

# Next-Gen Patient Support: Enhancing the Experience Using Data-Driven Personalization

By *SHYAM SAKHRANI*, IQVIA

The evolving healthcare landscape presents an opportunity to reimagine patient support by combining the personalized care aspects of traditional programs with the accessibility and data capabilities of digital health technologies. This integration creates a more comprehensive approach that meets patients where they are while providing the structured support they need.



Pharmaceutical companies have struggled to effectively address medication adherence despite a substantial investment in support programs. With nearly 50 percent of patients continuing treatment beyond the first year, we must reimagine our approach to building patient support programs.<sup>1</sup> The estimated cost of poor adherence is 37 percent of total pharmaceutical issue revenue, making this a crucial imperative.<sup>2</sup>

Traditional support programs face an engagement crisis, as 59 percent of patients have little knowledge of available assistance. Additionally, while 61 percent perceive minimal value, only 3 percent of eligible individuals enroll.<sup>3</sup> Simultaneously, these same patients actively use digital health technologies throughout their treatment journey, which highlights an opportunity to transform support through personalization and technology integration.

## The engagement challenge

The gap between conventional programs and patient behavior stems from misaligned stakeholder priorities. Healthcare providers, pharmaceutical companies, and patients approach health improvement differently. Individuals typically seek information independently or through communities, lacking an easily available “source of truth.” Physicians rarely prioritize program enrollment during brief clinical interactions, largely because a significant proportion of them remain unfamiliar with available patient support programs.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, pharmaceutical companies rely on familiar playbooks to design, develop and implement patient support programs, compounding current challenges.

Patient support programs as we know them emerged with nurse-oriented assistance for specialty medications, when target populations were smaller and more well-defined. As health care has become

increasingly digital, patients turn to online resources and AI-powered tools like OpenAI's ChatGPT, Google's Gemini, and Microsoft's Copilot (among others) for health guidance.

Meanwhile, digital health applications have undergone a significant transformation. The market shifted from general wellness management, which accounted for 72 percent of apps in 2015, to condition-specific solutions (51 percent of apps in 2024). Reflecting consumer preference for tailored assistance rather than standardized approaches, disease-specific apps have seen a three-fold increase.<sup>4</sup> The most substantial growth areas include mental health, diabetes, and cardiovascular and digestive system applications. These are all chronic diseases with high volumes of patients demanding specialized support.

## Four essential components for next-generation support

The next generation of patient support programs will leverage four essential components to bridge existing gaps:

### 1. Integrated experience

The emerging patient journey is increasingly digital, encompassing emotional, informational and behavioral needs. Rather than creating standalone platforms, effective programs connect with established ecosystems where patients already engage.

A successful initiative in diabetes management involved Roche leveraging data from glucose monitoring devices to inform its acquisition of mySugr, a popular condition management app. Following this, the company invested in remote monitoring systems, which have become commonplace among consumers. By taking a stepwise approach and plugging into an established ecosystem based on data analysis, Roche effectively reduced adoption barriers and boosted patient participation. Research indicates that patients with diabetes who use remote patient monitoring are 4.5 percent more adherent to their medication.<sup>5</sup>

### 2. Technology and device integration

Consumer wearables collect health metrics that identify subclinical changes that would be impossible to detect during traditional clinical visits. These capabilities transform everyday devices into valuable health management tools. They can be used to provide patients truly personalized information rather than general advice.

For instance, according to a study from Mount Sinai, standard wearables monitoring heart rate, variability, activity and oxygenation can predict Irritable Bowel Disease (IBD) flare-ups up to seven weeks before occurrence, enabling preventive intervention.<sup>6</sup> Similar applications exist for respiratory conditions, which combine location-based pollution alerts with physiological monitoring to prevent exacerbations.



