

# The Benefits of Online Scheduling to Medical Practitioners

Thousands of medical practitioners, hospitals, medical centers and immunization clinics rely on Appointment-Plus for their secure appointment-scheduling needs each and every day. In fact, healthcare is the number one industry serviced by our online scheduling software. One example of how medical practitioners use Appointment-Plus to improve their business is detailed below.



Medical practitioners and healthcare facilities are a unique group of Appointment-Plus clients. Unlike many businesses, organizations and offices, some medical offices do not permit their patients to self-schedule their own appointments online. Instead, they utilize Appointment-Plus for such functions as staff scheduling of patients, sending automated e-mail and text reminders to patients regarding upcoming appointments, generating reports, maintaining patient contact information data and e-mail marketing. The system can be securely accessed via the Internet so you can access your schedule and patient information even while away from the office. Whether a medical office allows patient self-scheduling or not, an effective appointment-scheduling component allows them to operate their practices more efficiently and profitably.

## **Recent surveys of healthcare practitioners and facilities illustrate the need for and benefits of Appointment-Plus:**

- Prior to using Appointment-Plus, over 55 percent of medical practitioners had their receptionists book appointments without an online scheduler. Additionally, over 11 percent personally booked appointments by phone or a phone answering system.
- Over 33 percent said they sought out an online scheduling system because of the time spent booking appointments in the more traditional manner. Another 33 percent wanted to utilize such a system to improve their customer service.
- Automated e-mail and text reminders are one of the most popular system features among medical provider respondents, with over 65 percent citing it as the most important feature.

## **Other notable results include:**

- Better coordination between other offices and providers.
- Reduction of patient phone calls and e-mails. In one instance, the medical provider experienced a 70 percent reduction in phone calls and a 30 percent reduction in e-mail messages.
- Overall time savings.
- Ability to access system on any Internet connection.

**In addition to the above survey results, Appointment-Plus software can help reduce the number of patient “no-shows”, helping practitioners better manage their clients and increase their operating revenue.**

# Case Study

## COMPANY PROFILE

Dr. Monique Cohn, a board certified dermatologist with Advanced Dermatology & Cosmetic Surgery Center in Twinsburg, Ohio, provides medical services for the treatment of skin, hair and nails and the improvement of aging or sun damaged skin for men, women and children. The busy practice—which treats an average of 100 patients each day—offers both general dermatology and cosmetic procedures.

## THE PROBLEM

Up until January 2008, Advanced Dermatology & Cosmetic Surgery Center did not utilize Appointment-Plus. Rather, they scheduled sessions using a traditional paper appointment book. This required staff to manually look through the appointment book, determine by month which days were available and then manually book the appointment. This process required excessive amounts of staff time, prevented them from scheduling several appointments simultaneously, and required them to put patients on hold while appointments were booked. Additionally, it also required staff to manually contact patients to remind them of upcoming appointments.

## ANALYSIS

Dr. Cohn and her practice assessed their specific needs before deciding on their online appointment scheduling provider. The practice determined four required functions the software must provide: scheduling, confirming, reminding and analysis. In addition to the scheduler and confirmation functionality, a reliable e-mail reminder system and the ability to pull patient reports and information were also important, as well as a secure data backup system to protect their patients' details. The Center conducted Internet searches to identify companies that specialized in this service

## SOLUTION

Although other online scheduling software companies offered some of the needed services, only Appointment-Plus provided all of them. A free Appointment-Plus setup coach worked with Advanced Dermatology to quickly set up the perfect solution to its scheduling needs. For a fast-paced office that books an average of four patients every 15 minutes during the workday, a seamless transition to an automated online scheduling system that met certain requirements was a must. As Dr. Cohn states, "Appointment-Plus was able to tailor it to our needs."



## RESULTS

Dr. Cohn estimates that Appointment-Plus frees up at least 10 hours per week of staff time they previously would have been devoted to manually scheduling and confirming appointments and making reminder phone calls to patients. Two system features that Advanced Dermatology & Cosmetic Surgery Center staff utilizes regularly are the e-mail reminder and report-generating functions. The Center uses the e-mail reminder function to inform its patients of upcoming appointments; the response from the patients has been extremely positive. Additionally, Dr. Cohn and the Center use the e-mail functionality to distribute marketing pieces to their patients.