

# Enhancing Communication, Improving Care

A White Paper On Engaging Specialty Pharmacy  
Patients To Improve Care And Outcomes



**AcariaHealth**<sup>™</sup>  
An **envolve** Pharmacy Solution

**T**oday's health care consumers increasingly expect open dialogue and transparency when making care decisions in collaboration with health care providers. At the same time, rapidly developing technologies allow for targeted, customized and personalized communication that can inform and engage patients at an individual level. The benefits of improved communications and greater patient engagement may include improved

medication adherence; reduction in expensive emergency care and hospitalization; better health outcomes; and reduced health care cost.

This white paper explores opportunities to increase patient engagement and positively impact health care outcomes when incorporating patients' behaviors and personal communication preferences into messaging and delivery.



Studies show that engaged patients are more informed and better equipped to make important decisions regarding their care.

## The Opportunity: Patient Engagement

AcariaHealth, a leading specialty pharmacy, serves patients living with complex and chronic conditions, including arthritis and high cholesterol. These patients benefit from a higher level of clinical support, customer service and educational resources to help them manage their conditions. AcariaHealth uses leading-edge technologies and targeted communication strategies to give patients the tools they need to be more informed of their drug therapies and better connected to their health care providers.

While patient expectations of increased dialogue and responsiveness from health care providers are growing, there are opportunities to better meet and exceed those expectations through enhanced communication and an overall focus on higher quality of care. Health care providers continue to adopt various communication mediums, such as text/SMS and email, to communicate with patients. Use of these tools in a variety of care settings has the potential to create a better overall experience for patients.

### Figure 1: The Five Types of Psychographic Segments

These psychographic segments are listed in order of highest to lowest propensity to engage, with their percentage representation in the general population.



**Self Achievers (19%):** The most proactive when it comes to their wellness. Self Achievers stay on top of health issues with regular medical check-ups and screenings. Motivated by goals and achievement, they will tackle a challenge if given progress measures.



**Balance Seekers (17%):** Generally proactive, but open to ideas, information and treatment options when it comes to their health. Choice is a priority for Balance Seekers, and they make decisions regarding treatment after weighing all their options.



**Priority Jugglers (18%):** Very busy and reactive when it comes to their personal healthcare; however, they are proactive when it comes to their families' health and are among the least price sensitive when it comes to investing in loved ones. Dedication, duty and sacrifice are strong values to Priority Jugglers and can be used to motivate healthy behaviors.



**Direction Takers (15%):** Look to healthcare professionals for direction and guidance. Direction Takers trust credentialed experts to make the right health decisions for them. However, they are not simply direction followers. They may find it challenging to comply with treatment if they can't incorporate it into their daily routine.



**Willful Endurers (31%):** Live in the "here and now" and do not prioritize their health. Willful Endurers are the most reactive and least engaged in health and wellness. They are self-reliant and only go to the doctor when they must. The key to this segment is immediate gratification and making things easy and hassle-free.

## The Approach: Psychographic Segmentation

AcariaHealth continuously explores ways to expand engagement capabilities to support its people-centered approach to patient care. By tracking the behaviors of patients to create highly targeted two-way communications, AcariaHealth aims to increase engagement and empower patients to live a healthier life. This approach led to a collaboration with PatientBond to create a pilot program for adult patients with select chronic conditions.

PatientBond is a communications platform that supports a wide variety of digital processes to engage members via email, text/SMS, interactive voice response, and in-app/portal communications. Cloud-based and Application Programming Interface (API) driven, PatientBond integrates with any electronic medical record, customer relationship management tool, or practice management system to access and manage relevant and appropriate patient data. Beyond the platform, however, is the focus on using psychographic segmentation to customize and personalize the communication experience.

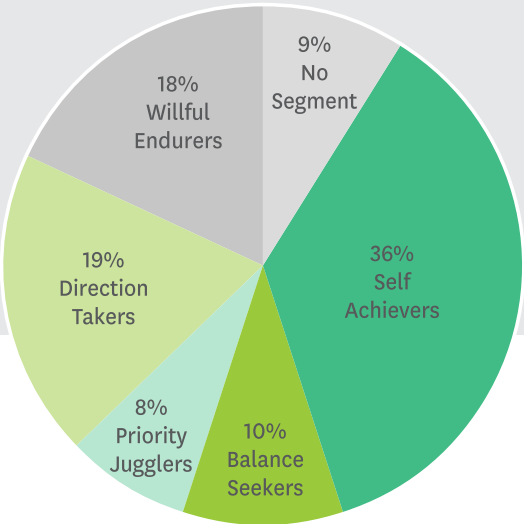
Psychographics pertain to people's values, beliefs, lifestyles and personalities, which are core to their motivations and communication preferences. Psychographic segmentation categorizes people into sub-groups based on shared psychological characteristics to explain and predict behaviors. While psychographic segmentation has been used for decades in consumer and retail industries, the concept is relatively new to healthcare.

