

Case Study

ComputerTalk | London Health Sciences Centre

London Health Sciences Centre Automated Patient Screening with ComputerTalk's iceAlert



Improved Quality of Patient Care



Saved ~60 Nursing Hours Per Week



Reduced Number of No-Shows

London Health Sciences Centre

London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC) has been providing patient care for the people of London, Ontario and the surrounding region since 1875. It is home to three hospitals: University Hospital, Victoria Hospital and Children's Hospital.

Appointment-Related Challenges in Health Care

LHSC, like many other health care providers, has faced a number of challenges related to patient appointments:

- **Prevention of No-Shows** – Patients often miss appointments, resulting in inefficiencies and wasted resources, longer wait times, and negative health impacts.
- **Delivery of Pre-Appointment Instructions** – Some patients need to follow specific instructions before an appointment, making it essential for health care providers to deliver this information effectively.
- **Receipt of Pre-Appointment Confirmations** – Health care providers often require patients to confirm appointments in advance to prevent no-shows, necessitating an effective method for receiving these confirmations.

Problems with Manual Appointment Reminders

To overcome these challenges, health care providers have historically manually contacted patients prior to their appointments. However, this approach comes with its own set of problems:

- **Time-Consuming and Expensive Process** – Manually calling or sending letters to each patient is time-consuming and expensive. Time spent on reminders could be better allocated to patient care.
- **Inconsistent Information** – Manual calls leave room for human error, potentially leading to inconsistent messaging and patients missing important instructions.
- **Lack of Resources** – Busy clinics sometimes lack the capacity to make reminder calls. This results in more no-shows and undelivered instructions.



iceAlert for Appointment Reminders

To address these challenges, LHSC started using iceAlert, a tool that delivers automated outbound notifications via phone, email, and text message. By using iceAlert, LHSC automated appointment reminders, reducing no-shows without hospital staff needing to make manual calls. This automation also ensured the delivery of consistent, correct information and receipt of appointment confirmation in advance.

“The greatest thing about iceAlert is its flexibility in meeting the specific needs of our hospital.”

*- Patricia Fueta, MScN(c), BScN, RN
Manager: Health Information Technology*

LHSC had already been using iceAlert with great success for more than ten years when they were faced with a new set of challenges.

The Unprecedented Challenges of COVID-19

When the COVID-19 pandemic began, hospitals worldwide, including LHSC, faced a uniquely difficult situation. While health care is an essential service, seeing patients in person posed a risk of exposure to and spread of the COVID-19 virus among patients and hospital staff. To limit the potential spread of the virus, many

non-essential health appointments were postponed or cancelled, while others were transitioned to virtual appointments. However, these changes were not an option for some appointments, such as treatments for cancer patients.

Manually Addressing Challenges

For patients who needed to be in the hospital, LHSC put preventative measures in place to limit the spread of COVID-19. Before appointments, hospital staff called each patient to ask a series of screening questions to identify those at high risk of carrying the virus. If a patient was identified as too high-risk, their appointment was rescheduled for a later date.

While the screening process was important for the health and safety of hospital staff and patients, the process was resource intensive, the extra workload on staff was substantial, and it was often difficult to reach patients. Additionally, the significant time spent on screening calls was time that could have been better spent on patient care.

New Use Cases to Meet New Needs

Considering the significant time and costs associated with the screening process, LHSC knew that something needed to change. They realized that the screening process, with its standard, repetitive questions and consistent workflow, was a perfect candidate for automation. Having been a long-time iceAlert user, LHSC knew exactly where to turn to implement automated communications. The challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic gave rise to a new use case for iceAlert and LHSC decided to use it to automate the patient screening process.

Automating Patient Screening With iceAlert

Using iceAlert, the eight screening questions asked by hospital staff were translated into an interactive voice response (IVR) call tree. Before their appointment, patients received an automated call asking them to respond to the questions. If they successfully answered without indicating high-risk factors, they heard a reminder message about their upcoming appointment. If their answers indicated they were high-risk, they were routed to a message informing them that they had not passed the screening.



Each day, hospital departments received a report showing the results of that day’s screening calls. In the case of failed screenings, staff manually followed up to confirm results and reschedule the appointment if necessary. Due to the robust and configurable nature of iceAlert, the project was quick and easy to implement, moving from an idea to a fully operational system in a matter of weeks.

Efficiency Improvements

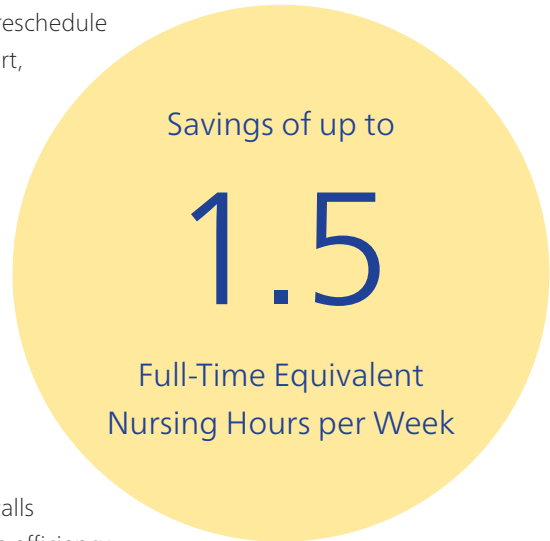
The switch to automated screening calls resulted in significant resource savings. One department in particular, the Women’s Ambulatory Care Program, had 1,400 appointments per month applied to the automated screening process. Their estimated time saved was up to 1.5 full-time equivalent nursing hours, or approximately 60 hours per week.

Additionally, the automated appointment reminders at the end of the screening calls helped reduce missed appointments, further supporting LHSC’s efforts to optimize efficiency and improve healthcare quality by ensuring that patients received necessary treatment on time.

Recognizing the benefits and success of automation, LHSC has continued to expand the use of iceAlert to other clinics and services within LHSC and to regional partner hospitals.

iceAlert Today and Beyond

While hospitals are no longer impacted by COVID-19 in the same way that they were in the past, the lessons learned by LHSC endure. Automation continues to be a valuable tool for organizations in health care and beyond. Innovation remains at the heart of all we do at ComputerTalk and we continue to work tirelessly to build solutions that support the ever-changing needs of our customers and those that they serve. To learn more about how iceAlert can help maximize efficiency in your organization, request a demo at computer-talk.com/demo.



About Us

ComputerTalk is the developer of ice Contact Center. ice modernizes the call center with business application integrations, AI, and analytics across all communication channels, helping organizations deliver outstanding customer experiences. As a Microsoft Teams native contact center solution, ice allows users to handle all interactions within a single interface. Founded in 1987 and headquartered in Markham, Canada, ComputerTalk powers enterprise-class contact centers for organizations across the globe.



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