Executive perspectives on advancing patient support

Patient support providers continue to be a vital link between manufacturers, patients, and healthcare providers. They enable the type of industry-wide collaboration to help patients overcome access, affordability, and adherence barriers. In a rapidly evolving patient support services landscape, it's important to choose a partner that designs and delivers solutions with patients at the center.

In these pages, you'll find answers to commercialization executives' most pressing questions about launching and operating a patient support program. You'll get firsthand perspective from Lash Group executives with decades of experience designing and implementing patient programs and helping alleviate barriers to therapy for patients.

You'll also get an inside look at our operations that will help you understand the connection between good business and good partnership.

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What a unified approach to business excellence means for patient support program success

Business excellence happens at the crossroads of diverse functions, departments, skillsets and experiences. But how do you operationalize success if those elements are scattered across the enterprise? Bill Smith, Senior Vice President of Business Excellence, shares how Lash Group's business excellence team unifies disparate functions to build and grow patient support programs.

Q: How does the business excellence team support Lash Group clients?

Bill Smith: We're a combination of people with different roles and functions who have experiences across all aspects of business growth and development. But whereas other patient support programs may pull in experts on an ad-hoc basis, our team brings those individuals together under one business unit to support continuous improvement.

Typically, that starts with understanding our clients' needs and then digging down to reveal opportunities for business excellence. We evaluate areas where we can maintain existing processes, and we also suggest new strategies that can make a meaningful impact.

Q: What's the thinking behind the team structure?

BS: We were very thoughtful about how we assembled our team and we landed on a three-part framework of implementation, customer experience and shared services. We've always had these functions in the organization, but they were traditionally in different pockets. Unifying them helps us deliver across-the-board expertise from a more integrated structure.

On the implementation front, we're focused on process excellence to launch our transition programs appropriately from the start. Our customer experience experts are committed to program health, quality, training, compliance, and opportunities for ongoing process improvements. And finally, shared services connects the dots throughout the program lifecycle, covering everything from data intake to contracting.

Q: What goes into your launch approach for a new patient support program?

BS: We're shifting to a more intentional approach of pairing subject matter expertise with the project management discipline for a seamless launch experience. Both areas are critical. By combining them, we create launches that not only meet timing and budget expectations, but also inform optimized and technology-driven patient services. We've always had those capabilities, but we would pull different threads from different fabrics to make the most of them. With a centralized Implementations unit, we can align those strengths for a robust, consistent launch approach.

Q: What changes do you see on the horizon in light of COVID-19?

BS: This year, we have to think and plan differently. We're leveraging process excellence methodologies so we can learn and adapt as we all adjust to this new environment. One thing that is certain is we need to effectively support a larger remote workforce, from clearly defining productivity goals to staffing counts and nuanced project management. We also had to reimagine training and development to work optimally in a virtual environment. We are doing this at the same time that we are pulling in dispersed pockets of training across the organization into a standardized, centralized training team, which is something we're all excited about.

Q: How has your experience helped shape these priorities for the business excellence team?

BS: I began my career in operations and managing programs, so being in a transformation role where I can help pull change through every aspect of our clients' business has always seemed like a natural fit for me. And we're unique in that our team plugs into so many different areas of the business ecosystem; we work with our IT teams, new business partners, operations, product team, client analytics, and others.

That structure lends itself to strong alignment and collaboration with other Lash Group business units and is what helps us set and stick to our strategic priorities.

Q: How do you help your team stay motivated, day in and day out?

BS: It begins with trust. I aim to be a transparent leader and not only communicate where I'd like to see us go, but also provide team members with the tools, support and latitude to get there. It's so rewarding when folks feel like they're making a difference and confidently propose and run with changes. I'm also big on making sure we reassess our priorities, because they do change from time to time, based on business needs and current events.

We always want to ask ourselves: Are we doing the right work at the right time? Because if we're not sure, that's a sign that we need to pause and recalibrate our purpose. Clients and patients deserve that above all else.

Troy Ward, *Chief Operations Officer*

Patient support program operations:
A peek behind the curtain

COMMITMENT | CHANGE MANAGEMENT | TEAMWORK

Sustaining an effective operations strategy during times of change and uncertainty presents numerous challenges particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Troy Ward, Chief Operations Officer at Lash Group, offers insight into how his team maintains the highest levels of service, even under difficult circumstances.

Q: How have your 25-plus years of experience in the pharmaceutical and healthcare industries prepared you for your role as Chief Operations Officer at Lash Group?

