

AUTOMATED NOTIFICATION SYSTEM (ANS)
Frequently Asked Questions

Q1: What is an automated notification system?

A1: The ANS is an electronic system that is used to provide telephone, e-mail or text reminders to patients of scheduled appointments.

Q2: Why is ANS being implemented at this time?

A2: ANS is being implemented to remind patients of their upcoming appointment(s). Sometimes patients forget appointments or experience unplanned life events which result in missed appointments. The ANS will provide a reminder several days before a patient's scheduled appointment so that patients may confirm an appointment and carry out any preparations needed before the appointment. If a patient informs the health authority that they are unable to attend the appointment, this will allow other patients to be booked in any unfilled appointment slots.

The number of 'no shows' or missed appointments are a concern to all four regional health authorities in the province. When a patient doesn't show at the appointed time, or doesn't give sufficient cancellation notice, there is no time to offer that appointment to someone else. This results in underutilized staff and equipment resources and lost procedure times that can never be recouped and can impact waiting list and wait times.

Q3: How will the Health Authority know how I would like to receive my reminders?

A3: On your next registration for an appointment, you will be asked how you would like to be contacted for appointment reminders by selecting one of the following options:

- Telephone
- E-mail
- Text

Q4: How does it work?

A4: The ANS is used to remind patients by telephone, e-mail or text of an upcoming scheduled endoscopy appointment 5-7 days in advance. Patients will be asked to provide their preferred method (telephone, e-mail or text) for future appointment reminders during their next registration for an appointment. Endoscopy appointment reminders will be made to a patient's preferred method of communication. Patients are then able to confirm the scheduled appointment. If the patient cancels the appointment, depending on your region, they are asked to call the number listed on the appointment letter or otherwise, the central booking clerk or referring physician's office within 2 working days.

Q5: What happens if I would like to receive the telephone reminder on my cellular/smart phone?

A5: If the patient prefers to be contacted by cellular/smart phone, when asked how they would like to be contacted for appointment reminders during registration, the patient would

provide a cell number. It is very important to ensure that telephone numbers with a health authority are up-to-date.

Q6: What time will the ANS send reminders to patients?

A6: Reminders will be made Monday to Friday between 5-9 pm local time. In a survey conducted by the Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) Statistics Agency people said they would like to receive their health appointment reminder calls during the weekdays. Over time, modifications may be made to this schedule based on patient feedback.

Q7: What name or number will show up on my telephone caller ID or e-mail?

A7:

Telephone: A telephone number and the name of the health authority (i.e. Central; Eastern; Labrador-Grenfell; Western) Health will appear on the telephone caller ID.

Note: If the patient returns a call to this number, they will reach an information only mailbox advising that they received a telephone reminder for a scheduled appointment. The telephone number will be beneficial for those patients who do not have a voice mail and missed the calls. A patient will not be able to leave a message at this number as it will be an information only mailbox.

E-mail: Reminders will appear from the following address depending on Regional Health Authority:

centralhealthappointments@voicegate.com

lghealthappointments@voicegate.com

westernhealthappointments@voicegate.com

easternhealthapponitments@vociegate.com

Messages will display the following:

This is an appointment reminder email from (Central; Eastern; Labrador-Grenfell; Western) Health. This is to remind [NAME] of a scheduled appointment on [DATE] at [TIME] [SITE] [LOCATION]. If there are any questions regarding this appointment or [NAME] is unable to keep this appointment, depending on your region please call the number listed on the appointment letter, or contact central booking or referring physician's office within 2 working days.

Please remember to bring a non-expired MCP card.

Thank you and have a nice day.



Text: Text message reminders will originate from the following number – 416-578-5992 and will display the following:

Reminder for [NAME] Appt at (Central; Eastern; Labrador-Grenfell; Western) Health [SITE] on [DATE] [TIME] Reply YES to Confirm NO to Cancel

Although this information is not provided in the text message, if you are unable to keep this appointment, depending on your region, please call the number listed on the appointment letter or otherwise, the central booking clerk or referring physician's office within 2 working days.

Q8: What information will be provided in the reminder?

A8: The day, date, time, department and location of the scheduled appointment (i.e. the hospital or site) will be identified within the message. Patients are reminded to bring their non-expired MCP card to their appointment.

