



Rachael Lewinson, online manager,  
national communications,  
Juvenation.org (front) with Susan  
Rago, director, patient services  
and professional relations and Jim  
Shehan, VP, legal, government &  
quality affairs of Novo Nordisk



# GROUP THERAPY

Pharma companies like Novo Nordisk are finding success by reaching out to existing patient communities. **Ben Comer** looks at the latest trends

It doesn't take several years of post-graduate studies and a degree in medicine to describe what it's like to live with a disease. From a patient's perspective, the practical wisdom available in an embarrassing anecdote, or a triumphant description of a breakthrough, can sometimes provide more value than any discussion to be had inside a doctor's office.

Additionally, direct-to-consumer advertising, for all of its patient-centered emphasis and messaging, doesn't necessarily affect the behavior of real patients, at least in terms of requesting brands from doctors. Data compiled by Verilogue, a company that records and studies physician-patient conversations, found that DTC advertising drives patients to request specific brands during in-office visits only 3% of the time (out of a study of 12,500 interactions). "Notably, physicians are more likely than patients to reference DTC ads in these conversations," says Jeff Kozloff, Verilogue's CEO.

For marketers, harnessing the value of patient-to-patient disease communications online can be a ticklish endeavor. The importance of perceived authenticity—regulatory requirements notwithstanding—can present a challenge for even the most transparent educational campaign, branded or not. However, new strategic partnerships with a loud focus on meeting patients' needs, and a quieter focus on meeting business objectives, are accomplishing both.

For other patient groups and their caregivers, point-of-care models, direct mail and email, mobile applications, video and TV continue to be invaluable channels in a successful patient marketing campaign.

## Social Media & Patient Communities

To effectively engage patients, and keep them engaged, marketers need to understand what kinds of information and services are needed at the individual level. To that end, Novo Nordisk, through a partnership with the International Diabetes Federation, the International

Society of Pediatric and Adolescent Diabetes and experts in the field, sponsored the Diabetes Attitudes Wishes and Needs (DAWN) Youth WebTalk Survey in 2007, an extension of the DAWN initiative beginning in 2001. The findings, culled from 6,500 participants from nine countries, "indicated that the psychosocial aspects of coping with diabetes are particularly important to address for youth and young adults...and their parents," according to Susan Rago, director, patient services and professional relations at Novo Nordisk.

When the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF) approached Novo Nordisk in February 2008, the organization "had done its homework, by proposing a concept that was in alignment with Novo Nordisk's focus on empowering an important patient and caregiver segment," according to Rago.

Through an "unrestricted educational grant" from Novo Nordisk,



Juvenation.org is a way for Novo Nordisk and other corporate partners to maintain a presence in the juvenile diabetes research site

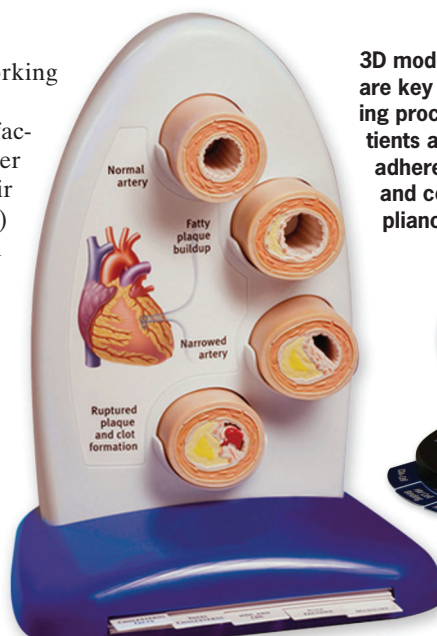
JDRF launched Juvenation.org, a social networking community for type 1 diabetes patients.

Though Juvenation.org does not allow manufacturers to send product-specific messages to its user groups, Novo Nordisk (manufacturer of Levemir and NovoLog insulin products for type 1 diabetes) and other corporate partners are able to maintain a presence via corporate logo placement and visibility. JDRF monitors site page views, unique visitors and membership growth, and also acts on the insights gleaned from group discussions, in order to stay relevant and keep patients engaged, says Rago. JDRF is responsible for site content and operations, and monitors conversations for “appropriateness and approval of online content, safe-guarding of audience and meeting regulatory guidelines,” says Rachael Lewinson, national manager, online communications, JDRF.