Troy Ward: Before joining Lash Group, I was a service leader responsible for customer experience for a health plan, a manufacturer, and a pharmacy benefit management organization. Those experiences prepared me for the multi-faceted COO role I have today. I have worked extensively with companies that are key stakeholders to Lash Group leading strategy, setting priorities, managing profitability, executing operational strategies, and ensuring regulatory compliance.

Q: How has your experience as a Lash Group client guided your thinking and priorities for the operations team?

TW: I look through the lens as a client would with each opportunity we pursue or problem we're trying to solve, asking "what needs are we addressing for our patients and customers?" and "how will they benefit from this change?" In my experience, initiatives that deliver the biggest impact rise to the top.

I appreciated transparency as a client, so that has become a priority for the team. The product pricing and staffing models used to support our programs are considered proprietary; however, in some cases sharing the underlying math we use to determine these components builds trust and, by virtue of that trust, long-term client relationships.

Q: You manage a large group of associates who essentially form the backbone of the Lash Group organization. What is your strategy for ensuring teams work effectively?

TW: A common challenge that teams struggle with is misaligned priorities. My strategy for ensuring effective teamwork is to focus on prioritization, share why it's important and how every action contributes to our success. It's also important that we recognize contributions and coach team members for continuous development. It's something that sounds great in writing, but can be hard to implement at times.

At Lash Group, I've seen teams work together to create greater synergies across the business, get work done faster, and have a high level of engagement when our purpose and contributions to the company are clear. One great example of this is our transition to a completely virtual working environment due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We had a set priority of getting everyone working from home within a specific timeframe. Team members throughout the organization rallied around the goal and were able to successfully transition all team members safely.

Q: What would you want manufacturer clients to recognize if they could take a peek behind the curtain at Lash Group?

TW: I would like manufacturers to see the deep commitment of our associates to delivering excellent service and support. Also, the tremendous support our associates provide for each other. In just my first few months, I have witnessed numerous examples of thoughtfulness, caring and encouragement. What really stands out is how egos are checked at the door. Lash Group teams cross-collaborate and back each other up as much as possible.

Q: In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, what is the main priority for the operations team right now?

TW: The main priority is to support our associates so they can continue to deliver the highest levels of service. That means we need to understand their workload and adjust as needed. We need to set priorities to ensure associates act on the most important work first. We must also provide routine feedback. When we do all of that well, there will be greater engagement levels which translate into superior levels of service.

I have noticed that managers who had solid engagement routines prior to the pandemic adapted quickly by establishing new routines to check in and support their teams. We assess where leaders are spending time and how we can support them with tools and resources to limit non-value-added work or to redistribute the workload.Because of the pandemic, the office water cooler no longer exists. We've had to find new ways to check in with associates. Now, we touch base virtually with smaller groups within the team.

Troy Ward, *Chief Operations Officer*

Patient support program operations:
A peek behind the curtain

COMMITMENT | CHANGE MANAGEMENT | TEAMWORK

Q: How would you describe the spirit of your team as they have adjusted to virtual, home-based work?

TW: I am so proud to work for an organization that has rallied behind the work-from-home transition. It required the best from every individual to pull it off as quickly as we did. It was awesome to see how every area prioritized the safety of each associate. Moving nearly 4,000 people to a work-from-home environment was not a perfectly smooth process. There were a number of equipment combinations to consider to enable a speedy transition. Our IT teams did an amazing job under very tight timelines. Our frontline associates practiced patience as we learned along the way, and they were quick to adjust to working from home. Fortunately, we were able to transition all associates while meeting every client service-level agreement. That's a huge accomplishment. Our clients have shared their appreciation of the seamless continuity of care for all patients throughout this event.

Recently, I had the opportunity to check in with associates in small chat sessions to see how they are doing. I'm inspired by their stories of how they are more productive and are converting their commute time into exercise or family time. Most have shared they have made the shift and are enjoying the new norm.

Q: How do you personally stay focused and motivated during this challenging time?

TW: Times like these not only amplify one's character, but also highlight the need to have great support structures in place. Personally, I rely heavily on faith, family, fitness routines, and friends. I set goals for each of these areas to stay focused and motivated. I also acknowledge that things will not always go my way, so it's critical to remain positive and resilient, regardless of the circumstances.

