

Responding to the Needs OF THE SAVVY PATIENT

► When healthcare IT strategist Leonard Kish referred to patient engagement as the blockbuster drug of the century, he tapped into an important realization: that the patient has to be at the center of everything a pharmaceutical company does.

Today's patients are increasingly savvy and engaged in their own health. They expect a say in decisions related to their care and they want to know how the products they are prescribed will benefit them. As PwC notes, there is a growing need for pharmaceutical companies to constructively engage with consumers to justify prices, show value, and satisfy calls by regulators who want them to work more closely with the people who use their products.

Pharmaceutical companies must move with the times. Today's patient communities are not only more educated, but they also have more information at their fingertips. They are connecting on social media networks, tracking their health data through apps and wearables, and searching for information about drugs being developed. According to PwC, 37% of

consumers have sought healthcare information on social media networks.

Proactive patient engagement is an important part of the equation for pharma companies today, not only because patients expect to be included but also because it is to the advantage of the business. At the same time, companies will have to tread carefully to ensure they adhere to regulations around patient privacy and don't overstep the mark. As PwC has stated, going forward pharmaceutical companies will have to determine the type of information patients want to access, how they wish to access that information, where and when, and other needs they may have.

Tools of the Trade

With patients now central to the conver-

sation, new tools, solutions, and approaches continue to emerge to help drive engagement. Among these are tools to enhance communication with customers and monitor patient outcomes. Companies are also looking to technologies to enhance data analytics, which can help them determine the value of the programs they are delivering and decide what product development direction to take.

PwC lists a number of tools that can be used in conjunction with online portals and mobile apps to enhance communication, including miniature implants, vital signs tracking devices, remote monitoring biosensors, and noninvasive diagnostics. In some cases, pharma companies have developed smartphone apps to communicate with patients, survey their health and symptoms, and help them to remain compliant. Such apps help companies

EXECUTIVE VIEWPOINTS



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THE ECOSYSTEM EXPERIENCE

Our industry needs to better appreciate that patients don't live in a disease vacuum. Although patients should always be at the center of a support intervention, an effective program must acknowledge and address the entire ecosystem of their experience. This includes the relationship with their doctor, the strength of their social support network, and, especially, how their condition or treatment impacts daily life, e.g. cooking for their family, taking children to school, commuting to work. As patients learn to manage their condition and treatment, we need to honor the fact that the rest of their lives must continue.



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GAMIFICATION CAN CHANGE BEHAVIOR

Within pharma, there's a lot of talk about gamification, a broad term used to describe the process of applying gaming elements to engage and motivate people in non-game contexts. The research shows that the use of gamification is still in its infancy with regard to patient support solutions. That said, the approach shows promise in enhancing interventions to change health behaviors for adults living with chronic physical health conditions, including treatment adherence. The key is to ensure the gamification element is both grounded in behavior theory and appropriate for the individual patient. With these aspects considered, gamification

can provide patients with a more coherent intervention experience and long-term results.



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TIMELY PATIENT MANAGEMENT

Pharma continues to adopt new strategies and technologies to address patient needs and provide innovative solutions. For example, one strategy is to help patients track their symptoms and help them become more involved and participate in their own care. By encouraging and motivating patients to more proactively track symptom control, patients will be able to provide real-time information to their healthcare team. This results in more timely and effective management of side

to understand patient needs, and can also be used to connect patients with healthcare providers as needed.

Another way to enhance patient well-being include incentives, for example a small lottery prize for obese patients who show regular weight loss.

During clinical trials, companies increasingly adopt tools such as electronic patient reported outcomes (ePRO) to make it easier for patients to log their data.