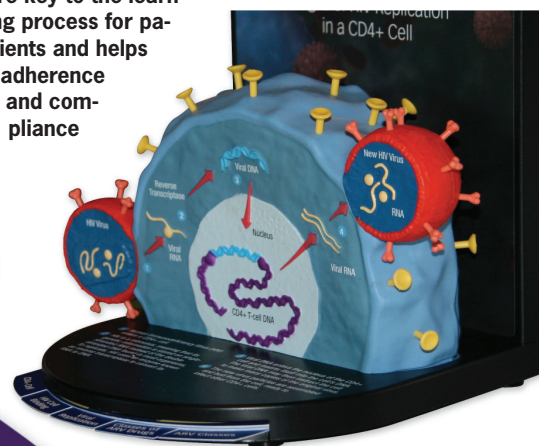
“To create win/win partnerships...it is essential that the initiative creates mutual and relevant value to each partner and targeted patient/stakeholder groups, leverages the strengths of each partner, aligns with respective business objectives and delivers upon pre-agreed performance metrics,” says Deno Syrios, national director, marketing and corporate relations at JDRF.

Juvenation.org, built by marketing agency Ignite Health, features member blogs and groups including parents of children with diabetes and diabetic athletes, a college life group, a poetry and funny stories group, and a “sick of diabetes” group, among many others. Forum topics cover blood sugar readings to “the worst diabetic crime you’ve ever committed,” and everything in between. Banner ads sponsored by Medtronic direct visitors to a free webinar on the subject of insulin pump therapy, or a registration form for a free glucose monitoring system.

Through another unrestricted educational grant, Shire Pharmaceuticals partnered with Dialysis Patient Citizens (DPC), a patient group for dialysis and pre-dialysis patients. DPC Classrooms, the Shire-sponsored portion of the website, offers virtual “classrooms” for dialysis patients. The first classroom, launched in late summer of



**3D models of organs are key to the learning process for patients and helps adherence and compliance**



2008, focuses on nutrition, from “kidney-friendly diets” to the role of phosphate binders—such as Fosrenol, a Shire product—in managing one’s health. The classroom, created

by MicroMass, is the first of many other classrooms that will eventually comprise an entire school of health, according to Bill Leinhos, director, dialysis clinics, at Shire. A second classroom focused on building health networks—including caregivers, nurses, renal dieticians and others—is currently in the works. “Dialysis patients can be on 12 different medications, while also balancing socioeconomic issues. It’s important for Shire to bring in materials and tools outside of the specific core condition,” says Steve Carickhoff, product manager, Fosrenol. The community of dialysis patients is fairly small—around 3,500, according to Leinhos, so the wisdom in partnering with a pre-existing group like DPC was self-evident.

According to Manhattan Research, the most frequented patient community sites encompassing multiple conditions include DailyStrength.com, PatientsLikeMe.com and CarePages.com. In June, UCB announced a partnership with PatientsLikeMe.com for an epilepsy-focused patient community expected to launch in early 2010. Maureen Malloy, manager, strategic marketing and corporate communications at Manhattan Research, pointed to a study from late 2008 that found over 60 million US adults using health blogs, online support groups and other health-related social media applications. Over 20 million adults in the US have posted health content online, according to the Manhattan Research study.

### Online Video & iPhone apps

With the sheer amount of video online increasing exponentially by the second, being in the right place at the right time—with the right video—is more important than ever. Raj Amin, CEO and co-founder of HealthiNation, an independent producer of health videos, says online video is a great way to engage patients—if the context is right. “If we’re looking for women in a very specific demographic, they could be on a gaming site,” for example, says Amin. HealthiNation partners with over 50 web affiliates spanning condition-focused sites to lifestyle and nutrition properties, in addition to providing cable television subscribers with video-on-demand options.

Beyond location, another important consideration is a consumer’s motivational stage. While some patients may be looking for straight

**HealthiNation's GirlTalk offers video-on-demand options, dubbed 'edutainment,' developed by a team of doctors and media experts**

## From push marketing to pull marketing



**Daniel Hawkins**

Dennis Urbaniak, VP of innovation & new customer channels at Sanofi-Aventis, Dan Rubin, president, inVentiv patient outcomes, and Daniel Hawkins, founding member at Clarion Healthcare Consulting sat down with MM&M's editor-in-chief James Chase to discuss the ongoing shift from selling products to selling patient outcomes. The following conversation is excerpted from an MM&M webcast on June 30.

In the old days, the key elements in a successful product marketing campaign depended on getting to market first, outspending the competition and maintaining a tight control over all messaging associated with a product. "It had become an arms race," said Hawkins. "Now the old playbook is being challenged." With market share for generics on the rise, new regulations and a proliferation of new technology, among other things, new strategies have become a necessity.



