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SURGERY CONNECT

CONNECTING PATIENTS TO PRACTICES

Surgery Connect Appointment Reminders

Case Study: Freeman Hospital, Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospital Trust

X-on's unique two-way SMS cuts costs and improves Patient care at the Freeman Hospital.

The Paediatric Cardiac Transplant unit at The Freeman Hospital contacted X-on in 2007 to implement a service which would allow two way SMS communication between consultants, nurses, patients and their carers.

The Problem

Nurse Liaison Officers were spending too much time on the phone talking to patients and their carers for simple requests such as blood test results or the cancellation of clinics. Phone calls were often duplicated to accommodate both parents, or where the parents were not available nurses often needed to retry the call many times. Additionally, with many adolescent Cardiac transplant patients also needing to be advised regarding their condition, some families needed to be contacted three times, often with the same questions every week.

The Solution - Surgery Connect Appointment Reminders

Surgery Connect Appointment Reminders easily satisfied the requirements of the Freeman Hospital and was flexible enough in its configuration to allow the Freeman to send out SMS, receive replies specific to the patient, and also have those replies easily shared amongst the consultants and nurses. One SMS could reach many patients, saving nurses and patients valuable time.

The Benefits

- Quick communication - Quick reply
- One message – Unlimited number of recipients - Just a few clicks away
- Less intrusive to patient lives - Long term disease management
- Cost effective - Audit trail with delivery receipts

After using the service for a year Nurse Liaison Officer Julie Flett said:

"Highly convenient, time saving, and makes communication simple between hospital and patients and their families at home. Families respond to it readily as most people are very familiar with texting these days. I would highly recommend it to other health care professionals. We hope to be able to improve our communication particularly with teenagers by using this system."

Sister Julie Flett, Paediatric Cardiac Transplant Liaison Sister, Freeman Hospital, Newcastle upon Tyne.

Time Savings = Costs Savings

During one week, on average, the liaison nurse will spend 11 and a half hours calling approximately 70 patients to request a blood test or relay results. In time alone this would cost on average £187, not including the cost of making the calls. With Appointment Reminders communicating with 70 patients takes a maximum of 10 minutes in total, including registering the results. The cost of this *in total*, including nurse time and cost of the communication via SMS, is £7.80.*

Surgery Connect Appointment Reminders, though initially supplied as a patient communication tool for long term disease management, has also been used by Paediatric Cardiac Unit administration staff to manage clinic cancellations, and now serves as the only communication to remind patients to have MRSA screening before surgery. This has reduced the costs of communicating with patients in these areas by 93%.*

If the Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospital Trust expanded this service to all departments just to notify the postponement/cancellation of clinics for first appointments (18043)** it could make a saving of just over £14000.

HES data showed postponement/cancellation of clinics for subsequent appointments was 106,428.**

* Figures provided by Paediatric Cardiac Transplant unit Freeman Hospital. All staff costs calculated on Average Salary band and letter writing costs based on Research conducted by the procurement hubs.

** HES 2007-2008 outpatients statistics.