



SIGNHEALTH

OBJECTIVE

Sign, a charity dedicated to supporting deaf people with health problems, launched a revolutionary computer program SignHealth in 2006 to help health professionals communicate with deaf patients. To highlight the benefits of the groundbreaking technology to the public, deaf community and healthcare industry, *Sign* appointed Storm Communications to implement a six-month PR campaign.

SOLUTION

A limited budget meant a hard-hitting media relations campaign was the ideal route to raise awareness of SignHealth to all relevant audiences. Storm knew at the beginning of the campaign that significant developments were being made to the program so suggested splitting the campaign in two: an announcement to launch SignHealth to the media, which took up the first four months, and follow-up media work for two months in 2007 after the developments had been completed to keep up media interest.

As the charity's primary target was healthcare professionals, Storm contacted healthcare publications individually with a tailored approach and arranged a series of interviews, leading to in-depth articles. To also create a demand among end users, Storm issued press releases to all national and regional media, each tailored to the region and mentioning their local Primary Care Trust.



- ▶ Lastly, media aimed at people with hearing difficulties was approached to write about the technology to encourage deaf people to lobby their local PCTs to adopt SignHealth.

RESULTS

The launch of the program created a massive interest among regional and local newspapers, with 99 covering the story and 12 regional radio stations broadcasting news about it. SignHealth's key trade titles also reported on the technology, including Capital Doctor, GP – General Practitioner and Nursing Times, which led to coverage on BBC Online.

The announcement regarding the program's developments also generated strong interest with 55 regional and local newspapers reporting on the story and seven regional radio stations broadcasting news and interviews on the subject. Again, the healthcare trade media also devoted significant space to the stories, with Independent Nurse, Capital Doctor and Nursing times all covering the story. The Daily Mirror also covered the story on its health pages.

In total the PR campaign delivered the client a 3.8 return on investment, created 6.8 million opportunities to see with 184 pieces and resulted in several PCTs receiving calls from the public demanding SignHealth be installed at their GPs.



Blood this... STOCKS of fall by 10 p over the su so the Natic

Blood Service is running a campaign to encourage more people to become donors.

Remember, just one donation can save more than one life. To register as a donor, either call the 24-hour helpline on 0845 771 1711 or visit www.blood.co.uk.

Existing donors can give blood up to three times a year.

Sun-dressed

DESPITE repeated warnings about the dangers of sunburn, thousands of us still suffer every year.

But now a dressing - originally designed for patients with chronic burns - is available to help ease the hot



pain caused by a loss of moisture to the skin, which irritates the nerve endings

THE MIRROR

costs from £2.50 from pharmacies.

Visit www.activehealthcare.co.uk for more.

HEALTH NEWS

Hearing aids A NEW webcam system, SignHealth, is now available at

many doctors' surgeries to help deaf people communicate better with their GPs - by linking them to an online sign language expert.

At the moment patients can request an interpreter, but it often takes two weeks to make an appointment due to a shortage of fully qualified interpreters. To find out more, visit www.signhealth.com



Video aid for the deaf

DEAF people will soon be able to take advantage of an innovative new SignHealth programme to give them greatly improved access to their GPs.

SignHealth has been developed by Sign, a national charity dedicated to supporting deaf people, with the endorsement of the Department of Health.

The idea is to allow healthcare professionals to communicate with deaf patients at the click of a mouse.

The patient is able to view a video clip of predetermined questions being put to them in British Sign Language (BSL).

Along with their GP they can now have a fully interactive two way communication with a live BSL interpreter using a webcam.

By giving doctors almost instant access to a BSL interpreter, SignHealth will allow emergency or unsupported deaf patients

to be seen without communication difficulties.

In Surrey, as in the rest of the country, there is a severe shortage of fully qualified sign language interpreters.

This has meant that deaf people have often had to book appointments with their GP weeks in advance in order to be sure of having the support of an interpreter at the consultation.

SignHealth hopes to prevent these delays, as managing director Phil Murden explains.