**Dan Rubin**

"A critical element in driving the shift is to truly adopt the mindset that moves from a product focus to a customer focus," said Urbaniak. "Pharma has been very successful for many years with a one-way shout across many channels. Success in the future depends on a true customer-centric approach." To demonstrate this point, Sanofi-Aventis launched a pilot program in six markets aiming to close the gap in communities where chronic disease rates are above the national average, and access to healthcare resources is lower. "You can't create a national platform that you try to sell

in local markets," said Urbaniak. As a part of its program, Sanofi tapped a community health liaison in each market to connect with patients and healthcare providers through "true, local efforts," said Urbaniak. The equally weighted success criteria for the program included physician satisfaction, patient satisfaction, impact on prescribing in the six markets, and "a range of qualitative and quantitative endpoints to determine health outcomes for patients," according to Urbaniak.

To achieve the goals laid out in new initiatives like Sanofi's community health partnership—and a second Sanofi program that partnered with the Health Alliance to essentially guarantee against bone fractures for patients using Actonel—companies have to broaden their own perspective about their products, said Rubin. "It's no longer just a chemical entity you're providing. If patients don't take it correctly, you're not getting the health outcomes. What you're selling isn't the pill, but the promise of wellness."

Rubin described an initiative at Merck that created an incentive for adherence at the insurer level. "Merck cut a deal with Cigna on reimbursement rates for Januvia and Janumet that changed according to how well patients controlled their diabetes," said Rubin. "The amount of compensation that Merck received actually went down [in the short term]...but it created an incentive for Cigna to keep patients on the therapy, and if patients stay on the therapy, Merck benefits significantly."



For more information log on to MM&M's archived webcast *From Selling Pills to Selling Healthcare*. It is available on demand at [www.mmm-online.com/Webcasts/section/76/](http://www.mmm-online.com/Webcasts/section/76/)

facts without the gloss, others need a stronger entertainment hook to be engaged. For the latter group, HealthiNation creates video content dubbed "edutainment," or educational health videos developed by a team of doctors and media experts designed to provide informational content in a snazzy format. "Pharma is understanding that it is high quality video that engages consumers," says Amin. "Viewers spending a longer amount of time on a video have expectations of higher quality."

GirlTalk, an edutainment-based video series sponsored by Schering-Plough in support of the contraceptive Nuvaring, features episodic discussions between young women hosted by Annabelle Gurwitch, an actress, author and activist. Topics include stress, dating, relationships, diets and body image, and are spliced with long-form video advertising for Nuvaring—usually close to three minutes—that resembles the Girl Talk format. Viewers can skip over the Nuvaring ad at any time and continue with Girl Talk, although a stationary Nuvaring banner remains just below the video player. Amin says the company is able to measure how much time is spent viewing a brand-oriented message, as well as click-through rates and unique viewer numbers. On the back-end, clients can measure those conversion rates with product sales, he says.

GirlTalk content, which targets women in their early twenties to mid-thirties, is somewhat broad in terms of audience, but that was appropriate for Nuvaring. HealthiNation can create video with a tighter focus—for diabetics pre-insulin, as an example, says Amin, as well as video for conditions that require a more inclusive educational campaign, such as fibromyalgia.

Additionally, HealthiNation offers targeted email programs that serve up videos focused on compliance, such as motivational stories. "Most pharmaceutical companies have their own email compliant platform," acknowledges Amin, adding that HealthiNation's platform is integrated and can work with internal programs. In April, the company announced a partnership with A.D.A.M., a health information and technology solutions firm, for the launch of Medzio, an iPhone application linking smart phone users to HealthiNation and other content suppliers. Amin says only a small percentage of HealthiNation's overall viewership is currently watching videos on mobile devices, although the company is testing iPhone capabilities.

In other online video news, Merck and Allergan have both recently launched celebrity-helmed video series. Merck's unbranded HIV/AIDS education series, titled *Living Positive By Design: Creating Positive Conversations*, stars Jack Mackenroth, a designer on *Project Runway*. The series premiered on Myspace ([www.livingpositive-bydesign.com](http://www.livingpositive-bydesign.com)) in September, and was created by M-Street Creative. Allergan coupled actor Michael Welch of the *Twilight* movies with *High School Musical*-themed online video in support of Aczone, an acne medication. The campaign, titled *Aczone the Musical* and found at [www.aczonethemusical.com](http://www.aczonethemusical.com), was created by Indelible.

In addition to online video, a panoply of health-related iPhone applications have launched in recent months, allowing on-the-go patients to keep records of their health as it relates to a condition in real-time. Some of the apps deliver sponsored messaging and reminders to patients as well. For \$4.99, patients with Crohn's disease can purchase an iPhone app called GI Monitor, to record their symptoms and transfer the information to doctors. A Humana subsidiary called Sensei launched a \$0.99 app last April for patients looking to manage their diabetes in real-time. The app also includes a checklist to help facilitate patients/doctor conversations, and the



