Introduction of Telephone Appointment Service of General Out-patient Clinics

The Hospital Authority (HA)’s General Out-patient Clinics (GOPC) Telephone Appointment System (TAS) aims to allow patients with episodic illnesses to book GOPC appointments at home and prevent them from queuing up for quota in early morning. TAS also helps alleviate the crowded condition of clinics and reduce the risk of cross-infection among patients.

Currently, the GOPC TAS offers service through around 800 telephone lines 24 hours a day. A patient can book an appointment in the next 24 hours if quota is available. HA calls user’s attention to the following:

Elderly Appointment Quota
Based on previous utilization pattern of elderly, quotas have been reserved for the elderly aged 65 or above with episodic illnesses to enhance their accessibility to GOPC services.

Anytime Booking
TAS operates 24 hours a day so that members of the public can call anytime to make their clinic appointments for the next 24 hours. There is no need to make appointment at designated time slot during the day.

Key-in or Voice Input
TAS offers three language options for caller. Taking into the consideration the needs of different users (including elderly), the system supports two different input methods (i.e. key-in and voice input). The call flow for both input methods is identical. Throughout the booking / enquiry / cancellation process, callers may choose to use one of the input methods. Callers may choose the most comfortable way for themselves to operate the system and input the information required according to system instruction.

Continuous Quota Update
The TAS would continuously update the quota status. This includes cancelled appointment which will be released back to the system for booking. Therefore, patients who are unable to secure an appointment may consider calling back again later for booking.

Search for Quota in Nearby Clinics
For the convenience of patients and good use of resources, the TAS links the nearby GOPCs together as a network, within which quota of different clinics could be checked and offered to optimize the usage. If the consultation quotas of the called clinic is full, the system will automatically be diverted to the nearby clinics and identify available quotas for public to book via the Telephone Appointment System.

Appointment Enquiry and Cancellation
The TAS has the appointment enquiry and cancellation function. In case patients cannot turn up for a booked appointment, HA encourages patients to make a cancellation through the system as soon as possible and at least one hour before the scheduled appointment time. The cancelled quota will then be released for open booking by the general public, aiming to optimize the use of public resources.
Notes:

- Registration is required for using the TAS. If you are a new patient, please bring your original identity document and make registration in person at the GOPC you plan to use in the future. Upon verification of personal data, you may use the Telephone Appointment System for making GOPC appointment.

- Help desks have been set up in GOPCs to provide suitable assistance to anyone who encounter difficulties in using the telephone appointment service. If you have any difficulties in using telephone booking, please approach our help desks. Besides, your family or friends and some community organizations such as elder centres would also be able to provide assistance.

- To encourage patients to cancel the booked appointment that they are unable to attend, the TAS had arrangement on this. Patients who fail to attend an appointment and did not cancel the booking for 3 separate occasions within 2 months will be prohibited from using the TAS temporarily. If patients want to use the GOPC service, please enquire at clinic in person.

(June 2018)
www.ha.org.hk/gopc
**Steps of GOPC Telephone Appointment Booking**

Patients who have registered for GOPC service may call the clinic’s telephone booking number for making appointment. Please make reference to the following booking steps in general to complete the appointment booking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>System instruction</th>
<th>Response from caller</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Select Language</td>
<td>Choose <strong>Cantonese</strong>:&lt;br&gt;Press (1) or say “1” after the “Beep”&lt;br&gt;Choose <strong>English</strong>:&lt;br&gt;Press (2) or say “2” after the “Beep”&lt;br&gt;Choose <strong>Putonghua</strong>:&lt;br&gt;Press (3) or say “3” after the “Beep”</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Input the <strong>first six digits</strong> of Hong Kong identity card number (HKID) or registration number of birth certificate (excluding the digit or alphabet in the bracket)</td>
<td>Input the first six digits of HKID or registration number of birth certificate&lt;br&gt;Input the first six digits of the patient’s HKID or registration number of birth certificate without the digit in the bracket. Or say them after the “Beep”.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Input the <strong>year of birth</strong> as shown on the identity document of the patient</td>
<td>Input the year of birth as shown on the identity document of the patient&lt;br&gt;Input the year of birth as shown on the identity document of the patient or say it after the “Beep”.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Confirm the patient’s identity</td>
<td>Confirm the patient’s HKID if it is correct&lt;br&gt;To confirm:&lt;br&gt;Press (1) or say “1” after the “Beep”&lt;br&gt;Re-enter if the patient’s HKID is incorrect&lt;br&gt;To re-enter:&lt;br&gt;Press (8) or say “8” after the “Beep”</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The system offers the earliest available timeslot</td>
<td>Confirm if the appointment offered by the system is accepted&lt;br&gt;To Confirm:&lt;br&gt;Press (1) or say “1” after the “Beep”&lt;br&gt;(Remark: If <strong>no quota</strong> is available at the clinic you called, the system will offer a nearby clinic where there is remaining quota. To choose the nearby clinic, press (1) or say “1” after the “beep”, then follow the instructions from step 5 onwards to complete the appointment booking.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Other services</td>
<td>Obtain a fax copy of the appointment information:&lt;br&gt;Press (1) or say “1” after the “Beep”&lt;br&gt;Repeat the appointment information:&lt;br&gt;Press (2) or say “2” after the “Beep”&lt;br&gt;Enquire the address and telephone number of this clinic:&lt;br&gt;Press (3) or say “3” after the “Beep”&lt;br&gt;Terminate the enquiry:&lt;br&gt;Press (9) or say “9” after the “Beep”</td>
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</table>

Please bring your identity document and handheld medical record (if any), and arrive at clinic **15 minutes before your appointment time** for registration. Late comers may not be able to receive medical consultation on that day.

**Steps of Appointment Enquiry or Cancellation**

For appointment enquiry or cancellation, please call the telephone booking system of the clinic you booked. Follow steps 1-4 as listed above and the instructions from the system to complete the enquiry or cancellation.