

# SMS in the Healthcare Industry

A GUIDE FOR USING  
SMS IN YOUR PRACTICE





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# Introduction

**With people's livelihood and wellbeing at its core, healthcare is arguably the most important industry in the world.** There will never come a time where healthcare is not needed, which means the industry constantly needs to evolve and find new ways to treat and reach patients.



With the way that the COVID-19 pandemic shook the world in 2020, many medical practices have had to adapt to deal with the influx of patients. This means that now more than ever, the industry must find reliable and accessible communications tools to reach patients quickly and effectively. This is where SMS comes into play.

From practitioner-to-patient notifications, to internal communication and telehealth, the use of SMS within the healthcare sector is broad and, often, literally a lifesaver. When used correctly, SMSing a patient or practitioner can reduce risk by offering a quick, easy, and affordable solution for any busy facility.

**In this e-book, we unpack how SMS is used in the healthcare sector to streamline communication and keep patients and practices ahead of the curve.**

# 1. Appointment reminders

Sending out an SMS to patients up to 24 hrs before their appointment, detailing the time and address, will help reduce last minute cancellations or no-shows. SMS is accessible to anyone with a mobile phone, reaching almost all patients. Communication between the practitioner and patient is made even quicker with SMS as clients can reply to either confirm, postpone, or cancel their appointment.

Hi **Sarah**. This is gentle reminder for your **appointment tomorrow morning at 9:30am**. Thank you.



Hi **John**. The practice will be closed on **Monday**. In case of an emergency, contact your nearest ER.



## 2. Notifications about practice hours

Send an SMS to all patients notifying them of the practice's operating hours, especially during the holiday season. The SMS should include information on when the practice is closed as well as who to contact in the case of an emergency.

### 3. Reminders to collect test results or scripts

With people leading busy lives, they are not always able to answer calls from the practice. Instead of calling, rather send an SMS to a patient as soon as their test results come in, ensuring speed and ease of communication between the doctor and patient. Ask the patient to set up a follow up appointment, or to collect a script based on their results.



Hi **Freddie**. Payment on your Dr's account is almost due. You can [view your statement here \(link\)](#).



### 4. Payment confirmations and reminders

**Manage cashflow better — send an SMS to remind the patient a few days before the payment is due.** Not only will this give the patient time to action payment, it also gives them the opportunity to let you know when they can schedule the payment. After payment is made, send a follow up SMS thanking them.

## 5. Tips for condition management

**With many patients suffering from chronic illnesses, taking medication becomes a vital part of their daily routine.** Use SMS to remind your patients to take their daily meds, or send other tips that can help them to manage their condition. For example, if a patient is diabetic, remind them to regularly monitor their sugar intake, or send them a list of recommended foods to eat or avoid. Always make sure these SMSes are relevant to your patient's treatment plan, for instance, a physio may send out a list of strengthening exercises to a patient with a ligament injury.

Hi **Jesicca**. I have created a quick set of exercises that will help you regain strength after your injury. Follow this link to the PDF.



# Medical billing reminders

## A BulkSMS Case Study



**Late or delayed payments is not a new or unique issue faced by Healthcare Professionals. Ensuring that payments are made on time is key to guaranteeing a steady cash flow and ensuring a sustainable healthcare practice.**

DentFin, a dental claims administration company based in Gauteng, South Africa, aims to meet that business need. By providing a service that specialises in the processing of patient claims for dentists and dental labs, DentFin aims to ensure a healthy cash flow while reducing the administration for their clients. DentFin prides itself in supplying a reliable outsourced claims processing solution that ensures that clients claims are finalised in the shortest possible turn-around time.

DentFin turned to SMS messaging as a vital part of their claims processing solution. Malinda Harper, CEO of DentFin, started using BulkSMS in 2006 and it has become an invaluable tool in ensuring payment reminder notifications are sent to patients.



DentFin's SMS communications within its administrative process consists of a two-step patient billing reminder service on behalf of their clients. According to Harper, "We send two SMS messages to every patient once they have visited one of our clients. The first SMS is a standard SMS message that informs the patient of the balance due and the second SMS, is sent shortly after the first and comes with a PDF attachment of the patient's statement."

"The ability to send PDF statements as an attachment is essential to our business and has proved to be far more effective than emailing statements to the patients. PDF statements sent via email would often end up in trash folders or could not be opened on certain computers," says Harper.

Harper then goes on to say that the use of SMS messaging has a high read rate and has also improved the time in which payments are made by patients because they are able to view the statement on their cell phone immediately after they received the initial SMS message.



# SMS takes to the (electromagnetic) waves

## A BulkSMS Case Study

**East Coast Radiology, a well-established diagnostic radiology practice based in South Africa, believes that health care is more than just treating patients, it's about running business.**

People have busy lives, but appointments need to be filled to keep the practice running, which is why effective and reliable communication between clients and healthcare providers is essential.

By using the **BulkSMS Text Messenger**, Teresa Vice, the MRI & CT Authorisations and Bookings administrator, communicates with her patients straight from her laptop. "I work in a very busy MRI department with the phone ringing continuously for appointments or for help, having access to SMS on my computer is a definite time-saver and stress reliever," says Teresa.



Her patients reply to her texts with any questions they have or if they need to reschedule their appointment. “My patients know that even if they can’t reach me by phone, I am just an SMS away”, says Teresa.

### Why choose SMS?

When asked why SMS is being used as opposed to email or phone call, Teresa said that many of her patients don’t answer the phone. “Some of my patients are deaf, some just don’t like to answer their phone, and some don’t have email, so SMS is the perfect solution,” says Teresa.

She goes on to say that, “the Desktop Application is quick and easy to use, and my patients appreciate the option to reply to my SMSes when they need to.”

**In these times, where accessible healthcare is more important than ever, why not use SMS to quickly and easily communicate with your patients?**

To get started, [email us here](mailto:info@bulksms.com)  
or visit us at [www.bulksms.com](http://www.bulksms.com)

