said they were accessing this information for the following reasons:

- ▶ 26% to know more about their health
- ▶ 21% curiosity
- ▶ 21% to understand what the provider said
- ▶ 13% to remember what happened in the visit
- ▶ 9% to check to see if the notes were right
- ▶ 6% to know what the provider was thinking

The Blue Button Door study showed that patients were engaged and understood the benefits of reading notes from their provider visit; 99% of participants wanted access to the site after the study and most participants said the availability of notes would influence their choice of future providers.



VERA RULON
Director,
External Medical
Communications
Pfizer Medical, Pfizer

I understand that it may be difficult for providers to ensure that their patients are accessing their health information. However, it is

more likely that patients aren't aware that this information is available to them. It is interesting that most patients do wish to have greater digital access to their providers and many providers have found benefits when their patients did access their medical records online, according to a Harris Poll survey. So, the meaningful use recommended change sets back the cause of patient engagement which is a critical part of improving healthcare in the United States. It is important to shift our approaches. By decreasing the requirement from 5% of patients accessing their medical information to just one patient, we lose the incentive to provide that access and educate patients and their caregivers on how they can manage their health and wellness by being better informed, especially when providing this access has proven beneficial, as exemplified by the Open Notes project.

Editor's Note: OpenNotes is a national initiative working to give patients access to the visit notes written by their doctors, nurses, or other clinicians. More than 4.8 million patients use Open Notes. In 2010, more than 100 primary care doctors from three diverse medical institutions across the United States began sharing notes online with their patients. Each site was part of a 12-month study to explore how sharing doctors' notes may affect healthcare. The evidence from this study suggests that opening up visit notes to patients may make care more efficient, improve communication, and most importantly may help patients become more actively involved with their health and health care. Now, this evidence has started a movement to enable patients to easily read notes written about their care, and to bring more transparency to medical records.

