Managing Your Support Program Awareness

HCPs with high familiarity of patient support programs are not only more likely to discuss program offerings with their patients but also more likely to appreciate these programs. Consequently, a well-crafted, well-executed awareness strategy is a means to directly influence program utilization.

Driving awareness of your patient support programs (PSPs) not only educates healthcare providers (HCPs) about the available patient resources, but it is also a key influencer of overall HCP satisfaction, according to recent research conducted by Nuvera Life Science Consulting, along with oncology HCPs. There are several ways to influence support program awareness among HCPs, but none are more valuable than sales reps, specialty pharmacies, and websites and leave-behinds. It is imperative to include the sales organization in order to leverage face time with sales reps, to align with specialty pharmacies' messaging to ensure you are communicating with customers in a unified voice, and to design easy-to-use websites from which users can access information quickly.

Introduction: Program awareness is an important consideration for companies when investing in their support programs. Program awareness can have aspects of cross-functional ownership across the marketing, PSP, sales, and account management teams, and one of the biggest challenges is knowing where to direct investment in order to boost program awareness. Since limited research exists in this area, decisions are often made based on the intuition and opinions of internal stakeholders. **The PURE Report: Oncology 2019**, Nuvera's latest syndicated PURE research, explores the utilization and appreciation of the different channels HCPs are using to stay current with patient support programs.

Preferred Channels: There are a number of ways HCPs learn about and stay informed on support programs. Not surprisingly, company sales reps, specialty pharmacies, and websites are the most utilized channels, yet field reimbursement teams, although smaller in size, also play an important role. Generally speaking, MDs strongly favor interactions with live personnel while their support staff are more likely to use company websites and leave-behinds that they can review during their downtime (see Figure 1).
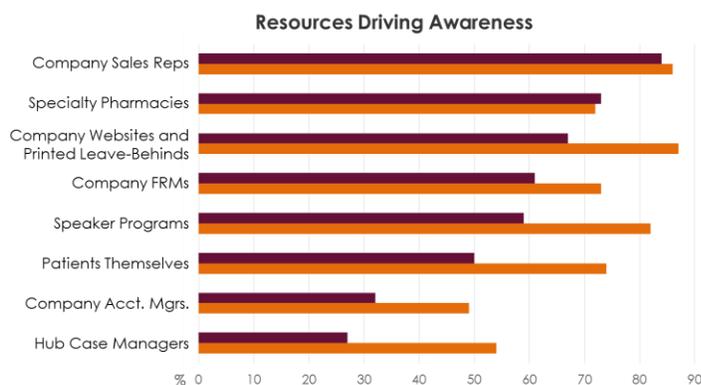

Figure 1. Breakdown of select channels MDs (purple) and their support staff (orange) are using to learn about pharma programs

35% *of Support Staff*
More likely to value pharma-company-sponsored educational programs as a prioritized source of information

41% *of MDs*
More likely to favor company sales reps as a prioritized source of information

67% *of MDs*
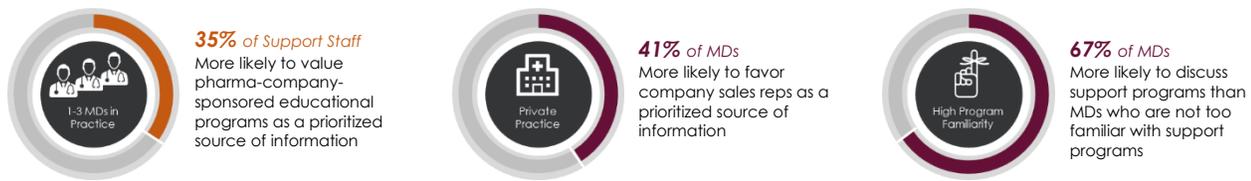More likely to discuss support programs than MDs who are not too familiar with support programs

Figure 2. Segmentation analysis of channel preferences among MDs (purple) and support staff (orange)

Sales reps are not only the most utilized resource but also the most appreciated channel among both MDs and their support staff. This sends a strong signal for manufacturers to use sales reps not just for clinical selling but also for advocating for and educating HCPs on patient support programs. The share of voice provided by company sales reps is a contributing factor for their use and HCPs' appreciation of them. The biggest challenge is to convince the sales organization to allow reps to use 20 to 30 seconds of their valuable face time with HCPs to discuss the support program.

Specialty pharmacy (SPP) is another channel with high impact on awareness. SPPs have their own field force visiting offices and also have frequent communication with offices and patients via phone, and their constant presence is a key reason they can generate program awareness. However, the messaging and communication of the specialty pharmacy field force is not always aligned with the manufacturer's messaging, which can cause confusion among HCPs.

Obviously, websites and leave-behinds are both considered popular resources to learn about programs. All programs are using these promotional tactics, but their setups differ from organization to organization—especially for their websites. Some organizations use brand-specific websites while others use enterprise- or portfolio-wide websites, depending on their individual strategy for promoting their support program and the desired association between their different brands. Support staff are more prone to use websites compared to MDs, and it is critical to have an informative and flat design, i.e., make sure the user can access the information they need quickly and intuitively.

Segmentation: Looking into the subcategories of our respondents and how their preferences deviate from the larger HCP population, there is a significant appreciation of sales reps among private practices

(see Figure 2). This is most likely driven by office workflow alignment and a more open policy to see reps. For manufacturers, this means it is even more important for sales reps to use a portion of their face time with HCPs within these segments to discuss support program offerings.

In closing, despite pharmaceutical and biotech companies' significant investments to help patients gain access to and support for their therapies, many HCPs have limited knowledge about patient support programs. Our research shows a strong connection between HCPs' familiarity with programs and their willingness to discuss them with patients—and familiarity also drives HCP satisfaction. If the goal of the program is to increase patient utilization of support offerings, it is important to focus on the right channels to drive HCP program awareness.

About the PURE Report: This white paper focuses on a small part of the broader PURE Report, an independent, syndicated study of HCP satisfaction with manufacturers' patient support services. The first **PURE** (**P**atient services **U**tilization, **R**ecognition, and **E**xperience) **Report** was conducted with 400 oncology HCPs (150 MDs and 250 support staff), and studies of more therapeutic areas are in the works. The PURE Report sets the standard for evaluating HCP satisfaction with pharma support programs and will ultimately enable pharma companies to deliver enhanced patient experiences. In addition to uncovering the needs and perceptions of HCPs related to pharma support programs, the PURE Report also ranks manufacturers in several areas to demonstrate which companies are excelling and struggling across various satisfaction drivers.

For more information, visit www.thepurereport.com or contact Jens Kulstad at jens.kulstad@nuveracg.com