



Google Voice

Teach Your Phone New Tricks

Michigan Primary Care Association

What It Is

- Google Voice is a phone management system that is perfect for helping you stay organized. It isn't a phone service, but it lets you manage all of your phones in one place online.

How It Works

- Google Voice gives you one number for all your phones -- a phone number that is tied to you, not to a device or a location.
- Google Voice lets you define which phones ring based on who's calling and your personal preferences. For example, with Google Voice, you can ring your home landline phone, work phone, and mobile phone, just when someone calls your Google number.
- Google voicemail allows your voicemails to be stored in one place, and you never have to worry about your voicemails being deleted after a certain time period. You can download the voicemails, play them back online, see a transcription, email them to someone else and add notes. A mobile application is also available so voicemails can be sent as texts without charges from your carrier.
- Anyone can send a text message to your Google number. If you reply to the message, your replies display your Google number as the caller ID and the whole conversation is stored and searchable from your inbox. You can also have text messages delivered to your email.

Successes

- Outreach and enrollment isn't a "desk job"! Google Voice technology allows us to stay connected to the families and children we serve no matter where we are and provides tools to better manage voicemail. Our clients appreciate the promptness and our staff like the flexibility.
- An added benefit of using Google Voice for geographically spread-out programs is that it creates "local" phone numbers for out-stationed staff. You can select a Google Voice number in nearly any phone area code and avoid some of the costs and pitfalls of centralized toll free numbers.

Challenges

- Every technology comes with “quirks” and Google Voice is no different. The system has some automatic preset options (auto answer with recorded voice etc.) that have to be changed and the “back end” settings are a bit complicated for novice users.

Implementation

- Google Voice is completely free but does require a Google account.
- Implementing Google Voice does require additional staff training and less technologically “savvy” staff members may experience a challenging learning curve. However, once staff members fully understand the technology they quickly take advantage of the tools at hand because it makes their work easier and more efficient.

For more information:

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