"We don't intend SignHealth to be a replacement for a face-to-face interpreter but for certain types of consultation give deaf patients in order to have an appointment with the immediately."

The new programme will also allow

Swindon Advertiser

Signs are hopeful for deaf patients

DEAF people in Swindon should soon be able to have greatly improved access to their GPs, thanks to an innovative webcam program developed by national charity Sign.

Sign, a charity dedicated to supporting deaf people with health problems, launched the revolutionary program SignHealth last year with the endorsement of the Department of Health.

The program enables healthcare professionals to communicate with deaf patients who use British Sign Language at the click of a mouse.

They simply choose from a list of pre-determined questions, which are then relayed to the deaf person via a short video clip of someone signing the question.

Once enhancement to the program enables a deaf patient and their GP to have a fully interactive two-way communication with their GP immediately.

SignHealth will also help Swindon GPs meet their legal obligations under the Disability and Discrimination Act 1995, which requires that disabled people have the same access as everyone else to GP's services.



Phil Murden, the managing director of SignHealth Ltd, said: "We don't intend SignHealth to be a replacement for a face-to-face interpreter, but for certain types of consultation, it can give deaf patients in Swindon the option to have an appointment with their GP immediately."

SignHealth will also help Swindon GPs meet their legal obligations under the Disability and Discrimination Act 1995, which requires that disabled people have the same access as everyone else to GP's services.

"We have received very positive feedback from GPs and their deaf patients who have used the program in Swindon. Booking appointment reminders by text alerts has been shown to dramatically improve attendance rates by deaf patients and this shows that SignHealth can deliver real cost efficiencies as well as improving access to primary care for deaf people."

Swindon Primary Care Trust, which includes 42 practices, is one of 152 PCTs in England that will be offered the newly enhanced program.

Helping to make diagnosis clear

Deaf patients will benefit

DEAF people and those who do not speak good English are not to understand health professionals better thanks to a new computer program.

Walton Primary Care Trust is trialling the SignHealth program in all of its 57 GP practices.

The program allows a GP, nurse or receptionist to choose what they want from a list of the computer program.

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and the deaf person can answer by choosing from another list on the screen.

The questions are also translated into 12 different languages, which appear on the screen and are played out of the computer speakers.

The computer also prints out information sheets for the patients about their medical

understanding.

Steve Powell, chief executive of Sign, said: "Currently more than 60 per cent of GP appointments do not provide communication support to people with learning difficulties or to those who have limited English."

The program also allows practices to send appointment reminders to deaf people by text message.



Visual hearing aid GPs are now able to remotely access an interpreter for Deaf patients at the 'click of a mouse'. The revolutionary web-based program SignHealth has been enhanced to provide live sign language interpreting over the internet.

SignHealth, developed by the national charity Sign, enables doctors and nurses to communicate with Deaf patients who use British Sign Language (BSL) via a computer program. The new development to the program allows a Deaf patient and a GP to

Pilot project aims to make it easier for doctors to talk to patients

Sign of the times as GPs trial new service

GP surgeries in Walsall are being given the chance to take part in a pilot scheme to transform communication between doctors and patients with hearing impairments.

Walsall Teaching Primary Care Trust (WPTCT), which includes 40 GP practices, is being offered a trial of SignHealth, SignHealth's computer programme developed by national charity Sign.

For people who cannot speak or read English, it offers healthcare professionals and patients a choice of 12 foreign languages.

A system called the Health Communication System (HCS) has been developed by SignHealth to help deaf patients communicate with their GPs.

The system allows a GP, nurse or receptionist to choose what they want from a list of the computer program.

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PCTs urged to use free communication software

FEWER than half of PCTs are taking advantage of a free computer software package that enables practice nurses to communicate with people who have impaired hearing or whose first language is not English.

The package was developed by the charity Sign and sent to every chief executive and lead for equality and diversity at all 303 PCTs in England at the beginning of February.

