

# Raising the Bar in Patient Experience

Syneos Health team discuss what it takes to improve patient experience through health systems and pharma partnerships.

During the [Trade & Channel Strategies](#) conference held in Philadelphia, patient experience was a key topic heard throughout many sessions, including [Syneos Health's](#) "Pharma + Health System Partnerships – Aligning Interests, Advancing Care" panel.

Speakers [John Hamilton](#), Managing Director; [Claudia Stemple](#), Director, Value and Access Consulting; and [Christopher Lisanti](#), Managing Director, who also facilitated the discussion, spoke about the ongoing patient experience movement.



"Patient experience is the sum of all interactions that patients have throughout their journey and how they feel about it," Hamilton said, quoting [The Beryl Institute](#). "So it's not just what's being done for patients, it's how they feel about it."

Hamilton shared the [Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality's](#) (AHRQ) dimensions of patient experience, which are:

- Communication with clinicians
- Care coordination
- Courtesy and respect
- Access to care
- Shared decision making

"A lot of patient experience has to do with communication. It's probably one of the top drivers," he said.

Additionally, Hamilton noted that valued-based care and its fundamentals have shifted from volume to value, which will become more defined by outcomes and experiences that matter to patients.

Word of mouth has also become very powerful in how patients are making their healthcare choices, Hamilton said. "Ultimately, what's driving choice in the future is patient experience and word of mouth... Patient experience is the new marketing."

Other factors driving the patient experience movement include competitive differentiation, empowered patients, and the growing complexity in the patient journey.

## Patient services perspective

In some instances, health systems may resist or decline to participate in patient support services offered by manufacturers, Lisanti noted, followed by asking Stemple about the opportunities for pharma.

Stemple, who has experience running hub services for Novartis, Amgen, and Regeneron, responded, "What we [pharma] find is we spend tens of millions of dollars on hub services, patient navigators, field reimbursement teams, and oftentimes health systems or even certain specialties."

However, without effective partnership, these programs may have limited reach and impact, she noted. For example, oncology, where they have their own established staff that provide services.

"We all have the same goal of getting patients on therapy, keeping them on therapy at the prescribed dosage per the package insert. How do we marry that up?" she said, adding that adherence is a big focus.

"Adherence is really important for your health system. For a pharma company, it's also very important, but if you're not engaging in the pharma systems hub services, we have no visibility to that program or to that patient.

"So it's really working with health systems to figure out what our shared goals are and how do we embed in an EMR [electronic medical records] of a particular specialty where we make it very easy for that provider."

Stemple issued a call to action, urging the audience to consider: "How do we work with health systems? How do you think we can best work as pharma companies?"

## Collaboration opportunities

According to Lisanti, achieving meaningful outcomes requires manufacturers and health systems to align their goals and co-develop solutions that positively impact patient experience.

"This is a vision that we should all keep in mind if we're truly interested in bringing systems and manufacturers together," he told the audience.

Acknowledging the challenges faced by both pharma and health systems, Hamilton recommends prioritizing patient input. "Once you have identified the problem, talk to patients, and talk to families first. Because between health systems and pharma, this is where we've worked on and see a future opportunity for collaboration."

Many health systems incorporate "voice of patient" initiatives, he explained, in which they recruit patient experience partners. "These are also referred to as patient and family advisors that are assigned to different task forces within the health system."

Also important are CAHPS scores, which stand for Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems. Developed by the AHRQ, CAHPS scores offer real time data on patient experience that health systems can use to improve patient experiences, according to Hamilton. However, he noted, patient satisfaction is highly subjective and does not allow for change. Therefore, those scores shouldn't be the only metric examined. He said, "The field of patient experience is meant to provide concrete measures of what should happen in a patient journey, and it takes it into account where aspects can be improved."

### Conquering successful partnerships

The Syneos panel presented their own model for successful pharma and health system partnerships (*bottom of page*). For example, a lot of successful partnerships have formed steering committees that focus on problem solving as well as the contributions from each party, according to Hamilton.

