

67% Reduction in DNA's in 6 weeks



NHS Dumfries and Galloway serve a population of over 148,000 across a geographical region of 2,400 miles. Around 6,000 outpatient slots are wasted each year due to patient DNAs (did not attend). This was having a serious impact which the Trust needed to address.

The Challenge

In August 2004 Dumfries and Galloway began to issue text message appointment reminders to patients using NHSnet in an attempt to reduce their DNA rate which was over 8%. Early results were encouraging, but only 5% of patients with an associated mobile number were able to receive an appointment reminder. Dumfries and Galloway required a service which would reach a higher number of patients to ensure DNAs were significantly reduced.

The Solution

In November 2005, Dumfries and Galloway introduced the Chronos Confirmation service from ERS Connect. Chronos uniquely contacts patients using a blended approach of live agents, IVRs, SMS and Email. If the patient can't attend their appointment Chronos instantly alerts the Trust allowing slots to be quickly rebooked, maximising clinic capacity.

Dumfries and Galloway quickly gained the benefits of Chronos's dedicated service and expert support in the following areas:

Reduced Patient DNAs

The overall DNA rate of Dumfries and Galloway was initially 8.6%. After only six weeks of introducing Chronos this DNA rate fell to 2.8% – a 67% reduction. For patients booking through the Patient Focused Booking system (PFB) the DNA rate fell from 5.6% to 2.1% – a 63% reduction.

“If we weren't using the Chronos service our DNA rates would be much higher.”

Stewart Cully
IM&T, NHS Dumfries and Galloway

Effective Healthcare Communications

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Improved Patient Experience

Chronos manages to confirm the attendance of over 90% of patients, which is why the service is currently the most effective tool available at reducing DNAs. The live agents Chronos uses are key to this success rate. In a three month period between November 2010 and January 2011, Chronos successfully confirmed 87% of all of Dumfries and Galloway's appointments, 18% of which were the result of the call being switched to an agent caller and would not have been completed otherwise. Stewart Cully comments "I like the fact when you can't reach patients using an IVR the service then switches to an agent. This is very important to us".

Live agents are not only cost effective but avoid the anxiety which IVR only services can cause.

"Chronos offers four methods of communication – live agent calls, SMS, IVR and email. This makes it simple for us when we are contacting patients."

Stewart Cully
IM&T, NHS Dumfries and Galloway

Appointment Slot Utilisation

Over a six week period, 24 patients used the system to cancel their appointment and another 46 chose to rearrange out of a total of 2988 reminders which were confirmed as being received. Dumfries and Galloway calculated that the 24 cancelled appointments which were refilled translate to 200 more patients being seen each year.

Rebooking appointments in this way ensures consultant professional activity (PA) time is increased and wasted cost and time from undertaking DNA related administration is reduced.

"We have had excellent efficiency savings."

Stewart Cully
IM&T, NHS Dumfries and Galloway

Improved Data Quality and Information Security

The security and confidentiality of patient data is fully maintained by the Chronos system which has achieved ISO 27001 certification. The Caldicott Guardian at Dumfries and Galloway conducted a full review of the Chronos service and concluded that it meets all of the NHS security requirements. Stewart Cully comments, "We are very impressed with the level of security that the service offers".

Continued Success

Since piloting the service in 2005, Dumfries and Galloway have now been partnering with Chronos for five years and have found that Chronos has provided them the service they need to help run their outpatient clinics efficiently.

"Chronos has delivered great DNA reductions. ERS Connect are great to work with, they are professional, flexible and really understand the needs of the NHS."

Stewart Cully
IM&T, NHS Dumfries and Galloway

Key Features

- Blend of Live Agent Calls, Automated (IVR) Calls, Emails and SMS Messaging to maximise capacity and income within NHS Trusts, across the UK
- Fully managed service, working securely over the N3 network
- No capital investment, with low service costs

Delivers

- Reduced DNAs
- Maximised slot utilisation, reducing waiting lists
- Improved cash releasing efficiency savings
- Increased income, through Payment by Results
- Improved patient access to care

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