Analytical tools can be used to determine what is working and what isn't and why, though these tools need to be used carefully

in combination with focused questions. Used properly, pharmaceutical companies can use analytic tools to determine which patient populations will benefit most from a drug, ensure their regulatory application contains real-world data and outcomes, strengthen the supply chain by determining when stock is

EXECUTIVE VIEWPOINTS

effects. This is great news, not just for patient/HCP engagement, but also because of the positive correlation with clinical outcomes. In fact, a recent study of patient-reported outcomes (PRO) for symptom monitoring presented at ASCO demonstrated an increase in survival among patients receiving chemotherapy for various cancers.



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SKILL BUILDING FOR BETTER OUTCOMES

For years, pharma has been talking about patient-centricity, incorporating pill-plus programs to help the patient manage his or her condition. Recently, pharma has taken the pill-plus program concept a step further. Instead of the traditional product-centered approach, pharma is addressing both the clinical and psychosocial needs of patients. An opportunity for pharma is to supplement the conventional awareness efforts with active motivation and skill-building programs to accelerate product awareness and adoption and drive optimal outcomes.

Evidence-based approaches, such as cognitive behavioral techniques, health coaching, and problem solving, are key to unlocking better outcomes. These approaches aren't about providing tips or persuading patients to make changes. They are fundamentally different because they engage patients in a way that builds skills and changes behavior.



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ALLEVIATING FEAR IN THE NEW AGE OF IOT

I shared my article — The Connected Consumer — with my 86-year-old dad, himself an avid high-tech user and multi-condition healthcare consumer. Here's his reaction:

Hi,
Fascinating topic. It's the upside of technology, which I don't think Mom & I will live to see. However, I will tell you what it made me think of — "1984" — Big Brother is watching you. With an ever-growing senior population, with the resources available becoming more limited, what could happen in an Orwellian world? Monitoring every facet of one's life is a 2-way street. Think about it.

Love, Dad

FEWER WORDS, GREATER IMPACT

Goodbye words, hello music. And visuals. With six-second TV spots, Snapchat, Storyvine, Twitter, and Facebook, brands will increasingly need to master the art of using fewer words to create more impact. Look for expertise in visual storytelling, semiotics, and influencer marketing to become increasingly critical skill sets.



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INTEGRATED MODELS

LEAD TO BETTER COMMUNICATIONS

Integrated models in care are inspiring better patient communications. Coordination among pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs), insurers, and physicians allows pharmacies to proactively contact patients regarding important aspects of their care.

As an example, a pharmacy's information about a diabetic patient taking metformin may be linked to diagnostic notes in the electronic health records. The pharmacist with access to this data can initiate a conversation with the patient about A1C levels, flag a late refill, and discuss potential changes to the regimen.



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THE FUTURE OF AI-ENABLED TECH

Patient-based technologies were on view in abundance at the National Association of Chain Drug Stores Total Store Expo, an annual gathering of pharma manufacturers and retailers. Their Vision 2028 exhibit provided imagination-sparking insights into the ways current trends are becoming future realities. Innovations on display included wireless pill bottles that collect and send adherence data, facial recognition software for personalized pharmacy experiences, and AI-enabled health services apps. For pharma companies, these and other technologies offer exciting potential for patient education and interaction.

running low, and help to support reimbursement discussions.

Digital channels are becoming the main means of communicating with patients, with companies using social media, web pages, and online communities.

However, digital solutions are just part of the overall package needed to demonstrate patient-centricity. As important is having a culture that is focused on the patient rather than just on product development. According to *Walking the Talk in Patient-Centric Pharma* by Heidrick & Struggles, patient-centric requires a “P-suite” that drives a true culture change, but with change being driven from the top by the CEO, who might assume the role of chief experience officer.

Some key performance indicators that monitor and measure implementation of patient-centric practices, include satisfaction and experience data and the use of social media to enhance the patient experience. From a harder data perspective, analysis of the financial benefits of patient loyalty provides insights into whether patient-centricity programs are resonating.

The Rights of the Patient

While most patients are comfortable sharing information with their physicians, the same is not true when it comes to pharmaceutical companies. According to HRI research, only 53% of consumers would be willing to share healthcare data with pharmaceutical companies. However, these same consumers indicated willingness to respond to specific questions about their diseases.

