

Maintaining access in shifting times:

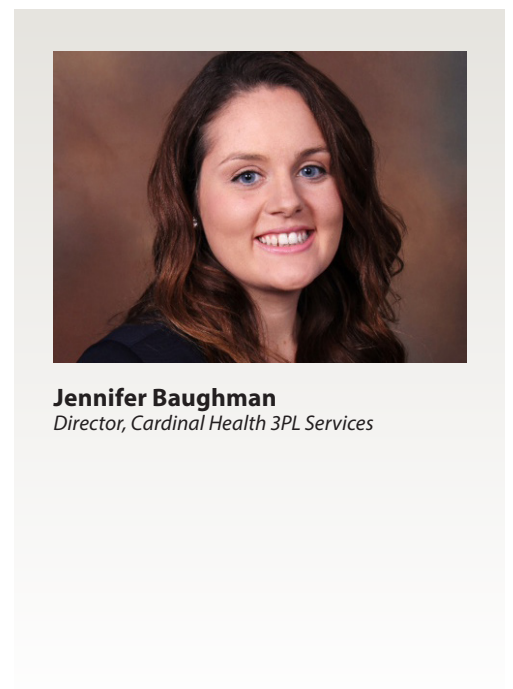
Telesampling and whitespace access opportunities



For several years, pharmaceutical representatives have faced increasingly restricted access to healthcare providers, a challenge that has been further intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, there has been renewed focus on direct-to-physician sampling approaches. At a time when social distancing regulations are essential for patient and staff safety, a telesampling program may be able to create access where none exists today.

While these programs have often been referred to as “whitespace” solutions due to their beginnings in reaching HCPs outside of designated representative territories, telesampling has expanded in response to the growing trend of physicians, and the health systems they work for, limiting rep access. According to a 2019 Decision Resources Group survey, the share of physicians seeing reps fell from 67% in 2018 to 54% in 2019; however, half of respondents indicated an openness to remote means of communication if it were offered by pharma.¹

In response to a McKinsey survey on the impact of COVID-19 on access for medical technology reps, more than 80% of physicians reported that their institutions were restricting access to reps, further narrowing the in-person engagement channel. Reflecting on this finding, McKinsey researchers concluded that while sales reps will continue to be important to the customer buying journey, companies will need to prioritize the highest value activities, and the future of physician engagement will take an “omnichannel” approach — relying on multiple methods for interaction.²



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In this environment, telesampling can be used to address these challenges and maintain physician engagement, even as access to in-person visits becomes more restrictive. Here are a few examples where this approach can either supplement or replace traditional field sales engagement:



Geographically remote areas

HCPs in rural areas simply fall outside of the territory reach of many pharmaceutical reps, but that doesn't negate their patients' need for samples. A telesampling program can help mitigate rural health disparities by giving patients timely access to therapies to sample before deciding upon long-term treatment.



Salesforce restructuring

During times of economic uncertainty and downsizing, salesforces may be struggling to call on a broader swath of HCP offices. Telesampling can help fill the gaps between — or replace — rep visits and create greater frequency for product reminders.



Shifting sales team priorities

When a field sales team's attention is diverted to other products due to a launch or lagging prescription forecasts, a telesampling strategy can provide support to products that fall out of the call priority.



Time out of territory (TOT)

Having an established telesampling program in place can help provide coverage for times when field sales teams are out of territory — whether for vacations, industry conferences or annual sales meetings.



Planned and unexpected absences

For sales representatives and managers, keeping a territory "warm" with virtual outreach, rather than going dark on communications due to a leave of absence or vacancy, can be valuable and make re-engagement easier. Workable, a leading developer of talent acquisition software, reports that the average time to fill sales positions is 48 days, with biopharma among the industries with the longest interview processes of 28.1 days.³



Low-decile prescribers

Taking a "leave no stone unturned" approach can lead to undiscovered prescribing potential. Telesampling offers low-touch outreach to prescribers to understand their patient population and need for your product.



Responding to a new, on-demand world of interaction

ZS Associates recently theorized that new healthcare provider engagement models will be characterized by customers setting the terms of engagement.⁴ COVID-19 has demonstrated that thriving businesses must leverage multiple channels to serve customer needs, both in-person and virtually. Cardinal Health 3PL Services helped several clients "flip the switch" from rep-delivered to direct-to-physician samples as stay-at-home orders went into effect in many states. Omni-channel sample access — via rep, phone and online — may become the new standard.

Whitespace sampling programs rely on calls and emails to reach prescriber offices and offer samples. Cardinal Health 3PL Services launched telesampling as an extension to our established sample distribution services offering. Managed and executed entirely in-house by the dedicated 3PL Services Samples Center of Excellence, we can help pharmaceutical companies address access challenges in the following ways:

- Coordinate HCP office outreach strategies using client-provided target lists, call frequency and approved messaging
- Establish program rules, including request limits and notifications to you and your team
- Manage sample acknowledgements
- Complete signature audits, upon request
- Integrate with customer relationship management (CRM) systems to provide visibility to sample activity
- Deliver integrated reporting to support your company's Prescription Drug Marketing Act (PDMA) compliance and Sunshine Act reporting

Partnering with Cardinal Health 3PL Services to manage your sample distribution can provide consistency in execution and one-stop visibility to sample activity. You can bring value to your organization by expanding the reach of your sampling program:

- Reach restricted access HCPs in existing sales territories
- Expand reach into geographies not covered by field sales
- Create continuity of coverage during territory vacancies, salesforce restructuring and medical leaves

What's more, Cardinal Health 3PL Services is continually evaluating how to do more with this proven access strategy. For example, in partnership with our Specialty Pharmaceutical Distribution team, we are exploring ways to apply consignment technology to rep sample distribution and inventory management. If you are looking to expand the return on investment on sample inventory and deliver measurable success to your organization, let's look at your sample program possibilities.

Start the conversation today.
cardinalhealth.com/pharma3PL

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As Director of Customer Operations for Cardinal Health 3PL Services, Jennifer Baughman is responsible for order management, customer service and chargebacks. She inspires her team to be responsive to customer needs, discover solutions to unexpected issues and drive toward business efficiency and compliance with every transaction. Jennifer oversaw the development of the direct-to-physician sampling services within 3PL Services, taking an exacting approach to the regulations and compliance concerns surrounding these programs.

Since joining Cardinal Health in 2013, Jennifer has held leadership roles in multiple areas within Customer Operations. Her background also includes implementation management, contracting, financial analysis and customer service.

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