



Acurian on...

“How Can I Improve Patient Engagement and Retention in My Clinical Trial?”

Introducing Patient Concierge

A white glove level of service in patient support

Representing a level of personal service that goes “above and beyond,” a Patient Concierge program is designed to provide a single point of contact to help patients and caregivers navigate the complexities of clinical trial participation. It can mitigate patients’ concerns or objections, enhance the patient experience, and increase patient satisfaction.

Patients in a clinical trial – particularly those with a rare, debilitating, or deadly disease – frequently need special support beyond that supplied by their healthcare practitioners and loved ones. Issues such as the following may loom as obstacles to keeping current patients enrolled and attracting new potential trial candidates:

- Traveling regularly to a distant study site
- Scheduling multiple appointments
- Applying for and receiving timely reimbursement for participation.

With so much to keep track of, and ongoing coordination among various personnel (primary care physician, site administrators, study coordinator, etc.), patients may not know where to turn for assistance. In these situations, Acurian Patient Concierge can help.



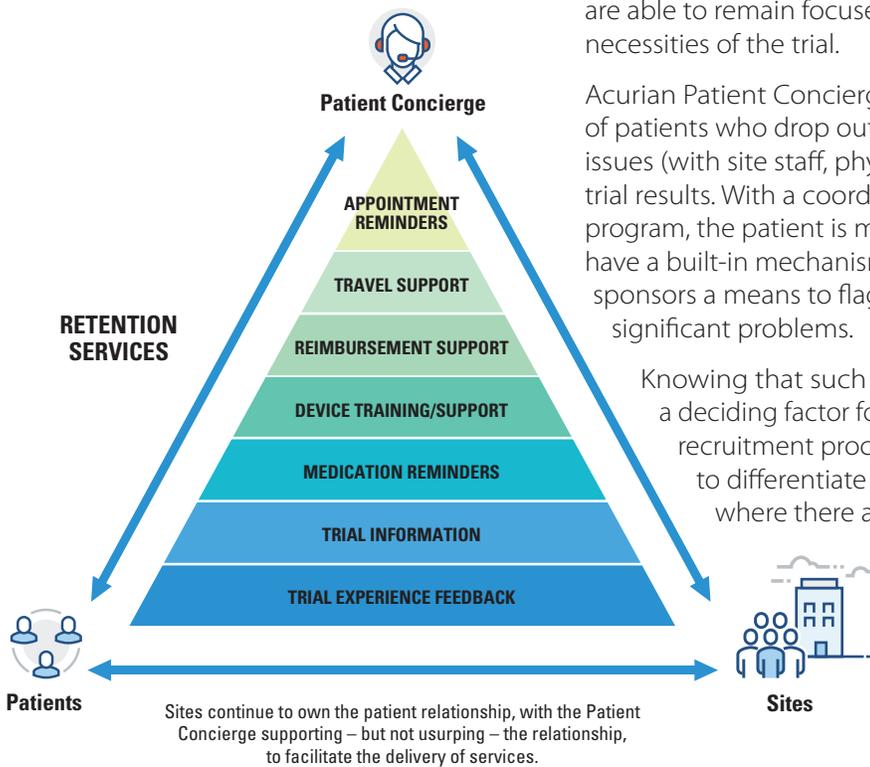
Who Benefits?

Research has shown that there is demand for this type of service across almost all therapeutic areas, especially those with unique patient populations, high competition for patients, long travel distances to sites, complex protocols, and extended timeframes. Clinical trial sponsors, sites, and patients alike rank issues such as trial reimbursement, travel support, and appointment reminders as highly important in these studies.

For clinical trial sponsors and sites looking for innovative ways to improve patient retention, a Patient Concierge program is a way to more effectively deliver services like the ones mentioned above. Patient Concierges assist patients with trial comprehension, logistics, technologies, and non-medical issues and questions, supporting sponsors' goals of retention and "patient centrality." And by having a system in place to handle non-clinical administrative requests, clinical research site staff are able to remain focused on **patient care** and the medical necessities of the trial.

Acurian Patient Concierge can also reduce the number of patients who drop out of a trial because of customer service issues (with site staff, physicians, etc.) or lack of insight into trial results. With a coordinated, integrated Patient Concierge program, the patient is made to feel that s/he is truly #1. Patients have a built-in mechanism to provide feedback, which also gives sponsors a means to flag recurring issues before they become significant problems.

Knowing that such a service is available may even be a deciding factor for patients to participate during the initial recruitment process. Acurian Patient Concierge can serve to differentiate a particular study in therapeutic areas where there are multiple trials competing for patients.





What Is Included?

Following the example of a hotel concierge, Patient Concierges can provide travel logistical support, but also do *much more* to simplify the trial for the patient. Other services may include:



- Appointment reminders
- Reimbursement coordination/support
- Device training/support
- Medication reminders
- Trial information resources
- Collection of patient feedback.

The Acurian Patient Concierge program is a global solution, leveraging the extensive Contract Research Organization resources and expertise of parent company PPD. Offering both inbound and outbound support, Acurian Patient Concierges respond *reactively* to patients' inquiries, connect them with the appropriate resources, and coordinate all contacts. Patient Concierge representatives also *proactively* check in with patients in between site visits – accessing appointment, site, and protocol information to provide trial details and reminders as needed.



Addressing Potential Challenges



Research has shown that sites are very open to working with a third party to improve patient retention *as long as* they maintain the relationship with the patient. It is important to note that in the Patient Concierge model, each site continues to own the patient relationship. With the Patient Concierges supporting – but not usurping – that relationship, the sites can deliver retention and engagement services without adding to their workload.

The Patient Concierges also coordinate closely with sites so as not to overwhelm, confuse, or annoy the patients with too many messages or too much information. Potential methods of communication can include phone calls, texts or emails.

Obviously, patient confidentiality is a priority. The use and storage of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and Protected Health Information (PHI) must comply with HIPAA data privacy and security laws, the EU Data Protection Initiative, and other regulations as appropriate. Patients are asked to opt into Acurian Patient Concierge as part of the trial consent process.

And with potential trial candidates located all over the world, the program can only be as successful as the language capabilities, backgrounds and locations of the Patient Concierge representatives, and the operational processes and systems in place. At Acurian, the service is offered worldwide, with Patient Concierges speaking local languages, and many even residing in the same countries as the patients.



Conclusion

Although Patient Concierge is a relatively new concept for clinical trials (and often perceived as primarily travel-related), it is becoming widely accepted in other areas of healthcare. Just as more and more hospitals are offering a variety of Patient Concierge services to improve the patient experience, when a patient in a clinical trial feels valued and knows someone is available to meet their non-clinical needs, their stress decreases and their level of engagement improves.

Making it easier for the patient to participate and remain engaged is especially important in an environment where trials are becoming increasingly complex, with protocols incorporating arduous medical regimens, advanced technology, and/or appointments with multiple practitioners/sites. The support provided by Patient Concierges can minimize patient attrition, lower patient retention costs for the sponsor, enhance site relations by reducing administrative burdens, and ultimately lead to faster completion of the trial.

