

CASE STUDY:
**Stakeholder Spotlight — Patient Advocacy
Groups as Key Opinion Leaders**



How We Can Help You

Whether you're interested in reaching out to or gaining important insights from practicing physician networks, advocacy groups, patients, or payer decision-makers, Truven Health Analytics,™ an IBM® Company, can help — even when dealing with hard-to-reach, less conventional, and specialty settings.

Effective drug commercialization strategies include engaging with the right key opinion leaders (KOLs) and this includes patient advocacy groups (PAGs), who can have a profound impact on product uptake.

To be effective, thought leaders need to have a deep understanding of developments impacting the market, including clinical advances, competitive issues in the market, and more restrictive payment policies.

Many life sciences companies are expanding their definitions of KOLs. For example, in the case study presented on page 2, oncology PAGs were targeted. These groups maintain a regular, direct line of communication with patients and their families — and are well-positioned to offer insights about patient treatments, concerns, and challenges.

In the oncology space, PAGs may include organizations such as:

- American Cancer Society®
- Susan G. Komen®
- European CanCer Organisation
- Breast Cancer Care
- Canadian Cancer Society

Patient advocates are a valuable stakeholder group on the front lines, so it's critical to understand their daily workflow, professional activities, and extended stakeholder networks throughout the industry. By understanding advocates' professional environments and networks, drug manufacturers can gain a better understanding of patient needs.

Three essential principles guide the collection of KOL knowledge and are illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Essential Principles to Guide Collection of KOL Knowledge



Together, these three I's inform an effective KOL identification and engagement strategy and directly apply to engaging with PAGs.

The following case study illustrates how identifying and evaluating PAGs globally helped a Truven Health pharmaceutical client more fully support its product positioning plans.

Objective

To support a patient-centered strategy, this client sought to establish a more structured framework for collaboration with oncology PAGs and larger, mission-driven organizations across numerous countries and global regions. With a more thorough understanding of individual PAG capabilities, activities, and communication channels, the client would be better able to select and engage with PAGs — and more effectively communicate specific value messages.

Approach

The Truven Health project team identified leading PAGs by country and conducted primary market research via several hundred interviews to answer questions important to the client. Research responses were weighted by market priorities. This resulted in the creation of individual profiles, which enabled the ranking of advocacy groups both within one group of stakeholders and within individual countries. The work revealed which PAGs had stronger advocacy capabilities and which had better organizational strength.

Results

The analysis helped the client develop more tailored engagement strategies. For example, while more established PAGs could partner with the client to convey value messages through their existing patient communication channels, smaller and less sophisticated ones required more client support. This project helped the client better understand the support needed to collaboratively develop and extend the reach and organizational strength of these smaller groups.

Conclusion

By expanding its definition of KOLs and targeting a specific subset of stakeholders, the client realized the value of PAGs for patient outreach — and was able to craft a more informed, multinational commercialization strategy.



For More Information

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