

Media Release

Healthphone Launches Second-Generation Stop Smoking via Text Message Service

SEATTLE, July 23, 2008 - Mohave County Department of Public Health, AZ is the first health provider in the USA to roll-out a second-generation smoking cessation text messaging service, STOMP (STop smoking Over Mobile Phone) from Healthphone Solutions.

STOMP sends smokers trying to quit a series of personalized text messages over 26 weeks. The next-generation service uses text messages based on a clinically-developed program with proven medical efficacy and offers several interactive features. Clinical trials have shown that using STOMP doubled reported quit rates from 13% to 28% after six weeks.

Mohave County Department of Public Health will use STOMP in a pilot project to reach young smokers, and will enrol high school students caught smoking into the service as a form of youth diversion instead of suspending them from school. Court judges and School Resource Officers in Mohave County will be asked to refer students to the program. The project is funded by the Arizona Department of Health Services, Bureau of Tobacco Education Prevention Program.

“Using mobile phones to stop smoking, we hope will engage the hard-to-reach and at-risk groups like young adults in a way that suits them,” says Susan Williams, Mohave County Tobacco Use Prevention Program Coordinator.

“Quitting tobacco is a very personal and uphill battle to overcome a powerful addiction. Using a text message program allows participants to receive cessation messages at their fingertips throughout the entire day when the participant needs it the most.”

“The fact that STOMP has clinical recognition was also very important to us as a public health provider,” says Williams.

STOMP empowers smokers to quit by enabling them to be a stakeholder in their own well being, acting as a reminder that they want to give up smoking and providing distraction and motivation to help them stop smoking. Messages follow a clinically-developed 26 week program with phases building up to the user’s nominated quit day, followed by an intensive period and then maintenance. Messages use various intervention techniques including tips on quitting, support while quitting, facts about smoking and the ability for users to respond to multiple choice polls. Users can also send a message to the service when they are craving a cigarette, have accidentally smoked a cigarette or have relapsed and will receive specific support for coping with those problems. Users can designate a period each day when they will not receive texts, and STOMP will not send texts during school hours.

The service runs on the Healthphone Messaging Engine which can be tailored to a variety of scenarios and to integrate with other public health services and campaigns.

In New Zealand, a nationwide government-funded version of STOMP called ‘Txt2Quit’ was launched in June and Canadian telecommunications carrier TELUS plans to offer the service as an employee health benefit.

Debbi Gillotti, Chief Executive Officer of Healthphone Solutions says, "We've taken one of the world's most effective smoking cessation programs and put it right into the hands of smokers. The clinically-developed program of messages and our messaging engine's interactivity significantly increase the effectiveness of using text messaging for health interventions.

"STOMP is a great example of how technology can empower and support people to take charge of their own well-being. It offers an excellent means to reach consumers wherever and whenever the urge for smoking occurs because it leverages a device they are very familiar with – their mobile phone."

STOMP is hosted by Healthphone and so doesn't place additional demands on health providers' computer resources. "Our hosting model and easy-to-use software make a proven smoking cessation program readily accessible to smokers, as well as the public health agencies that support them," says Gillotti.

The Clinical Trials Research Unit at the University of Auckland, New Zealand, conducted a randomized-controlled trial of over 1700 STOMP users, which showed that using STOMP doubled self-reported quit rates from 13% to 28% after six weeks.

The Healthphone Messaging Engine makes STOMP customizable, easy to manage, fast to deploy and can support multiple languages and timezones. It can also be adapted for other patient self-care programs offered by health providers such as hypertension, CVD, diet, nutrition and rehabilitation programs.

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About Healthphone Solutions Limited

Healthphone offers the community healthcare industry mobile optimized solutions that are easy to use and integrate science-based outcomes. Our solutions empower patient and care providers with the relevant health information they need, at the point of care. Headquartered in Seattle, Healthphone has offices in Australia, Canada and Singapore, and a development center in New Zealand. For more information, visit www.healthphonesolutions.com.

Healthphone's Mobile Wound Care enables communication across the clinical continuum for patient wound care management. It empowers doctors and wound care specialists to provide real-time recommendations, electronically, regardless of patients' location.

The Healthphone Messaging Engine is focused on a range of consumer-oriented services to assist patients to participate in the management of their own health, in areas such as smoking cessation and hypertension.

Concordia is an electronic health record, patient care and healthcare business solution accessible via the internet and mobile networks on a PC, laptop, tablet or PDA, making it always available at the point of care. Healthphone uses Microsoft's Health Connection Engine to integrate information between various healthcare providers and service users, so the entire continuum of healthcare is connected.

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