*Four key components of a next-gen patient support program.*

### 3. Behavioral science application

Modern programs that are effective apply evidence-based behavioral techniques to foster sustained participation. The approach begins with identifying key behavioral targets through research and then employing intervention mapping to select appropriate strategies. There is no one-size-fits-all when it comes to patient populations, and behavioral science can help us ensure our approach aligns well with patient needs and constraints.

Effective behavioral science applications in patient support use evidence-based frameworks like the COM-B model, which addresses patient capability, opportunity, and motivation to drive behavior change.<sup>7-8</sup> For example, studies in medication adherence apps show that personalized timing of reminders based on individual routines increases compliance by 27 percent, while gamification elements in chronic disease management apps increase engagement duration by 40 percent compared to standard interfaces.<sup>9-10</sup>

### 4. Evidence generation

To demonstrate value and enable improvements, today's support programs require measuring passive data combined with validated clinical assessments. This will enable next-generation initiatives to generate meaningful insights, at both the individual and population levels, with clear connections to business outcomes.

A study with cancer patients illustrates this potential. Researchers implemented a virtual care program combining validated patient-reported outcomes, continuity-of-care models and personalized risk stratification. Data collected from thousands of participants showed measurable improvements: 88 percent reported better mental health, 81 percent experienced physical health gains and 78 percent saw improved sleep quality. Additionally, 70 percent of patients had reduced annual medical expenditures compared to baseline.

This systematic measurement approach not only validated the program's effectiveness but provided actionable insights for future improvements in patient care.<sup>11-12</sup>

## Design principles for a better patient experience

Successful next-generation support programs are rooted in three fundamental principles.

### 1. Embrace user-centered design

When pharmaceutical companies approach digital solutions, they often either impose unnecessary restrictions or fail to invest adequately in the technology. True personalization requires understanding emotional, informational, and behavioral needs throughout the patient journey. Simply transferring brochure content to mobile formats or enabling text communication misses the opportunity for meaningful personalization.

### 2. Harness existing solutions

Integration with established solutions allows companies to meet patients where they already are. Many consumer health applications have over 100 million downloads, representing established usage patterns and routines. Expecting patients to adopt entirely new interfaces solely because they're taking a particular medication creates unnecessary friction and limits program adoption.

### 3. Think past individual programs

A bigger-picture approach builds lasting patient relationships, informs future product development decisions, and creates ongoing engagement opportunities. For example, disease awareness campaigns can build patient communities that participate in medication-specific support programs later. The goal is to create a connected ecosystem where patients receive support at every step of their healthcare journey.

## Keys to designing a Next-Gen patient support program

1

Patient experience data needs to be at the center of your strategy



2

Leverage established solutions and expertise (internal and external)



3

Take a portfolio-level view across the asset and patient journeys



### The future of patient support: Digitally integrated, deeply personalized

The future of patient support will be more integrated, intuitive and personalized. Instead of basic medication reminders, tomorrow's digital tools will offer natural conversations about both medical information and day-to-day condition management. Doctors already use these technologies to improve how they communicate with patients, showing that similar tools for patients themselves will likely become more sophisticated and widely accepted.

New technologies are getting better at combining information that patients actively provide (like survey responses) with passive data (like heart rate from a

smartwatch) to deliver personalized support through the phones and devices people already use. This approach can help lifesciences companies achieve better patient outcomes while making the patient experience more helpful and engaging.

By combining accessible technology with behavioral science and meaningful measurements, life sciences companies can create integrated programs that patients find valuable, driving adherence and engagement.

Doing so requires time, effort and a honed strategy, but organizations that commit can look forward to deeper patient relationships, insights, and differentiation across competitive therapeutic areas.







**SHYAM SAKHRANI** is senior director, global offering lead, patient engagement and support, IQVIA. In his role, Shyam leads the development of Patient Engagement products and offerings globally, with divisions across JAPAC, EMEA and the Americas. He holds a strong commitment to innovation and bridging the gap between technology, data insights and healthcare to support patient outcomes. He has worked across health care and life sciences for more than 10 years and has a history of leading strategic partnerships and collaborations.

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