

## How Northwell Health's Liaisons Are Reaching New Patients #102

**Kelley Knott:** [00:00:05] I have one of my great friends with me today. Her name is Naddira and we actually met at the American Association for Physician liaison and Naddira works for the Northwell Health Care System up north. So I wanted to bring her onboard because as you guys know, Northwell is a huge health care and hospital system with multiple physician liaisons and such a great outreach care center for patients. So I thought she could really help us provide some insight and we can kind of get talking about some of the challenges us as liaisons face and use some of her experience and tips to really help us get the momentum moving forward.

**Kelley Knott:** [00:00:53] So Naddira introduce yourself?

**Naddira Savard:** [00:00:54] Hi. Thanks so much for having me. I'm excited to be here. So like you said, I'm from Northwell Health. We are the largest health care system probably on the East Coast. We have about 70,000 employees now. We have roughly 24 different hospitals. We have a bunch of different service lines, almost 15 different service lines. And we've got about 4,000 ambulatory practices. My team consists of. We have a V.P. There's two directors, 15 outreach managers, three analytics in-house team members and one event coordinator. And we are all the way from Suffolk County, Nassau, Queens, Manhattan, Staten Island, Brooklyn, West Chester. So we cover a big geographic area. And I have personally been with the health system for about 13 years.

**Naddira Savard:** [00:02:12] I would say a master's in healthcare is worth it. It is. So if you like that this business, that is exactly what you need to get into. I always tell the people my team or my friends or my colleagues, like if you're really if health care is the industry you want to be into, it's totally worth it. It's so relatable. You can put so many things to what you're doing day to day. And the classes are just so interesting.

**Naddira Savard:** [00:04:01] So we now do with the IPA, which is the Independent Physician Association, and we do outreach as far as your day to day liaison work. The referral channel filling the pipeline with new business development leads. So we kind of merged altogether. I was on that team. I'd been on this team for about five years now where I started out as a liaison. Then I got promoted to a senior outreach manager and

then I got promoted about a little over a year ago to a director. So now I'm actually working with the team instead of I saw a little bit of territory because I think it's super important. As someone managing the outreach team to still have the pulse or no.

[00:05:16] Unless you're really out there, you know, counting that PR man and working side by side with your other reasons, you don't know the barriers and the struggles that they go through.

**Kelley Knott:** [00:06:16] There's a lot of fun in being in a nontraditional work environment. I mean, like you said, I used to just blare the music and sing so loud sometimes take my dog to work day secretly. I think that's a really fun part about being a on it's the freedom of your own time and you get to build what you want.

**Kelley Knott:** [00:06:59] How am I going to manage this team? What do I do to communicate and how do I keep it all together? As far as not adding extra hours of data entry or being micromanaging. So what are some things you would have for someone to avoid that micromanagement, but also stay connected and make sure that you're keeping it all organized?

**Naddira Savard:** [00:07:17] The way that we have it broken out is we have a director who he manages the analytics team and they do the data and the reporting. And then there's my side of it where it's more the operations and I work more closely with the outreach managers. It's a lot of competing priorities and a lot of stakeholders to make happy. The way that we try to do it is we have my V.P. who meets with her senior leadership and her chairs and, you know, all the the stakeholders on her level. And then I try to meet with the stakeholders on my level and kind of filter the new physicians or what the priorities are or where we can build business. I try to filter those doctors names to to my outreach managers at the same time. We also encourage them to go meet their physicians for Northwell. Northwell physicians, we try to encourage them to if they're in your territory, in your sights. By all means, go meet them. Set up a plan. But remember, we drive that. Know we're driving that that bus to say this is where we think the opportunities are.

**Kelley Knott:** [00:09:11] Getting that analytics, having someone help you with that and not being a one man show, one woman show, trying to get all this information as well as managing leads on.

**Naddira Savard:** [00:09:29] I try to look at the data daily and say, who are they going to visit? Which physicians are we supporting? How can we improve our. Is there any gaps in what we're doing in a specific territory? So there we are. I do not micromanage, but I do have to kind of take a look and see, make sure that the work is being guided correctly.

**Kelley Knott:** [00:10:29] Even though you're at such an amazing healthcare system, even though you have such an amazing team, you still face those physician liaison challenges like getting past the gatekeepers, communicating with team members and trying to think of ways to get outside health care systems to help become a referral.

**Kelley Knott:** [00:11:12] So what were some of your challenges, whether it was early on?

**Naddira Savard:** [00:11:25] Those office managers, those gatekeepers can be a real challenge. Sometimes you just have to be determined, continue to go back. My trick has been that. I try to find something in the office or I'll look at a picture, even if it's a challenging physician. Let's say I'm meeting with a doctor and he's not he's like standoffish. He doesn't really want to hear what we have to say. I'll try to look around the room and find something that I can connect with the doctor. So there was this one doctor that he was very. He just wasn't having it. He wasn't into our conversation. We were you could tell he just didn't really want to engage with us. He had horses. And this was right before the Belmont races.

**Naddira Savard:** [00:13:22] It's the common problems of how do we show ROI? How do we prove that these large events were hosting or these physicians that we're taking out? We are shifting business or we can make a difference because we are such a large organization.

**Naddira Savard:** [00:13:54] Our tool box has so many things in it that we can talk about, but as an outreach manager, a physician liaison, you need to be able to shift that

conversation at any moment or be able to multitask multiple conversations. That I think could be a challenge for a lot of new liaisons.

**Kelley Knott:** [00:15:00] Make sure that you're there to provide value. I think that's really good advice for new leaders on listening, learning how to pivot and get your information, make sure you know you're talking about but make good transitions. I think that was really good advice.

