



Patients at SunnyBank Medical Centre welcome SystemOne text messages

SunnyBank Medical Centre in Wyke, Bradford, went live on SystemOne in July 2006 and has a patient population of just over 10,000. As a training practice, they have a large staff base including 10 partners and a large supporting clinical team. In July 2007, they decided to trial sending text messages to patients' mobile phones.

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**Emily Dawrant,
IT Manager**

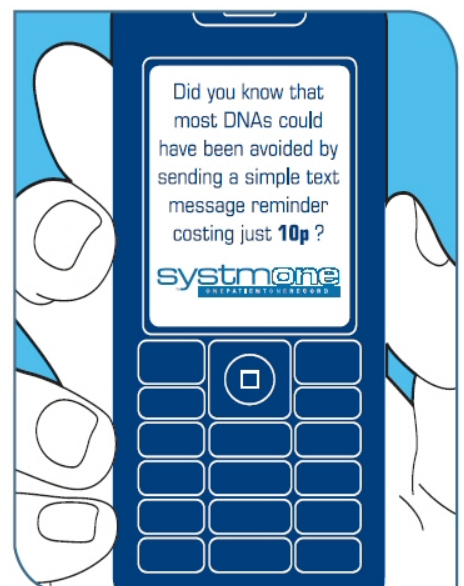
SunnyBank's IT manager, Emily Dawrant, says, "We saw a Status Message on SystemOne about the text messaging service and thought it would be a good idea so we put together a costing to take to the Partnership. We discovered that it would be cheaper to send a text message to every patient who had had a blood test than to send letters out to just those patients who hadn't already contacted the surgery to obtain their results."

Once set up, the staff had to go about seeking consent from patients. Emily says, "Most of the staff were involved in seeking consent. We ask people when they phone up, attend for appointments, access the website and during new patient health checks. When the Practice Nurse or Healthcare Assistant is taking blood, they ask the patient if they want to receive their result by text message. We also send consent slips out with letters we post, and hand slips out at reception."

SunnyBank staff have also added the 'Record SMS consent' button to their Quick Action tool bars and to the New Patient Health Check

template, making it easy to quickly record the patient's decision.

Some of the staff at SunnyBank were initially apprehensive about how receptive the patients would be to receiving text messages, but



the patient response was very positive as Emily explains, "The majority of patients say yes to being sent text messages. The ones that don't are few and far between and tend to be the older patients who perhaps don't have mobile



phones, or don't use them very much. The take up has been extremely good."

Once set up, automatic appointment reminders are sent out daily without user intervention. Preset messages for blood test results mean a message can be sent quickly and easily. It's also possible to send one-off texts with any message that you require from the patient's record.

"We're really trying to promote the service," says Emily, "and it's proving quite popular. The staff have been very positive, as have the patients. The chronic disease patients, for example, are now used to receiving the messages as they come in for regular reviews, and they like it. The pathology messages allow the patients to get their test results as soon as they're in. Usually patients wait a week before contacting the surgery for their results but now they can receive them by text in just a few days."

SunnyBank have now been using text messaging as a method of communication with their patients for five months and are constantly looking at how else they can use it. Emily says, "Now, anything we used to send a letter for, we'll send a text if we can - appointment reminders, blood test results, flu campaigns, chronic disease clinic review invites. And we want to start using text messages to send X-ray results."

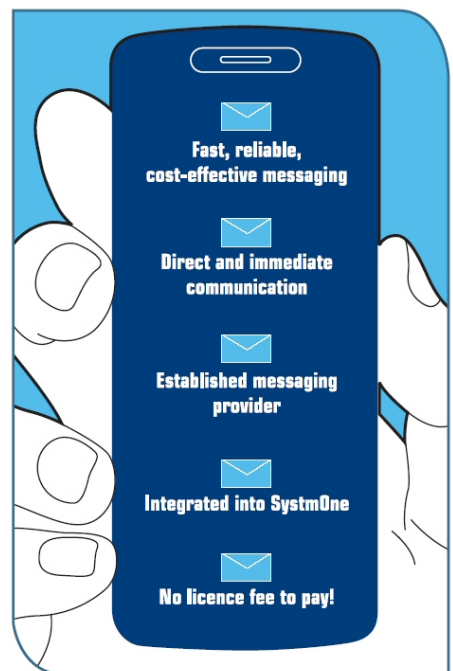
Emily has this advice for other practices thinking about using text messaging through SystemOne: "Initially, it could look quite expensive - but you need to do your costings right. You need to compare what you're spending on sending out letters (staff time, peripherals, postage cost etc) now to what you would be spending with text messaging. You only pay for the messages you send, so if you don't send the quota you've got, these costs are offset against the next quarter's invoice. SystemOne SMS text messaging is worthwhile and I'd recommend it to other practices as it's faster and cheaper than sending

letters and it's liked by the patients."

Stephen McCann of TPP's technology partner, medixt at txttools, says, "We enjoy working with technically forward thinking organisations such as TPP, they see the big picture. The technology is now available to reshape the way we communicate simple messages within the NHS. By intelligently integrating SMS messaging technology within their existing healthcare IT systems, TPP have made the provision of healthcare services more efficient and accessible."

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some statistics

Comparing a three-month period at SunnyBank before they started using SMS messaging with a three-month period afterwards, the practice saw their DNA rate decrease by 19.5%.

Missed appointments cost the NHS an estimated £789m a year.

To find out more, call TPP on 0113 20 500 80, or email enquiries@tpp-uk.com

