SmartAttend – the cost-effective way to maximise NHS appointment attendance

SmartAttend is an appointment reminder system developed by SmartDesk Systems specifically to minimise missed appointments or DNA's ("Did Not Attends") particularly in the NHS.

DNA's are a much reported and costly issue for the NHS, estimated to cost in the region of £600M annually. Managing the problem of missed appointments and achieving the government's target for referral-to-treatment time can be a significant challenge.

Many systems have been introduced to address this, the majority being a mix of SMS and email based reminder systems.

Whilst efficient and well suited for some, SMS and email are of limited use in reaching groups particularly those more vulnerable such as the elderly and partially sighted, in addition to non-English speakers and the illiterate. Significantly, few people are able or willing to respond to the message they receive, making it impossible to pre-determine the effectiveness of your

reminder service and prompting a level of appointment overbooking to compensate for 'no-shows'.

For a reminder system to deliver optimum results it must appeal to all patient populations. This is the downside of text and email reminder systems: they don't. Only by overcoming these limitations, can you maximise appointment attendance.

Introducing SmartAttend

SmartAttend is a multichannel reminder system which helps cut DNA rates by communicating with your patients the way they – and you – want. Alongside text and email communication, SmartAttend offers the unrivalled benefits of interactive voice messaging.

SmartAttend supports standard and personalised messaging:

"Dear Mr. Smith

Your appointment is at 16.30 on Friday 29th May

at the Chelsea & Westminster Hospital on Fulham Road, London SW10 9NH

Press 1 on your phone keypad to confirm you will be attending

Press 2 to cancel this appointment

Press 3 to reschedule this appointment"

…and so on, conveying the information required

As a web-based service, SmartAttend is easily deployed and backed by extensive reporting that allows you to see in real-time the effectiveness of your reminder comm-unications.

It's secure with anywhere, any time access too.

Voice messaging gives you an auditable, real-time advantage

Where SmartAttend seriously improves on traditional processes, is via voice messaging:

- Messages can be personalised (eg. name/ identity, time, date location)
- Messages can be delivered in the patient's native tongue
- Message length is not restricted unlike SMS
- It's better for elderly people uncomfortable with mobiles or computers
- It's better for the visually impaired
- It supports instant response and interactivity

"More than 1.1 million appointments were missed at London hospitals in 2007. That's 3200 missed appointments per day"

"Missed appointments cost the NHS £600 million annually"

(source: Evening Standard)

"The cost of each missed slot is estimated by the Government at about £100."

"Research by the NHS into "no-shows" has found that in two thirds of cases patients simply forget about their appointments."

"Average hospital waiting time from day of decision was 49 days in 2007 - up from 41 days in 1997/98"

(source: telegraph.co.uk)

Voice messaging makes it easier for patients and puts you in control

Interactive capability backed by the extensive reporting functionality of SmartAttend puts you in control. It lets you know instantly:

- if your patient will be attending
- if your patient is cancelling
- if your patient will be re-scheduling their appointment
- at what time and date your patient is rescheduling their appointment
- as a fully automated service it allows you to optimise your resources at minimal cost

SmartAttend offers much more than appointment reminders

The interactive nature of voice messaging offers additional advantages for patient confidentiality. SmartAttend can safeguard privacy by only delivering the message to those patients who pass the verification check presented to them at the beginning of the message.

The system is easily programmed to reschedule the issuing of messages where it shows the initial message is not received. Appointment reminder messages can easily be appended to remind patients on items to bring along such as samples, consent forms, dietary records and so on. SmartAttend is also perfectly suited to the cost-effective issue of acknowledgments, 'thankyou's, data verification requests as well as internal notifications and updates.

Via SmartAttend, voice and SMS costs are highly competitive and, as a hosted service, it can pay for itself within a matter of weeks.

Who are we?

Based in Wembley, SmartDesk Systems work with the Post Office, Argos, Eurostar, NTL / Virgin Media, 3663 and Echo Managed Services amongst others to make a difference through intelligent communication solutions. Please contact us at:

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