**Kelley Knott:** [00:17:14] What are ways that you found trying to get some physicians on board? Is there any times you ran into that or were there ways you could get them on board just by using other means?

**Naddira Savard:** [00:17:53] If you can get their buying and they support our program, it makes our lives so much easier.

**Naddira Savard:** [00:18:10] When you do get your first interaction with the physician. Be prepared. So have those reports ready. Have whatever the marketing material is, whether it's theirs or not, have it ready to show them what it looks like. Tell them what we can offer them or how we can help them. Explain that you're there to help grow their business.

**Naddira Savard:** [00:20:10] If we can't engage with the physician during the day, we'll do events during the week. And a lot of times those those are those are one of my favorite success stories because at the end that you've done all this work to drive all these physicians into these events or to build awareness in the community of these great programs that we have to offer and to see them show up to want to hear about the program or want to meet your new physicians. It's really an awesome feeling. And that for me is like job well done.

**Kelley Knott:** [00:21:32] How would someone in your territories or a physician be able to connect during these events? Where could they find this information for Northwell events?

**Naddira Savard:** [00:21:41] So we do mostly physicians to physician for these events. My team hands out. We hand deliver invitations. We are also emailing physicians as

well as we just started our new social media. So we're on Instagram @northwellphysicianrelations. And we will start actually promoting our events through our Instagram page. We're starting to highlight the physician or the program. We as our team take selfie is or you know, we're trying to do like fun, different picture with the physicians.

**Kelley Knott:** [00:23:58] What would you say for your health care organization is a good frequency for them to be seeing in a month or a week?

**Naddira Savard:** [00:24:41] I'd say we should touch those at least once a month, maybe a little bit more, depending on if they're newly onboard. If you have new physicians that align with what they send out, you know, you should be touching them a little bit more for our Northwell physicians, it's a monthly basis. You touch base with them. Has anything changed? Can I help you in any way? Know is there any physicians you like to meet, et cetera?

**Kelley Knott:** [00:25:57] I think it really justice depends too on your territory. Some people be rural territories, so they're not going to be able to pack in. I definitely I think that it ranges. But one thing that you brought up is kind of the tiers of visits, which isn't really, really true and consistent of not every doctor is the same frequency.

**Kelley Knott:** [00:26:40] Have you ever had any difficulty during your time in Physician liaison marketing, where though and good intention, maybe an office manager got a little bit too involved and tried to kind of take over the physician liaison marketing for that particular practice and maybe there were some lines crossed. And if so, how did you overcome that?

**Naddira Savard:** [00:28:59] I've found myself in what we call business development conversations with doctors that are looking to align with us, you know, maybe become part of the system. Right. So become a faculty practice provider. So we bring out our business development team because we have a team that does that. And it's funny. They'll look at me when my counterpart is speaking, but not because I can give them any information more than my counterpart can. But just because they're comfortable with me.

**Kelley Knott:** [00:30:40] What is some advice you have for experienced liaisons and then what is some advice you have for new liaisons?

**Naddira Savard:** [00:30:59] I'll start with new liaisons.

**Naddira Savard:** [00:31:09] Those barriers that you are encountering. If you find your own uniqueness and your way to communicate with them. Those walls will come down. Will you have the best job. And it will be even better once you're able to have that relationship with the physician or the office manager, that's given you a hard time. So stick with it. It does get easier over time and eventually it's like walking into seeing an old friend.

**Naddira Savard:** [00:31:57] Then for experienced outreach liaisons, I would say. Take it to the next level.

**Naddira Savard:** [00:32:14] Be that liaison on that finds a way to improve your program or impress your physicians a little bit more. If it's if your company is looking to get into using statistics or analytics, be that person that champion for that that program. Be that champion for your boss, for your director, whoever it is, and really get on board with whatever you want to be looking forward.

**Kelley Knott:** [00:33:00] Keep the leadership, keep the momentum and challenge yourself.

**Kelley Knott:** [00:34:44] You make a difference as a liaison. You make a different position. And it's the patients that are really reaping these benefits and really improving patient care quality and education.

**Naddira Savard:** [00:34:58] I think sometimes liaisons forget how connected they are to the health system. Because you're out there pounding that pavement on your own. But remember, if you didn't introduce this physician or introduce this program to this doctor who has this patient who could be a family member of someone. They may never have known about this amazing doctor or this amazing program or this life changing procedure that could have just saved the patient.

**Kelley Knott:** [00:36:00] What we do matters! You don't actually know as a liaison you could be making a huge difference in somebodies life just by connecting them to the specialist that can change their life, treat them and improve their quality of life.

**Kelley Knott:** [00:36:30] Tell them how people can connect with you guys.

**Naddira Savard:** [00:36:46] We just started our social media. So please follow us. @Northwellphysicianrelations on Instagram. You'll see us highlight physicians in our community and talk about our hospital system, all the great things that we do.

**Naddira Savard:** [00:37:06] You can Google us to learn more about our hospitals.

**Kelley Knott:** [00:37:27] We'll have to do an update for you listeners a little later on. Because I know we're going to get a ton of questions after this podcast.

**Naddira Savard:** [00:37:54] Your job is super, super important that day to day when you're out there and you're like, I feel so disconnected. Or does this really matter? It does matter. Your hard work, your efforts out there really do matter. And you can make a difference for bunch of patients out there and the physicians that they see and the programs that you highlight. So just continue to pound that pavement, get the word out and you are super important and connect with your colleagues if you are lonely.

**Kelley Knott:** [00:38:26] I built a team at Physician liaison University for any of you listening. That is just an exclusive community of physician liaison that are like minded. They've been where you are. So there are support groups out there. I met Naddira through the American Association of Physician liaison and really had a great time there too.