A consultative approach is fundamental for forming strong partnerships and scalable patient support programs. Shanna Barnes, Vice President of New Business Development at Lash Group, reveals what it takes to develop effective, lasting client relationships and deep knowledge of patient support needs in order to grow with manufacturers as the pharmaceutical market evolves.

Q: At what stage of a product launch is your team ideally introduced?

Shanna Barnes: Making the first contact about twelve months prior to launch is ideal. However, we are well-positioned to support clients who have a shorter runway. Sometimes we advise clients as early as Phase 2 or Phase 3 in the development process. It's imperative for our team to get introduced early in the process so we can help inform the client's overall strategy. Although patient services are typically thought of at the end of a product launch very close to commercialization, it's important for us to have more in-depth knowledge of the product to identify the crucial elements that providers and patients rely upon after launch.

Q: How should manufacturers vet a potential patient support partner?

SB: There are a few key areas manufacturers need to look at when evaluating a potential partner. The first is the partner's level of expertise. A good partner should demonstrate expertise within the specific market for the product: consider how informed are they in regard to the disease state, competitive landscape, product life cycle and the expectations of patients and providers. At Lash Group, we focus on being consultative and leveraging our expertise to help shape informed support services to be on par or better than others in the space.

The second factor to consider is how well-versed they are with the current payer landscape because that knowledge can have a tremendous impact on the recommended design and implementation of the solution. For example, if the product will serve a population with heavy commercial coverage, is the partner recommending robust copay services? For a population with higher Medicare coverage, are they offering guidance for foundation support? Do they have payer research data that supports their recommendations? Are they flexible enough to manage complex coverage mixes, which can often include a blend of automated and experienced counselor support?

Q: The current COVID-19 pandemic is having an impact on every facet of healthcare. How should manufacturers be looking at patient support programs during this unique time?

SB: The strain on people right now—mentally, economically, physically—is significant. For patients being treated for significant health conditions, the need for reliable and empathetic patient support is even more heightened to ensure they have access to vital therapies.

When it comes to choosing a partner, my advice is to find a company that has committed to creating and implementing strong business continuity plans to ensure they can stay in full operation during a crisis. That is foundational. On top of that, a great partner is also thinking ahead and anticipating what patients are going to need as the situation evolves, from having additional medication on hand to providing more frequent touchpoints with nurses to reassure them about remaining on therapy.

Q: Are there skills or experience that are often underrated during the selection process but extremely important for executing a program?

SB: Absolutely. We often talk about our years of experience in the industry. It is more than just counting calendar months. Understanding how that time translates into the knowledge needed for a particular product or disease state is critical. How a partner like Lash Group applies experience in a compensative way is what brings value. I urge manufacturers to consider more than just great technology. Also consider the trifecta of people, process and technology that comes together to provide solution-oriented patient services. Lash Group benefits from the knowledge and expertise that results from launching numerous services over a long period of time. Our experience also informs technology innovation for our programs.

Building partnerships and scaling services to patient needs

PARTNERSHIP | EXPERTISE | EXPERIENCE

Q: What is Lash Group's organizational strategy for working with new clients?

SB: The process of bringing a product to market is a long one, and the journey can be overwhelming for any decision maker. As an organization, our approach is to leverage integrated business development along the way. For new clients, this involves analyzing other areas of AmerisourceBergen such as a World Courier, ICS, Strategic Global Sourcing or Xcenda to determine the right time to incorporate different expertise into the launch strategy. We'll say to new clients, "let's break this journey down into manageable pieces. Who do you need to engage with and when?" We want to ensure that the manufacturer feels confident in the strategy and has a voice throughout the process.

In addition, we have developed an industry-leading launch process based on the knowledge and insights gleaned from years of experience. Our Launch Center of Excellence has a proven process that is customizable to fit manufacturer needs and has collaboration with the manufacturer baked in from the beginning.

Q: Is there a misconception in the marketplace that Lash Group is only focused on large clients?

SB: Historically, we've been perceived as the provider for large clients. That perception is changing as we're able to communicate the breadth of services we provide and share thought leadership around rare and orphan diseases. Our services are based on the needs of patients and the therapies being developed in the current healthcare environment. Today, we have several smaller programs that leverage our expertise and we are having success managing these programs. We are equally successful with small and large programs.

Q: Does your approach differ for large versus small programs?

