

## **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 during the week before a patient's scheduled appointment so that patients may confirm an appointment and carry out any preparations needed. 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 another patient. This results in underutilized staff and equipment resources, and lost procedure time resulting in large wait lists and increased wait time for care.

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

**A3:** On your next visit to the hospital for an appointment when you register, you will be asked how you would like to be contacted for 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 appointment during the week prior to your appointment. Appointment reminders will be made to a patient's preferred method of communication. Patients are then able to confirm or cancel the appointment.

**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 number provided at each hospital visit are up-to-date.

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

**A6:** Reminders will be made during the evening between 5-9 p.m. local time.

**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 call. A patient will not be able to leave a message at this number as it will be an information only mailbox.*

- **E-mail:** Reminders sent via e-mail will appear from the following address, depending on the Regional Health Authority:

[centralhealthappointments@voicegate.com](mailto:centralhealthappointments@voicegate.com)  
[lqhealthappointments@voicegate.com](mailto:lqhealthappointments@voicegate.com)  
[westernhealthappointments@voicegate.com](mailto:westernhealthappointments@voicegate.com)  
[easternhealthappointments@voicegate.com](mailto:easternhealthappointments@voicegate.com)

Messages will display the following:

This is an appointment reminder e-mail from (Central; Eastern; Labrador-Grenfell; Western) Health. This is to remind [NAME] of a scheduled [DEPARTMENT/SERVICE] appointment on [DATE] at [TIME] [SITE] [LOCATION]. 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] of a scheduled [DEPARTMENT /SERVICE] appointment at (Central; Eastern; Labrador-Grenfell; Western) Health [SITE] on [DATE] [TIME] Reply YES to Confirm NO to Cancel.

**Q8: What information will be provided in the reminder?**

**A8:** The day, date, time, department and Hospital/Clinic of the scheduled appointment 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 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 or **press 2** to cancel the appointment. If you **press 2** to cancel your appointment, the time slot will then be used to schedule another patient.
- **E-mail:** You will be asked to confirm/cancel as outlined below:

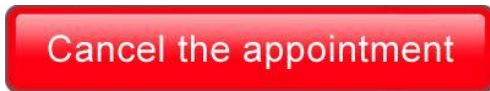


- **Text:** You will be asked:
  - Reply YES to Confirm NO to Cancel

**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 that they are cancelling the appointment. The time slot will then be used to schedule another patient.
- **E-Mail:** If a patient cannot attend their scheduled appointment, they will select



The time slot will then be used to schedule another patient.

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

The time slot will then be used to schedule another patient.

**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 contact the number listed on the appointment letter or otherwise, the central booking clerk or referring physician's office the next business day to confirm your appointment.
- **Text:** If a patient accidentally makes the wrong selection, depending on the region, they should contact the number listed on the appointment letter or otherwise, the central booking clerk or referring physician's office the next business day to confirm your appointment.

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

**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 made to the patient. The appointment information will need to be in the scheduling system a minimum of five days prior to the appointment for the ANS to make the reminder call.

**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 booking department 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:** Telephone, e-mail, and text appointment reminders are being implemented in all provincial Regional Health Authorities for several services using a multi-phase approach.