

Case Study - "Loss of revenue from missed appointments"

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Children's Specialized Hospital

Location: New Jersey

Type: Pediatric rehabilitation hospital system

Size: 12 locations in New Jersey

Founded: 1891

MyCareText User Since: 2012



Problem

Children's Specialized Hospital has lost considerable revenue over the years due to one problem -- no-shows. Too many prospective patients schedule first-time appointments, then don't arrive as expected. The reasons vary, but the result for hospitals is lost revenue—totaling in the millions of dollars over a year's time.

"We've struggled with our show rate for years," says Michael Marranca, Director of Patient Access Services. "We're a specialty hospital, so first-time appointments are made some six months in advance. People forget about the appointment or they may have found an earlier appointment someplace else."

In 2012, only 80 percent of patients kept their appointments—which meant that during the year, hundreds of patients did not show up.

When a patient misses a new-patient appointment, that's 1.5 to 2 wasted hours in the schedule, Marranca explains. Clinicians and therapists can't bill for the time, so they lose billable hours they could otherwise apply toward financial incentives, which affects morale. And the hospital loses considerable revenue.

In late 2012, hospital administrators decided to take action. They began evaluating various messaging systems to generate appointment reminders. "MyCareText was offering a trial, so we decided to see if it truly worked," Marranca says.

Solution

The MyCareText software was easy to implement, says Marranca. "We run a schedule report out of the patient appointment system--then upload it into the MyCareText product, which takes like 30 seconds." The MyCareText software is then automatically populated with the patient's appointment information, and generates the appropriate email or text reminders.

Email reminders: Delivered four days in advance of the appointment. The email message was customized to meet the hospital's needs – providing the appointment date, time, location, as well as hyperlinks to the hospital's website, a checklist on what to bring (like pathology evaluations) and a reminder to wear comfortable clothes. Patients can reply to the email, which goes into an internal hospital mailbox. The mailbox is monitored, and the patient gets a prompt response from hospital staff.

Text messages: Delivered 24 hours before the appointment. These reminders are very brief for a reason. "We certainly don't want people without unlimited texting to get a charge," says Marranca. Every text contains: appointment date, site, arrival time. Replies from text messages are visible to the hospital for questions and cancellations.

Children's Specialized Hospital system launched the appointment reminder program in October 2012, "We didn't know what response was going to be," he says. "What we saw was an instant spike in people showing up."

Results

During 2013 – with MyCareText software in place – the patient show- rate increased from 80 to 87-88 percent. "That's significant," says Marranca.

The hospital system also reached these milestones:

- For the first time in its history, the hospital volume exceeded expectations — with a 4.3 percent increase in patient volume over budget. "We treated over 22,000 individual children in one year, which is 2,000 over the previous year," he explains. "That is considered a fantastic increase."
- Hospital revenue increased by \$5 million (approximately) due to the increased patients.
- The patient show rate was under 80 percent on just five days over the entire year.

"We've been very satisfied," Marranca says. "They have been very responsive to any of our requests. I definitely recommend MyCareText."