SB: There are certain best practices and standards we have honed over several years that don't change based on the size of the program. However, we do adapt our approach based on specific client needs and the patients being served. For example, a smaller client introducing their first product to market may not have the resources or the bandwidth to engage with four or five members of our team. We understand their needs and look to adopt a strategy that is going to work with the specific manufacturer and their patient population. If the patient population is very small, for example, we may suggest working directly with skilled members of our team, and then look to incorporate automation as the program progresses ensuring time to collect necessary payer and plan information for the best results.

Q: What led you to this career? And after more than 20 years working in healthcare, what makes this job so special to you?

SB: Caring for my beloved grandmother and helping my family navigate her care fueled my personal passion around supporting individuals in their healthcare journeys.

I landed my first healthcare job with North Carolina Medicaid, helping families with special needs navigate the system. I went on to work for nonprofits in HIV and AIDS case management and then moved into hospital systems. Early in my career, I developed skills in understanding the U.S. healthcare market and translating the complexities into language that makes sense to people who are trying to make tough decisions about their medical care.

In my role here at Lash Group, I get to carry out my passion for helping people on a larger scale. I'm working on behalf of not just one or two families, but for a group of patients that may face affordability and access challenges. There is the opportunity to provide services that remove barriers to care and meet their individual needs.

Q: How do you coach your team to have that same sort of passion you have?

SB: I am extremely blessed to have a diverse group of individuals, who are passionate and sharp and very committed to staying patient-focused. Each one realizes we are offering solutions that truly help patients. And they work through any client issues that may arise by taking ownership and collaborating with other departments within organization to solve the problem. The goal that drives my team is not as much about the bottom line, but about our brand meeting patients' needs and being an informed, trusted partner.

Q: Why do you think it's so important for every associate at Lash Group to feel responsible for building client relationships?

SB: As we talk with patients, providers or payers, each interaction is a touch point for building a positive client relationship. So, no matter where you sit in our organization, you are a part of our reputation based on the patient coming first.

Patient support programs are critical commercialization services that get your novel therapy in the hands of patients who need it. Because of that, launching a patient support program is an important part of your product launch. With the right mix of strategic planning, collaboration and adaptability, you can launch a world-class program. Todd Wells, Vice President of Operations at Lash Group, shares the key components of a successful program launch.

Q: What makes a patient support program launch stand out from the pack?

Todd Wells: Launching a new program is never easy. It can present a number of unique challenges, some you may anticipate and some you may not. But the biggest differentiator between success and failure is preparation from the get-go. You need tempered patience to build a sound framework that will weather the changing market conditions.

Nimbleness matters too, because things will inevitably evolve. Manufacturers who can adapt in real time will find themselves more equipped to handle change. You also need an appetite for bold, new ideas those that disrupt conventional thinking and set your program up to make a lasting impact on issues like medication access and adherence. And of course, manufacturers need a patient support partner that is not only purpose-driven to overcome access and adherence barriers, but also one that has experience and expertise in supporting successful launches.

Our clients have seen again and again that the right mix of these traits helps them enjoy better and lasting success once their program launches.

Q: How do you ensure that best practices and lessons learned can be applied to new program launches?

TW: Lash Group's Launch Center of Excellence (LCOE) is an amalgamation of the experience and insights we've gleaned over years spent launching patient support programs for our clients. In that time, we've built a repository of best practices, toolsets and action plans, so the LCOE is our way of consolidating those lessons learned into a standardized but configurable framework. It rallies all stakeholders around a common methodology and language to give their program the best chance of success.

Q: How does the LCOE work?

TW: We approach every program launch with a proven process inspired by industry best practices. Each phase is unique, with defined steps and tools to carry the program through every milestone and checkpoint:

- **Assess:** Kickoff sessions and planning documents
- **Design:** Program design workshopping, workflow documentation and staffing
- **Implement**: System readiness, legal checkpoints, training and rigorous testing
- **Launch:** Program launch and ongoing review

Of course, just because the process is standardized doesn't mean it's cookie cutter. We fully adapt each phase based on the specific needs of our clients. In fact, as clients continue to get excited about our technology ecosystem, Fusion, and add more capabilities to their program, we've seen our framework evolve and expand into multiple phases. Luckily, because the LCOE methodology is so strong, it's built for more complexity.

Q: Who are the people behind the LCOE?

TW: Launches are remarkably dynamic and require a high level of energy, so we hire cross-functional experts. Our roster includes operations staff, project managers, business analysts, information technologists, data integration experts, analytics personnel and more.

Though all roles are critical, project management is the heart and soul of the LCOE and we have fantastic program managers. They ensure everyone understands their role in the process and how their dependencies impact the program downstream. From keeping things on track to removing roadblocks, they see every project through every juncture.