PatientBond uses a proprietary psychographic segmentation model to better understand people's health and wellness motivations and behaviors. This model is used to personalize engagement for members of a population and promote healthy behaviors. The psychographic segmentation model is based on an algorithm driven by twelve survey questions, which identifies five distinct healthcare segments. These psychographic segments are listed in Fig. 1 in order of highest to lowest propensity to engage, with their percentage representation in the general population.

The five psychographic segments exist across all populations of healthcare consumers, though the segment distribution may vary by disease or mix of demographic or socioeconomic variables. It is important to understand the profile of a population across these factors to develop an effective engagement strategy.

**Figure 2: Psychographic Segments of Pilot Participants**

Among 459 patients enrolled in the pilot, the results of the survey showed that two psychographic segments – Self Achievers and Direction Takers – were over-represented in the pilot. In fact, the percentage of Self Achievers in the pilot was almost twice that for the general population, representing 36 percent versus 19 percent, respectively.



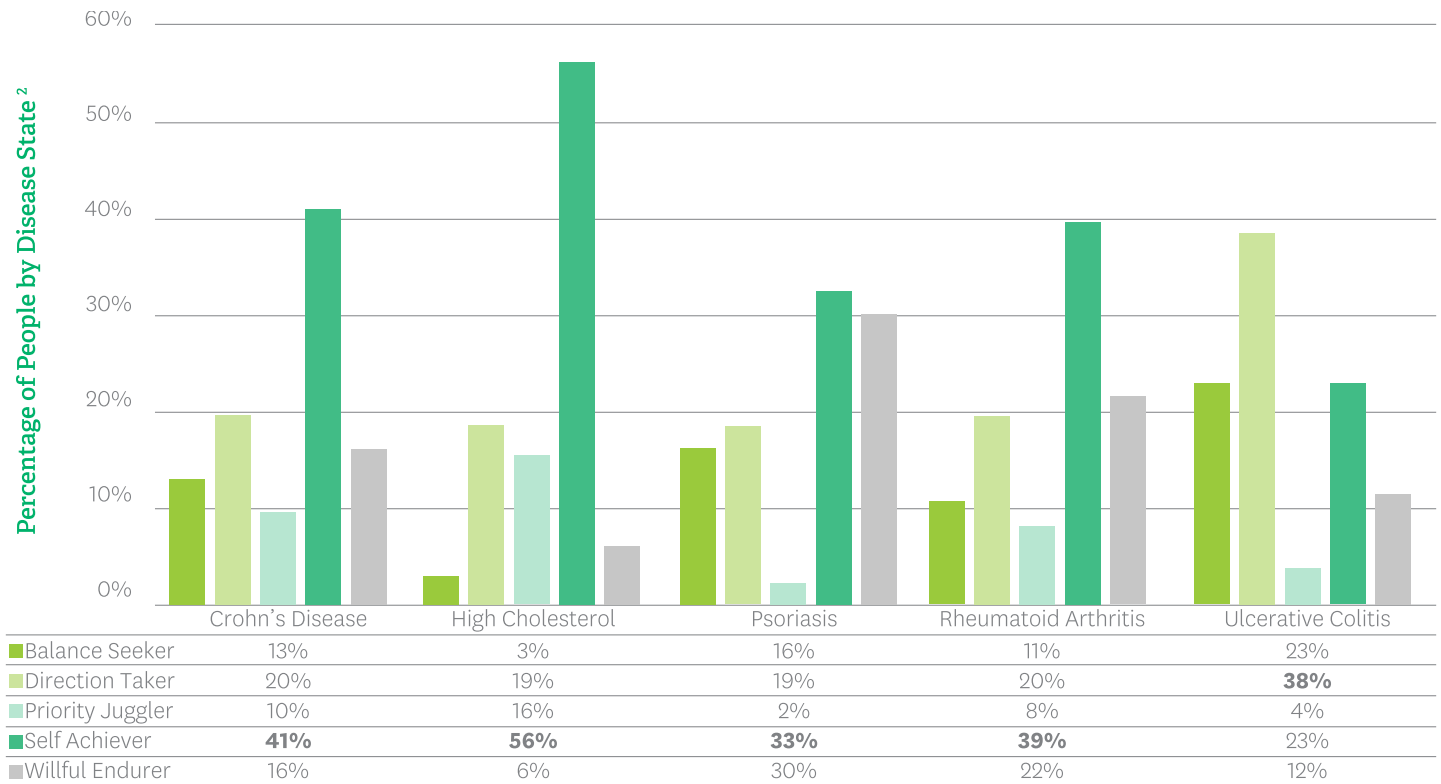
**The Segments: Pilot Representation**

The primary conditions targeted in the pilot study were arthritis, treated with Humira or Xeljanz, and high cholesterol, treated by Repatha.\* Additional conditions included Crohn’s disease, psoriasis and ulcerative colitis. Based on existing market research on psychographic segments, data show that patients with arthritis are statistically more likely to be categorized as Self Achievers and Direction Takers, while patients with high cholesterol are more likely to be Direction Takers.<sup>1</sup>

