HOSPITAL SMS

DLT registration, templates and what still works

Why appointment reminders stop arriving, how to register properly, and what hospital SMS can still do.

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WHY IT MATTERS

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SMS is the least glamorous channel in hospital marketing and one of the most important. It reaches every phone, needs no app and no internet.

If reminders suddenly stop or a template is rejected, the cause is usually DLT.

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REGISTRATION

Five steps on any operator's DLT portal

1. Entity: PAN, GST, authorised signatory; you get an Entity ID
2. Header: alphabetic for service, numeric for promotional, with -S or -P suffix
3. Consent template, if you send explicit-consent messages
4. Content template: fixed text fixed, variables as {#var#}
5. Telemarketer chain binding: declare every provider in the path

Registering on one operator is generally enough; ledgers are shared.

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CATEGORIES

The wrong category is the top rejection cause

TRANSACTIONAL	Reserved for banks on DLT portals; generally not for hospitals
SERVICE IMPLICIT	Confirmations, reminders, OTPs, reports, bills; most hospital traffic
SERVICE EXPLICIT	Health check reminders, camp invites; needs verifiable opt-in
PROMOTIONAL	Package offers, launches; numeric header, opt-out, 9 am to 9 pm

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WHAT CHANGED

TRAI in 2024 and 2025

- Every URL and callback number whitelisted against templates; no generic shorteners
- Header suffixes -P, -S, -T, -G; mandatory opt-out in promotions
- Promotional calls from 140 series, service calls from 1600 series
- Five complaints in ten days triggers action; first violation, 15-day suspension

A suspension stops OTPs, confirmations and report alerts at once. Keep promotional SMS conservative.

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USE IT FOR

Where reliability beats richness

- Confirmations with date, doctor, location and a reschedule link
- Reminders the day before, and hours before morning slots
- OTPs for portal login, payments and report downloads
- Report-ready alerts with a secure link, never the result itself
- Bills, receipts, discharge follow-up dates

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TEMPLATE RULES

Short, specific and boring

- No hospital name or base URL inside a variable
- No results, diagnoses or clinical details in the text
- No offers or book-a-health-check lines in service templates
- No sprawl of variables; they get scrutinised

Keep a template register: ID, category, header, owner, sending system, last review date.

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CONSENT RULES

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Implicit consent lasts the customer relationship. Someone who opts out cannot be asked again for 90 days. Misclassifying a promotion as service is treated seriously.

Customers can block promotions but cannot opt out of genuine service messages.

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READ THE FULL GUIDE

Hospital SMS and DLT, in full

- Six illustrative DLT templates in {#var#} format
- SMS vs WhatsApp vs RCS for hospitals
- How to measure hospital SMS
- gauravphogat.com/hospital-sms-marketing-dlt-india

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