More broadly, we see the LCOE team as a pipeline for developing future leaders at Lash Group. Because it's such a great learning environment to gain exposure to big-picture concepts in commercial manufacturing, it helps leaders expand their strategic chops while navigating unique variables along the way.

Q: How can leaders of patient support programs more nimbly navigate change?

TW: We operate in a dynamic healthcare market. Our robust standardized toolset and project management oversight helps our LCOE navigate changes better and faster than others in the industry. Early on, we collaborate with partners to craft a comprehensive change management plan that assesses impact, predicts problems and provides multiple-solution, rapid-response scenarios.

That said, you can't anticipate everything. Our teams understand that they should expect the unexpected with every new launch and having that mindset going in helps us build resilience and resolve when we need to shift something midstream.

Q: What would you tell manufacturers as they start their patient support program journey?

TW: Collaborate, collaborate, collaborate. World-class patient support programs don't take place in a vacuum, so entertain new ideas, communicate and trust the process. The time and effort you invest in preparation will pay dividends on launch day. And if you're a Lash Group client, get ready for an exciting and engaging 120 days of launch planning! We rely on our clients' expertise, because a good partnership depends on engagement from both sides. We're in this together, so enjoy the journey.

In today's commercialization services landscape, any patient support services provider can supplement manufacturer programs with technology. But are they making an impact in the lives of patients? Myra Reinhardt, Vice President of Product Innovation and Analytics, shares insight on how Lash Group combines technology, data, and human intervention to improve access to therapy for patients.

Q: What intrigues you most about product innovation and analytics?

Myra Reinhardt: I think everything ties back to data. We can most effectively help patients make informed decisions by providing the best information at the moment they need it. We use data as a tool to help inform and design access solutions so that we can meet patients wherever they are in their treatment journey.

Our team is constantly thinking about new ways to advance what our services can do for patients by developing both usable products and effective analytics. We consider not only what data we need now, but also what we will need to know a few months down the line. We pay close attention to the patient journey data we capture over time so we can use analytics and leverage tools such as artificial intelligence and predictive capabilities in order to best serve the healthcare community.

Q: How do you motivate your team to share in your vision of advancing technology in order to benefit patients?

MR: Most of us have been patients at some point in our lives or have loved ones who have been patients, and we apply everything we do to real-life stories and examples. I encourage my team to consider how technology will translate back to an associate who is helping a patient on the front line, or how our work will directly impact a patient and their ability to access the treatment they need. If we introduce unnecessary steps or the process of using our services is stressful, that can affect the experience of the end user.

When we encounter a challenge, it's not so much that a feature or function isn't working as we hoped, but that this feature or function is, for example, ultimately helping a patient get their medicine faster or delaying it. That's where we have an opportunity for innovation.

Q: How does technology enable Lash Group associates and complement their skills?

MR: Our solutions enable our associates to focus on the right work at the right time. If there isn't a value add by having them complete a particular task, we explore automation to alleviate that work from the associate. We want to ensure associates are engaging in activities that require their skills and thoughtfulness. If tasks are repetitive or can be managed through workflow or predictive AI, we remove or replace those steps so that our associates can apply that time to working at the highest possible level of their knowledge and skills.

Q: What do you think are the biggest myths around implementing new technologies in healthcare, such as electronic benefit verification?

MR: People often assume that technology advancements will make processes and products more cumbersome. While the initial implementation of new technology can come with some complexity, the long-term value and efficiency that it creates for a program and its ability to better serve patients is well worth it.

In the past, there was this idea that any piece of new technology had to do 100 percent of everything you were looking for or it wasn't a sufficient solution. As the industry has evolved over the last five to ten years, we've come to a place where people see that incremental gains are also important. If technology can do 30 percent or 50 percent of the work and leave the rest to be addressed by trained associates, there's real value in that. We can implement a solution today and then refine and push to evolve it over time.

Myra Reinhardt, *Vice President of Product Innovation and Analytics*

A patient-centric approach to technology and analytics

INNOVATION | AUTOMATION | INSIGHTS

Q: What is Lash Group's overall strategy for investing in technology and analytics?

MR: We want to provide valuable insights to our customers that enable them to make informed, strategic decisions for their programs so they can best serve patients. We're thinking about how we can best leverage AI and predictive capabilities to help our customers better meet patient needs. We also seek to bring in outside data on trends that are happening in the healthcare industry in order to provide a more holistic view. From a product and technology perspective, it's along the same lines: How can we best meet patients' needs today while also anticipating what they'll need as healthcare evolves, and planning for new services to emerge?

