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PARTNERSHIP

CONTINUUM AND LYFT WILL OFFER FREE RIDES TO CLINICAL-TRIAL PATIENTS

CONTINUUM CLINICAL partnered with mobile car service provider Lyft in January to offer transportation to patients enrolled in clinical trials.

Continuum’s clients include AbbVie, Merck, Sage Therapeutics, Ironwood, and Acadia. Patients enrolled in clinical trials or who are scheduled to go to screening appointments for clinical trials organized by Continuum’s clients are eligible for free rides to the study site.

“Studies have shown that of patients considering participating in a clinical trial, up to 50% list transportation as a barrier,” said Nariman Nasser, VP of site optimization at Continuum. “If they’re relying on family members, their transportation becomes less reliable, and they’re forced to drop out.”

In addition, family members and caregivers accompanying the patient to the study site will not be charged an additional cost, said Dan Trigub, who manages healthcare partnerships at Lyft.

Eligible patients do not need to own a smartphone to use the service. They can request rides through a call center or Lyft’s web request service, where they can input their pickup and drop-off information, and a driver will pick them up. Continuum and Lyft are also offering codes generated specifically for each patient to input into the Lyft app.

“We can control how the Lyft code will be used,” Trigub explained. “We can place

restrictions on the specific address, time of day, or day of the week, so there’s no concern about it being used for personal trips on the weekend.”

With this partnership, Continuum hopes to reduce the transportation barrier patients often face when deciding to stay enrolled in clinical trials.

Lyft is now giving free rides to patients enrolled in clinical trials through Continuum Clinical



Initially, the companies are providing transportation to clinical-trial patients with ambulatory conditions, focusing on those with Alzheimer’s disease and neurological and chronic conditions.

Through the access mode setting in the Lyft app, patients with accessibility needs can request vehicles that accommodate wheelchairs. The ride-hailing company has the capability to assist patients with walkers, wheelchairs, and guide dogs.

The partnership was announced at the annual Scope Summit in Miami, and initial feedback has been positive, said

Nasser. “It was a big aha moment of people understanding that leveraging something that’s growing in the consumer market in such a simplistic way is going to be a big differentiator for improving patient recruitment and retention,” she explained.

Continuum is also using online screening methods to identify patients before they interact with study sites, and exploring how to identify and connect with patients using real-time data.

Lyft has been involved in the healthcare sector since it announced a partnership in 2016 with the National Medtrans Network to provide 2,500 rides per week to patients with non-emergency medical appointments in New York City. In De-

cember, it announced a partnership with the Ascension health system to provide free or subsidized rides to patients in its 141 hospitals and 30 senior care facilities in 24 states and Washington, DC.

Trigub declined to share how much of Lyft’s business is now healthcare-related, but he noted it’s a growing vertical.

Lyft’s competitor Uber launched UberHealth in 2015 to provide rides to registered nurses delivering flu shots. It also has partnerships with health system MedStar and startup Circulation to arrange rides for patients. — Virginia Lau