Due to Self Achievers’ proactive approach to managing their health, over-representation in the pilot was expected, as this group is most likely to use health care resources and programs. See Figure 2.

*\*Unless otherwise stated, no pharmaceutical manufacturer is associated with, or has endorsed, this pilot or its outcome.*

**Figure 3: Psychographic Segments by Disease State**



<sup>1</sup> Proprietary market research conducted by PatientBond in 2018. <sup>2</sup> Disease state category predicted based on patient’s prescribed medications



The Strategy: Personalized Engagement

Each psychographic segment is unique in its motivations and approach to health and wellness, and each segment requires a different engagement strategy. Effective messaging and channel mix vary by segment, because a one-size-fits-all approach is suboptimal.

Pilot program communications were personalized by each individual’s psychographic profile. The approach focused on factors that prompt patients to engage, communicate and comply with treatment. **Figures 4** shows how a message may vary based on segment-specific key words and phrases, using

a text message as an example. All five versions of the text message focus on first day interactions, but each has subtle wording differences designed to resonate with each segment.

**Figure 5** provides the timeline of the communications used in the pilot. Some segments prefer additional information and the ability to further research a topic. In these cases, an email can provide information and links to other references. Other segments prefer less information, so a text message is enough to trigger a positive response.

Figure 4: Sample Text Messages

Self Achiever

AcariaHealth wants to ensure you have the tools you need. Let us know how things are going with your medicine. Proper dosing is the key to success.

Willful Endurer

AcariaHealth has your back with 24/7 assistance. Let us know how things are going with your medicine. Every dose matters.

Balance Seeker

AcariaHealth wants to ensure your peace of mind. How are things are going with your medicine? Proper dosing is the key to success.

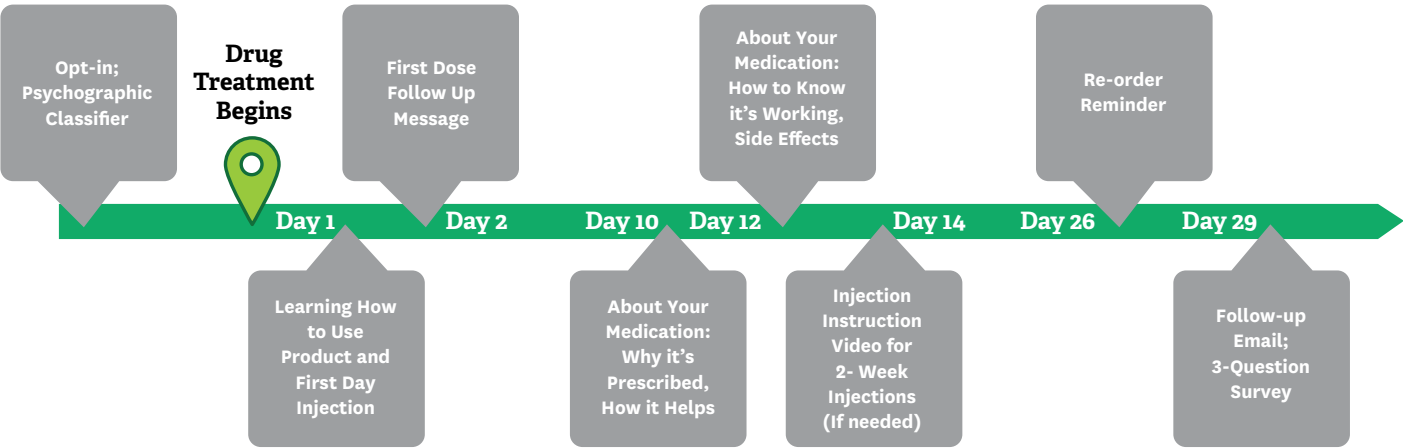
Priority Juggler

AcariaHealth is here to offer support when you need it. Let us know how things are going with your medicine.

Direction Taker

AcariaHealth is here to offer support. Let us know how things are going with your medicine. Proper dosing is the key to success.