However, last week Steve Powell, chief executive of the

charity, said that just 143 had so far logged on to the program. The software visually takes the patient and healthcare professional through a list of up to 150 relevant medical questions using sign language and 12 other languages.

The PCTs that sign up now will receive the software free under a deal agreed with the Department of Health that was meant to ensure it was tested in as many GP surgeries as possible, Mr Powell added.

'People do not believe in getting something for nothing, they think everything is going to

among deaf and hearing impaired people, which are estimated to cost the NHS £20m a year. For more information visit www.signhealth.com website.

capital DOCTOR

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Video signing to give the deaf better GP access

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This has meant that deaf people have often had to book appointments with their GP weeks in advance in order to be sure of having the support of an interpreter at the consultation.

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The new programme will also allow emergency or unsupported deaf patients

Technology

New Tool Gives Deaf People Better GP Access

GPs are now able to remotely access an interpreter for Deaf patients at the 'click of a mouse'. The revolutionary web-based programme, SignHealth, has been developed to provide live sign language interpreting over the internet.

SignHealth, developed by the national charity Sign, enables doctors and nurses to communicate with Deaf patients who use British Sign Language (BSL) via a computer programme.

The new development to the programme allows a Deaf patient and a GP to have a fully interactive two-way communication with a live BSL interpreter using a simple webcam.

This means that GPs can have almost instant access to a BSL interpreter allowing them to deal easily with short notice or unsupported Deaf patient appointments.

Recent research carried out by the University of Manchester demonstrates a disturbing picture where Deaf people face difficult and often distressing obstacles in order to access the NHS. Two-thirds of Deaf people surveyed said it was important to have support to communicate with their doctor, yet more than half were alone at their last appointment.

SIGN Matters

News from the Deaf community

reduces missed appointments by Deaf patients which, as prevent are estimated to cost the NHS £20 million a year (NHS). SignHealth will also support PCTs with their communication about the programme to surgeries and provide clear instructions on how to access it as well as supplying a webcam as part of the service.

SignHealth is the only computer programme of its kind to offer communication support to Deaf patients at GP surgeries.

For more information email signhealth@signcharity.org.uk or fax 01494 687622



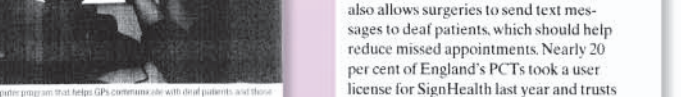
Independent Nurse

Professional Resources WORTH A LOOK

Sign language service Health professionals now have almost instant access to a British Sign Language interpreter through their computer, thanks to improvements to the web-based programme SignHealth.

Developed by national charity Sign, it allows a deaf patient and a doctor or nurse to have two-way communication with the interpreter, which is helpful for short notice or unsupported appointments with deaf patients. The programme also allows surgeries to send text messages to deaf patients, which should help reduce missed appointments. Nearly 20 per cent of England's PCTs took a user license for SignHealth last year and trusts are incorporating it into DES plans.

For more information visit www.signhealth.com



Sign of the times A computer program that helps GPs communicate with deaf patients and those with limited English has been launched by the charity Sign. SignHealth allows GPs to have a two-way communication with deaf patients at the click of a mouse. The program also allows practices to send appointment reminders to deaf people by text message.

FARNBOROUGH NEWS & MAIL

Along with their GP they can now have a fully interactive two way communication with a live BSL interpreter using a webcam.

By giving doctors almost instant access to a BSL interpreter, SignHealth will allow emergency or unsupported deaf patients

Another feature of SignHealth allows surgeries to create and send text messages to Deaf patients. Sending appointment reminders and prescription pickups by text dramatically

Existing donors can give blood up to three times a year.

But now a dressing - originally designed for patients with chronic burns - is available to help ease the hot

At the moment patients can request an interpreter, but it often takes two weeks to make an appointment due to a shortage of fully qualified interpreters. To find out more, visit www.signhealth.com

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