



PARTNER CONTENT

The point of inception: A timely story of patient empowerment to improve medication adherence

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[Andrew Burns, chief growth officer, DrFirst](#) | January 31, 2022 | 10:12 AM



There is a point in every patient journey that either leads to healthy outcomes or missed opportunities and unmet needs. While this was true long before the pandemic, COVID-19 has significantly impacted how patients could access their healthcare providers and get the treatment they need. By providing the right information and resources at the right time, brands can empower patients to achieve healthier outcomes with measurable results.

As a health IT and e-prescribing pioneer, DrFirst has seen COVID-19 accelerate digital solutions by influencing patient empowerment and provider workflows. Patients want more access to information, and they are embracing digital solutions to give them that access.

In this Q&A, Andrew Burns, chief growth officer at DrFirst, shares insight and perspective on the digital new normal and how Timely by DrFirst is leveraging the pandemic's technology acceleration to make healthcare more personal for patients and more streamlined for providers.

Q. How can digital solutions help brands have the greatest impact on patient outcomes?

At DrFirst, we have fluid opportunities to engage with patients at critical moments in their healthcare journey, particularly at that place between the point of care and the point of sale, the so-called point of inception. That is where the stakes are highest. The point of inception – initiated when providers prescribe treatment via electronic prescriptions – is where we have an opportunity to empower patients to manage their care and adhere to their physicians' prescribed therapies.

Research shows that one in four patients disengage and

abandon their prescription between the care visit and the pharmacy. This cannot continue because the cost is staggering: 125,000 patient lives lost and \$300 billion in industry losses a year are attributed to this pervasive, persistent problem around medication adherence.

Q. What happens at the point of inception that leads so many patients to abandon their prescription medication?

Most patients don't visit their physician with the intention of ignoring a treatment plan. For some patients, it's concern over drug efficacy or the potential for side effects. Others have financial reasons for not filling their prescription, and sometimes the reason is simply, 'I got busy and forgot.' We can overcome a great many of these barriers by providing patients with clinical education, financial support, and reminders at the most relevant time, shortly after their healthcare provider sends their prescriptions to the pharmacy.

Our core business of electronic medication management put us in a unique position to develop Timely, a digital mobile communication solution to improve medication adherence. Timely goes to work as soon as a prescription has been written, sending mobile communication to the patient from the provider, reinforcing the clinical decision, and keeping patients engaged, informed, and empowered to stick to their treatment plan.

Q. What makes Timely unique in its ability to improve medication adherence?

In a word: integration. Being integrated with over 280 EHRs and 130,000 physicians positions us to lead with a

solution that extends the reach of providers and empowers patients with relevant communications at the right time to help them follow their treatment plan. And that's what Timely is, a partnership with life science brands built on the strength and scale of our EHR integration to improve medication adherence.

In fact, the continued strengthening of our EHR integration partnerships will result in DrFirst touching one out of every three new electronic prescriptions written in the U.S. by the end of 2022. Timely's retention rate of 99% and the fact that our patients experienced as much as a 14% improvement in overall medication adherence in the last three quarters shows that we are closing the information gap for patients at a critical time in their care journey.

Q. Do you see Timely's value proposition as a technical solution or something more? And what is the role of personalization in communications?

Our technical differentiation is significant, but the human touch of our patient engagement is equally important. One of the more interesting concepts that the health technology industry is grappling with is the personalization of digital solutions. For us, person-centered communication means that it is relevant, has value, and is highly thoughtful in everything about how it's delivered: providing the right information to the right patient at the right time.

It's about knowing how to time each message, reminder and alert with the appropriate tone and frequency to have the greatest value for that patient at that point in time. Every patient has different needs depending on

their diagnosis and many other factors. It takes communication that's relevant, well-timed, and well-placed to help patients follow their care plans.

Our real-time insights into patients' disease state, whether they are new to treatment, whether their prescription is a first fill or a renewal, and their demographics allow us to tailor each message with the most appropriate information. We understand that patients with diabetes require different types of resources and touchpoints than patients with cardiovascular disease. On the provider side, digital solutions should always support and reinforce their delivery of care. We share appropriate clinical information based on the patient's history and profile – and do so efficiently – so that healthcare providers can spend more time with their patients.

Q. How has DrFirst established innovation around medication adherence?

With over 22 years as a healthcare pioneer, DrFirst has led our many stakeholders through transformational change and progress to support patient engagement for improved medication adherence and outcomes. More than 100 million Timely patients benefit from this innovation through our partnerships and integrations with EHRs and health systems.

While Timely was launched before the pandemic, it has evolved to better address the challenges we have faced these past two years. We are always looking forward, anticipating market trends, using data and artificial intelligence (AI) to increase insights. And we are consistently adding more partners and developing new

and enhanced technology strategies to empower patients and streamline care.

To learn more, please visit [Timely-Health.com](https://www.timely-health.com).

To watch Andrew's recent webinar for MM+M, [The Acceleration of Digital Health Technologies and the Impact on Adherence in a Post-Pandemic Era](#), click [here](#).

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