

Automated phone calls to remind Olean Medical Group patients of appointments

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OLEAN — Have you ever forgotten about a medical appointment?

Well the Olean Medical Group has a new service to help you remember your next appointment. The Medical Group will begin its HouseCalls service the first week of September to remind patients they have a doctor's appointment.

"Sometimes patients don't show up for an appointment," said John Camus, the chief executive officer at Olean Medical Group.

The HouseCall system will



John Camus

send an automated message by phone to a patient two days in advance. The phone reminder should give patients time to reschedule or get more information, Mr. Camus said. When a patient receives the call, they will be prompted to confirm that the right person got the message about the appointment. If the patient is not home, the service will

leave a voicemail.

Mr. Camus also said the service could free up some of the Medical Group staff so they could focus more on working with patients rather than calling to remind them of appointments.

"We've talked to other medical groups who have implemented this," Mr. Camus said.

"We're always looking to improve the quality of service we provide."

The HouseCall service will also allow those on a waiting list for an appointment to be notified if there is a cancellation by a patient.

Calls from the Medical Group are Health Insurance

Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) compliant as well, protecting the patient's medical information.

The service does not "give out private information over the phone," Mr. Camus added.

Over the next several weeks, the Medical Group will have posters and information on the new automated calling service.

It is expected to handle more than 10,000 calls each month.

"We will be looking for feedback from patients," he added. "We want to make sure it works the right way."

In addition to the new service, the Medical Group is also

looking into other types of technology to improve service.

Some services being considered include a self-check in kiosk and access to medical records over the Internet.

The Medical Group has been using a computerized filing system for three years and also has a wireless Internet connection, allowing doctors to use some wireless devices within the building.

"I'm a big fan of technology, but only when it benefits," Mr. Camus said.

The Olean Medical Group, which is next to the Olean General Hospital on Main Street, has serviced the Olean area for 60 years.