Q: With that in mind, what does the future of access solutions look like?

MR: We're in a moment when therapies are evolving at a rapid pace. A doctor can prescribe an app and give a patient a token to access it for 30 days. That's very different from an oral drug that's being shipped to you.

We're working with the healthcare community as payers are determining how they're going to consider these non-traditional therapies. We're considering how best to support patients and the providers who are prescribing these non-traditional therapies. There are cell and gene therapies where the patient is part of the manufacturing process, so that creates a complex delivery channel. It's important to ensure that patients, providers and healthcare facilities are well-informed and supported while they navigate emerging, complex and sophisticated treatment methods. To meet these challenges, we can never stop innovating at Lash Group.

Tommy Bramley, *President*

How tech-enabled solutions impact adherence: The dynamic patient assistance landscape

TECHNOLOGY | CLINICAL SERVICES | PERSONALIZATION

Lash Group president Tommy Bramley, PhD, discusses market trends that impact patient adherence and the role of technology in improving patient engagement and outcomes.

Q: What are the top trends you see impacting therapy adherence today?

Tommy Bramley: At Lash Group, we're always tracking the trends in healthcare that affect the way we support patients and our clients both in the short- and long-term. Therapy non-adherence has proven to increase healthcare costs and may put patients at risk, so it continues to be a main focus for our clients.

Right now, one of the biggest trends we've seen is a planned increase in organizational technology investment. Our internal data shows that roughly 70% of patients utilize some type of reminder service, like texts, phone calls or email. From artificial intelligence and data management to analytics reporting and security, the harnessing of information to guide us is having a significant impact on the way we implement adherence programs for our clients.

Second, patients continue to become more involved in their own care and are looking to pharma manufacturers to provide the education they need.[1] We also know there are multiple dimensions to non-adherence,[2] with factors such as socio-economic status and patient health literacy contributing to therapy drop off, and that there's simply no one-size-fits-all approach to engaging patients in managing their own health. Manufacturers must help evolve patient support services that put individualized patient needs at the center of each program strategy.

Third, innovation and new solutions continue to pop up in the market. We've seen an increase in start-up companies specializing in behavior modification, care coordination or therapy fulfillment. They're offering very distinct programs, but may lack the industry experience, resources and connectivity of a full-service hub provider.

Q: How is the role of technology evolving in adherence services?

TB: Technology is a powerful enabler for services that promote access, affordability and adherence. It allows our counselors to spend more time interacting one-on-one with patients, and helps our patients feel more involved and in control of their journey. As it relates to adherence, there are key areas where advances in technology will have the most impact:

Advanced patient support platforms can automate workflows to schedule and track tasks. At Lash Group, that means connecting patients with nurse counselors in real time.

Machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI) solutions allow us to predict which patients require the most adherence support, then use tailored interventions to meet them where they are in their treatment journey. These technologies can also be deployed to address real-time needs and provide personalized clinical support.

Mobile engagement apps increase connectivity with patients and help address early barriers to therapy by monitoring and engaging patients throughout their journey. Mobile technologies are a powerful tool for reaching patients before the first fill.

Pairing technology with high-touch patient interaction helps us reach patients on multiple levels and encourages continued adherence. It's an approach that combines empathy and expertise—merging of technology and people to make for the best outcomes.

Q: What does a high-touch approach mean?

TB: The most essential part of the human component of patient support is a patient-centric clinical program. Qualified nurse educators are critical to our programs. Lash Group's Clinical Services is URAC-accredited for Core Standards. URAC accreditation is a symbol of excellence in healthcare organizations that are committed to achieving quality and practicing accountability. The Core Accreditation from URAC validates that a clinical team has defined policies and procedures that allow team members to quickly and effectively respond to and support the health concerns of their patients. It also confirms that support programs adhere to stringent access to Clinical Services for telephone performance, such as average speed of answer by a live person, average abandonment rate and callbacks to patients.

Q: What advice do you have for manufacturers looking to pick a patient support services partner?

TB: Experience is important, not just in the industry but in partnering with manufacturers to dig in and design a right-sized program that works for your patient population. Clinical excellence is critical. Overall, you want someone who is focused on continuous improvement, who is always asking what else is possible—how can we innovate to identify and address hurdles sooner?