

# Real-World Benefits of an Oncology Navigation Program

How a multiple myeloma adherence program used nurse navigation to boost patient outcomes.

THE CHALLENGE

A novel cancer treatment may hold much promise—but only if the patient is adherent to therapy. Consider, for example, that up to 24 percent of cancer patients have skipped filling their prescriptions altogether, and up to 29 percent skip their doctor appointments.<sup>1</sup>

The underlying reasons for non-adherence vary from patient to patient based on a range of unique barriers—from financial challenges and accessibility to side effects, health illiteracy, work and family interruptions, and the influence of mental health issues.

To address these barriers and give cancer drugs the best chance of success, Lash Group sought to determine the impact of a patient-centered support program on multiple myeloma treatment adherence.

On average, patients in Lash Group's adherence program stayed on therapy **9 days longer**, had **20% more infusions** and went **20% less time between treatments**, as compared to those who did not participate in an adherence program.

ACTION

Researchers conducted a retrospective study among multiple myeloma patients who received IV treatment to assess the impact of Lash Group's medication adherence program on patient compliance.

Among the study population of 476 patients, 129 (27 percent) were enrolled in Lash Group's program, while 347 (73 percent) were not. The study compared adherence between the two groups marked by key indicators such as the number of IV infusions, therapy duration and time between treatments.

The Lash Group Model

Supported by a roadmap of features customized to combat patients' financial, personal and access-related barriers, Lash Group's adherence program included multiple evidence-based components, including:

- **Expert Phone Support:** Experienced Oncology Certified Registered Nurses (OCNs) provided holistic, one-on-one inbound and outbound phone support to participating patients.
- **Therapeutic Training:** Before beginning their assignments, each nurse underwent training on the product, side effects, infusion schedules and referral protocols for psychosocial support.
- **Individualized Communication:** Once onboarded, nurses engaged in segmentation via patient reported outcomes assessment, personalized problem-solving, motivational interviewing, education and ongoing follow-up to support patients in real-time throughout their therapeutic journey.

In addition, a marquee component of the Lash Group approach involved active listening, which can reveal patient needs that even providers may overlook. In particular, out-of-pocket costs and lack of transportation can deeply impact compliance, yet physicians may not know their patients face such barriers.

## RESULTS

The patients who participated in Lash Group's telehealth-based adherence program had markedly better compliance outcomes. Cancer patients enrolled in the program...

- ...had a higher number of IV infusions (27.6 vs. 22.9).
- ...stayed on therapy longer (154.1 days vs. 144.9 days).
- ...went less time between treatment sessions (5 days vs. 6 days).

## CONCLUSION

The study confirms previous research that has shown the necessity of medication adherence programs, especially for cancer therapies. For physicians and manufacturers, such programs can help ensure patient compliance—an integral part of treatment success. As such, it's also important for brands to invest the appropriate resources on enrolling patients in the program.

For patients, the stakes are far greater: Adherence programs can mean the difference between getting lifesaving treatments, delaying them, or even missing out altogether. And at Lash Group, breaking down barriers for these patients is why we exist.

## ENSURING SUCCESS

- Engage in a patient-centric navigation program that emphasizes the multifactor importance of emotional, financial and educational support.
- Opt for adherence programs that prioritize evidence-based training, certification and continuous education among nurse navigators.
- Explore multiple strategies for offering individualized support. Techniques such as motivational interviewing, personalized problem-solving and segmentation can help identify and address unique barriers for meaningful and lasting impacts on treatment compliance.

Find out what else is possible at [lashgroup.com](https://lashgroup.com) or call 1-800-357-5274.

1. Family Reach. Cancer-Related Financial Toxicity and its Pervasive Effects on Patients and Families. February 2018. Available online at [https://familyreach.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/february\\_wp\\_final.pdf](https://familyreach.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/february_wp_final.pdf)

## NURSE NAVIGATION AT A GLANCE

Lash Group's Oncology Certified Registered Nurses provide telehealth-based concierge support that is uniquely suited to each patient and drug program. Services can include:



**24/7 nurse hotline**



**Insurance coordination**



**Pre-infusion prep & post-infusion follow-up**



**Health literacy & clinical education**



**Emotional and financial resources**



**Motivational interviewing**



**Ongoing patient engagement**



**Patient segmentation**



**Predictive analytics**