Figure 5: Sample Communication Plan



## The Results: Positive Impact

Pilot program results were encouraging. In the initial six-month program, over 450 patients enrolled after receiving an invitation. Of patients that started the program, 88 percent responded to at least one message. Many of these patients responded to multiple messages, and also gave positive responses to customer satisfaction surveys.

For example, patient adherence to therapy **improved by 1.5 percent**, duration of therapy **increased by 10 percent**, and there was a corresponding **decrease of 6 percent** in the number of “gap days” of therapy. **Only 5 percent of patients in the program had escalation incidents**, vs. 12 percent for patients on the same medications not in the program.

Additional analysis found evidence that clinical benefits were

“**The pilot program with PatientBond shows promising early results which appear to enhance the patient experience and potentially improve patient care.**”

Dr. Ross Hoffman, MD

beginning to emerge. Dr. Ross Hoffman, AcariaHealth’s Chief Medical Officer, stated: “The pilot program with PatientBond shows promising early results which appear to enhance the patient experience and potentially improve patient care, and we are excited to see those results validated with further analysis in the near future.”

As a result of the pilot program findings, AcariaHealth and PatientBond initiated a two-pronged program expansion by:

- Continuing drug messaging for the three medications across a broader patient base
- Introducing additional outreach for cystic fibrosis patients

Ongoing program data and results are under review to determine longer-term benefits and positive impact to patient engagement and care. Additionally, AcariaHealth is conducting research related to this pilot, assessing opportunities to improve operational efficiencies including reduced call time for patient care specialists, faster response time to patient refill requests, and enhanced patient satisfaction.

## Summary

At the conclusion of the six-month pilot program, results indicated that more frequent and targeted communication to patients has the potential to promote safer, higher quality, and more cost effective treatment for specialty pharmacy patients. The program is continuing, and additional data and results will be collected over time.

Key takeaways from the pilot program include the following:

- **Psychographic segmentation can be used to positively impact engagement of specialty pharmacy patients.** By appealing to patients’ intrinsic motivations, health care service providers can influence behaviors and help promote positive outcomes. This methodology has the potential to enhance patient engagement and improve both medical and operational outcomes for health care organizations.
- **Personalized communications have proven effective in giving patients the tools they need to better manage their health.** It is important to first understand the profile of a population when developing engagement strategies. Then, customized and personalized communications can be used to inform, engage and promote healthy behaviors at an individual level.
- **Targeted engagement shows positive clinical benefits.** Preliminary data show that patient duration of therapy increased by 10 percent, accompanied by a corresponding decrease of 6 percent in the number of “gap days” of therapy. Additional research and analysis is ongoing to track results over time.

By tracking the behaviors of patients to create highly targeted two-way communications, AcariaHealth aims to increase engagement and empower patients to live a healthier life.

AcariaHealth, an Envolve Pharmacy Solution, is a national comprehensive specialty pharmacy focused on improving care and outcomes for patients living with complex conditions, such as hepatitis C, multiple sclerosis, oncology, rheumatoid arthritis, hemophilia, cystic fibrosis and other conditions. Offering specialized care management services in these disease states, AcariaHealth is dedicated to enhancing the patient care offering, collaborating with providers and capturing relevant data to measure patient outcomes. To learn more, visit [AcariaHealth.com](http://AcariaHealth.com).



PatientBond's mission is to leverage Consumer Insights and Innovative Technologies to disrupt healthcare engagement. PatientBond's highly configurable communications platform leverages a proven psychographic segmentation model and supports a diverse set of digital workflows to help our clients build a tighter bond with their patient/member population, while improving healthcare consumer acquisition, loyalty and health outcomes. To learn more, visit [PatientBond.com](http://PatientBond.com).



To learn how AcariaHealth can help engage your patients in their health care management, please contact [sales@envolvehealth.com](mailto:sales@envolvehealth.com).

## References

- Hibbard, J. H., & Greene, J. (2013, February). What The Evidence Shows About Patient Activation: Better Health Outcomes And Care Experiences; Fewer Data On Costs. Retrieved from <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/full/10.1377/hlthaff.2012.1061>
- Nickel, W. K., Weinberger, S. E., & Guze, P. A. (2018, December 4). Principles for Patient and Family Partnership in Care: An American College of Physicians Position Paper. Retrieved from <https://annals.org/aim/fullarticle/2716698/principles-patient-family-partnership-care-american-college-physicians-position-paper>



8427 Southpark Circle, Suite 400  
Orlando, FL 32819  
(p) 855.422.2742  
[AcariaHealth.com](http://AcariaHealth.com)

© 2021 AcariaHealth. All Rights Reserved. 25\_202108