"Each is going to bring a different insight and perspective," he said. "Pharma in many cases has patient navigators, as does the health system, and patient navigators are talking to patients every day. They're finding out what their pain points are, which is great insight," he continued. Patient experience mapping is also a critical tool and strategy in understanding needs and pain points. He cited the Veteran Affairs' (VA) successful implementation of patient experience mapping, which led to improved patient satisfaction. The VA was able to address wait times and recognize the social value of patient interactions.

"They are the number two largest integrated health system in the US, and they did patient experience mapping and had a significant improvement," Hamilton said.

Furthermore, Lisanti added, "Building pilot initiatives around key pain points and evaluating and scaling is a path for a successful partnership." However, he noted that creating these pilots can be complicated for manufacturers and come with the following goals:

- Establish governance
- Understanding roles
- Internal legal understanding and support

According to Lisanti, having trust and loyalty with these systems and partnerships is key to moving the needle on patient experience.

*Brandy Fidler is managing editor for Access Insider, the media resource for Informa Connect Life Sciences.*

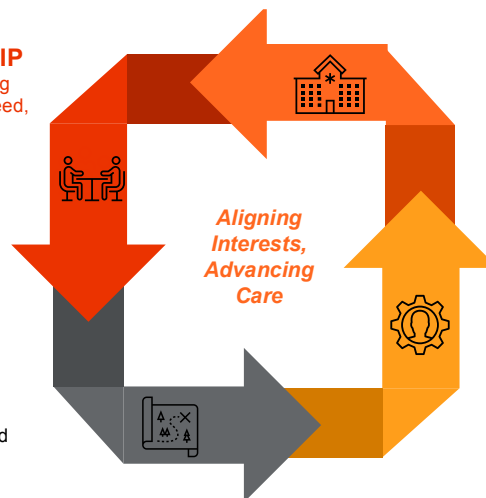
## Building Pharma+IDN Partnerships to Advance Patient Care

### 1. ALIGN PARTNERSHIP

Form an IDN+Pharma Steering Committee to define unmet need, partnership goals and key success criteria.

### 2. MAP PATIENT EXPERIENCE

Gather patient feedback through Patient Advisors, CAHPS data, Social Media analysis, and consultations with Patient Navigators to build Patient Experience Maps.



### 4. EVALUATE AND SCALE

Implement, assess, and optimize interventions in a pilot, preparing successful solutions for broader IDN rollout.

### 3. BUILD PILOT Px INITIATIVE

Focus on high-impact areas like healthcare disparities, provider communication, discharge, and medication adherence.

## About Our Speaker Panel



**Claudia Stemple**, Director, Value & Access Consulting, Syneos Health

With over 20 years in the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industry, Claudia has specialized in managed care, patient access, hub services, and provider workflow optimization. She is a healthcare leader with a deep understanding of reimbursement and the payer landscape, driving innovation at companies like Novartis, Regeneron, and Amgen. As a registered nurse with an MBA, Claudia excels in transforming healthcare systems, improving outcomes, and leading interdisciplinary teams. Passionate about innovation and mentorship, she is committed to advancing healthcare delivery.



**Christopher Lisanti**  
Managing Director, Syneos Health  
Commercial Advisory Group

Chris brings over 30 years of experience in biopharma manufacturer domestic and international commercial roles, consulting start-ups and advising biopharmaceutical clients on IDN/Corporatized Customer engagement strategy, organized customer collaborations, sales effectiveness, commercial business model transformation, and manufacturer partnership programs. In particular, he has designed and enabled several manufacturer-IDN collaborations and has led the development of a local ecosystem commercialization methodology that delivers therapy-specific, differentiated go-to-market approaches by commercialization stage, market type and go-to-market priority driven by local stakeholder understanding and analytical insights. This "ecosystem" methodology enables manufacturers to adopt more targeted and resource-optimal approaches while better meeting the needs of diverse customers across local ecosystems.



**John Hamilton**  
Managing Director, Syneos Health  
Commercial Advisory Group

Over the past 20+ years, John has collaborated with commercial leaders from brands like Keytruda, Dupixent, and Darzalex to deeply understand patient needs and craft impactful patient experience strategies designed for value-based healthcare environments. These efforts have led to lasting partnerships between biopharmaceutical companies and health systems/providers/patients and significant brand differentiation in highly competitive markets.