Q9: When I receive a reminder, how will I confirm or cancel the appointment?

A9:

- **Telephone:** At the start of the reminder call the ANS will say/indicate who the call is for and you will be asked to confirm your identity (i.e. this is a call for 'John Smith'). Once you have confirmed your name, you will be asked to **press 1** to indicate you will be attending your scheduled appointment.
- **E-mail:** You will be asked to confirm/cancel as outlined below:



- **Text:** You will be asked:
 - Reply YES to Confirm NO to Cancel

Q10: What will happen if I cannot attend and have to cancel my appointment?

A10:

- **Telephone:** If a patient cannot attend their scheduled appointment, they will be asked to **press 2 and then asked to reconfirm** this selection. The patient will then be advised to call the number listed on the appointment letter, or contact central booking or referring physician's office within 2 working days.
- **E-Mail:** If a patient cannot attend their scheduled appointment, depending on the region, they are asked to call the number listed on the appointment letter or otherwise, the central booking clerk or referring physician's office within 2 working days.

- **Text:** Although this information is not provided in the text message, if a patient cannot attend their scheduled appointment, depending on region, patients are asked to call the number listed on the appointment letter or otherwise, the central booking clerk or referring physician's office within 2 working days.

Regional health authorities have cancellation policies. In some instances, a patient may be able to reschedule their appointment given a valid reason; however, in some instances a patient may need to return to a physician for a new referral.

Q11: What happens if I make a mistake by pressing a wrong selection:

A11:

- **Telephone:** If a patient accidentally presses a wrong selection during the reminder, there are several opportunities to return to the main menu to correct the selection.
- **E-mail:** If a patient accidentally makes the wrong selection, depending on the region, they should call the number listed on the appointment letter or otherwise, the central booking clerk or referring physician's office to advise of the error.
- **Text:** If a patient accidentally makes the wrong selection, depending on the region, they should call the number listed on the appointment letter or otherwise, the central booking clerk or referring physician's office to advise of the error.

Q12: I have a voice mail and I seldom answer my telephone; what happens in that case?

A12: If there is no answer and there is a voice mail, the ANS is configured to leave a message on the voice mail.

Q13: What happens if I am not at home when the ANS calls with a reminder but someone else answers the telephone?

A13: If the patient is not at home, the ANS will ask if the person who answers the telephone can take a message for the patient. If yes is indicated, the appointment reminder is provided.

Q14: How many reminder attempts will the ANS make to each patient?

A14:

- **Telephone:** The ANS is currently configured to make up to three reminder attempts via telephone to each patient to confirm an appointment. The reminder attempts are made on the same evening within a short timeframe.
If a voice mail or message manager answers on the first call, the ANS is configured to leave a message indicating the day, date, time, department, location of a scheduled appointment.
- **E-Mail:** There will be one e-mail sent for the scheduled endoscopy appointment.

- **Text:** There will be one text sent for the scheduled endoscopy appointment.

On a daily basis, the booking clerk will receive a system report indicating which patients confirmed or cancelled their appointments and which patients could not be contacted.

Q15: If I was booked for an appointment with short notice will I receive a reminder?

A15: No, if an appointment is booked with short notice, most often a reminder will not be received by the patient. The appointment information will need to be in the scheduling system a minimum of five to seven days prior to the appointment for the ANS to make the reminder.

Q16: I received an automated notification but it did not work properly and I was not able to confirm my appointment .What should I do?

A16: Depending on the region, you should contact the number listed on the appointment letter or otherwise, the central booking clerk or referring physician's office to confirm your appointment and to report the system error.

Q17: Will the ANS be used for all appointment areas?

A17: No, at this point the ANS is being piloted in the twelve Endoscopy Services Departments throughout the four regional health authorities in the province. Initially, it was implemented to provide telephone reminders to contact endoscopy patients.

In phase 2, e-mail and text endoscopy appointment reminders are being implemented in the province. As part of this, regional health authorities will be asking patients to provide their preferred option (telephone; e-mail; text) along with the necessary information for future appointment reminders in preparation for when the ANS is expanded.

As a part of the ongoing evaluation, patient feedback will be gathered throughout the implementation.

Q18: How many endoscopy appointments are there per year?

A18: There are approximately 40,000 endoscopy appointments annually in the province, with approximately half of these appointments at Eastern Health.