

A Conversation with the Value & Access Team at Syneos Health

Addressing what's on the minds of pharma stakeholders

Market access barriers – from pricing pressures to consolidation to the emergence of value framework assessments – are changing the face of commercialization. Syneos Health Value & Access exists to help pharma brands confidently navigate this shifting market landscape.

At a recent roundtable, Kara Giannecchini, senior director of Haymarket Studio, Custom Content, Business Media Group, sat down with Leigh Ann Bruhn EVP of Value & Access at Syneos Health; Wayne Fassett, SVP, group creative director of Spherico, a division of GSW; Adrian Garcia, managing director of Spherico; Katie Mahony, director of Syneos Health Consulting; and Devika Vij, director of Syneos Health Consulting, to discuss evolving communication expectations, top-of-mind legislative issues and digital delivery.

UNDERSTANDING PAYER BEHAVIORS

Now in its fourth year, the Spherico 2024 Payer Survey delves into payer behaviors to help identify trends and understand their impact. “Their behaviors have reestablished how they want to receive information but also some of the best ways that manufacturers can engage them, personal face-to-face but also non-personal,” Garcia said. “They are actively seeking out information from manufacturer websites and sources, not just the account manager.”

The problem is “Not enough pharma manufacturers have sites that are dedicated to what the payers want and the kind of information they want,” Fassett said.

Increasingly important with the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) is that “payers are interested in both clinical information and understanding outcomes for patients in both launch and inline products. As we know, IRA provisions affect both. So it’s

critical for not only launch products, but even established drugs,” Vij noted.

Consequently, “Manufacturers have to rethink their value narrative, and what their plans for holistic evidence generation are,” Mahony explained.

That value narrative has to appeal to a broader landscape of stakeholders. “The conversation is so public, and what the government is doing is having an impact or is anticipated to have spillover effects to the commercial markets as well,” Bruhn said. The relationship between payers, integrated delivery networks, organized customers and pharma brands is shifting.

According to the survey, “two-thirds to three-fourths of those customers want



a relationship to be less transactional and more relational or collaborative,” Garcia said.

Syneos Health helps brands “engage in discussions with payers and other stakeholders about what the impacts of policy changes are and the importance of preserving access to medicines that will become increasingly challenged,” Mahony said.

That work starts with “stakeholder mapping of influencers to understand what voices they are listening to,” Bruhn said. By conducting a media audit, a brand can “equip account managers not only with materials but with a surround sound that’s going to amplify their efforts.”

Creating information specifically for

payers “shows that you understand what they’re going through, how they evaluate products and the issues that they’re dealing with,” Fassett explained.

Payers increasingly rely on multiple news feeds. LinkedIn, for example, is a great jumping-off place for information. “If you want to make sure your customers are looking at certain places, point them there, nudge them,” Bruhn said.

In this diverse landscape of sources, “make sure that message is consistent, that they’re hearing the right quick bullets from all those different influential aspects for information,” Garcia said.

NAVIGATING WHAT’S AHEAD

Negotiated drug prices between the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and selected manufacturers will become publicly available in September 2024 and will be effective in 2026 for the first 10 drugs selected. “Manufacturers should be prepared to discuss and evolve their access strategies,” Vij said.

Legislation has forced CMS to be “transparent about the way that they assess the value of the drugs,” Bruhn explained. “That has the potential to influence how private payers subsequently assess drugs for their formularies as well.”

Syneos Health can help brands navigate these changes. “Our functional experts understand those specific customers, what they care about, how to communicate with them, and how to best deliver against the needs of patients who are trying to access therapies,” Mahony said.

That insight stems from Syneos Health’s clinical affiliations. “We have the ability to see what’s coming from a healthcare standpoint, what’s coming from a product landscape standpoint,” Garcia added.