Given the lack of trust, companies might be best advised to work with partners, such as patient advocacy groups, to collect patient information that might be helpful in R&D decision making. However, as PwC warns, they must have controls in place to ensure that regulations such as HIPAA are strictly adhered to, that there is complete transparency about how data will be used, and that they build trust and engagement with the broader healthcare community.

Patient-Centricity in Practice

Life-sciences companies are increasingly serious about patient-centric solutions. According to a 2016 Accenture survey of more than 200 patient services executives in the European and U.S. pharmaceutical industry, 85% intend to raise their investment in pa-

tient-centric capabilities over the next 18 months. Priorities include technologies that interface between the patient and healthcare professionals as well as analytics and reporting metric technologies, and patient data management technologies.

An example of this use of technology to assist patients comes from UCB. To help understand the real challenges facing patients with Parkinson’s disease, UCB worked with patients to develop an early assessment tool to help patients describe their experiences at any point in time, and review and monitor their underlying symptoms. The Parkinson’s Well-Being Map was developed in association with patients and the European Parkinson’s Disease Association (EPDA).

The tool helps patients to discuss their condition in more detail with their physicians, to track fluctuations in the disease, and to assess the effect of different treatment options. The tool has also helped to change opinions about Parkinson’s disease by all stakeholders, which opens new approaches to the development or improvement of therapies.

Another example is Acorda Therapeutics, which has taken a dual approach to patient engagement, using both traditional, face-to-face methods, as well as a digital approach. Working across the organization, Acorda developed a self-health application called MS self. The tool enables patients to track metrics associated with their health from day to day. The company also uses a digital strategy to recruit for clinical trials, using multichannel techniques to inform patients about upcoming trials.

For its part, Novartis’ SymTrac app lets MS patients track and recall symptoms, mood, and energy to help them during discussion with healthcare professionals. Biogen Idec is working on a number of solutions for MS patients, including fitting more than 250 patients with Fitbit to help them set a benchmark on their activity levels, and partnering with Google using data analytics to gain insight into disease progression.

LEO Pharma through its innovation subsidiary is developing tools to help patients in disease areas it serves. For example, it is working on apps to give people with skin diseases support such as dietary advice, beauty tips for psoriasis sufferers, and ideas on how to interact with healthcare professionals. Included in the solutions will be KPIs to track how many patients with skin conditions use the company’s solutions and for how long.

Rare diseases companies have typically

been ahead of the curve with patient-centric programs, building tools such as disease and treatment education websites and materials.

The industry is increasingly responding to changing expectations of patients. The tools they use, the approach they take, and the care with which they implement their solutions will be key to their success. ^{PV}

Putting Knowledge in the Hands of Patients

One of the most patient-centric tools available to patients is PatientsLikeMe. More than 80 biopharmaceutical and healthcare industry organizations have partnered with PatientsLikeMe to help accelerate health outcomes.

PatientsLikeMe actively engages people in their own healthcare journey, then takes the information patients share about their symptoms, treatment, and health outcomes to develop millions of data points about the disease. Those data are then aggregated and organized to reveal new insights, which are shared with all stakeholders. These insights help industry to develop more beneficial products and services, and for healthcare providers to enhance their care programs.

One area where PatientsLikeMe has had a significant impact is with addressing gaps in safety data. By partnering with PatientsLikeMe, the FDA is gaining access to data from more than 350,000 members reporting 2,500 conditions. The partnership, which began in 2015, has the potential to influence the FDA’s risk assessment of drugs, giving the agency a more complete picture of side effects.

PatientsLikeMe has undertaken a number of other patient-centric projects that have the potential to improve care of patients while reducing costs, which is why so many pharmaceutical companies are partnering with the organization.

Source: PatientsLikeMe.com



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