

# Saúde 24 (S24)

## Improving Portugal's healthcare resources



### Background

Saúde 24 (S24) is a telephone based service that offers clinical assessment, health advice and health information for the people of Portugal. The aim of the service is to direct callers to the most appropriate level of care and ease pressure on more traditional branches of the healthcare service. A private company, Linha de Ciudados de Saude (LCS), was formed to implement the S24 programme. LCS is the first private/public sector healthcare partnership of its kind in Portugal.

### Choosing the system

The Portuguese Government instigated a full procurement procedure to evaluate the different market options available. Vendors evaluated included McKesson, Dshi Systems as well as Clinical Solutions. Clinical Solutions was chosen over its competitors to provide S24 with the required software. The company was selected due to its proven ability to deliver on a national scale, as demonstrated through the partnership with NHS Direct. S24 also recognised the benefits of using a system which had unsurpassed levels of consistent outcomes with the recommendation of care, and ability to meet national requirements whilst being customisable to a changing environment.

Ramiro Martins, CEO of LCS explains, "The Public Health system is under a great pressure to provide healthcare with limited resources. The national helpline provides a valuable means of support and reference for the Portuguese people and enables the Public Health System to allocate its resources more efficiently – making sure that the right level of care meets the right people. We saw Clinical Solutions as having the experience and expertise demonstrated through their success with NHS Direct in England, as the ideal partner for delivering this service."

### The solution

Clinical Solutions was chosen to provide call centre management and clinical support software to S24. The Telephone Triage applications allow complete visibility of a patient encounter, from personal details through to final outcome, using tried and tested decision support algorithms. This supports S24's expert advisors in assessing callers' needs and enables them to customise the applications in a manner that supports their chosen workflow. In addition, specialist or localised content can be adapted to suit the needs of the Portuguese Public Health System.

The Clinical Solutions software is used by staff to record patient calls and provide information to aid advice for patients. It also allows the Portuguese Public Health System to better manage its limited resources and allocate the correct level of care based on the assessment of each case.

### The Implementation

The implementation was a complex project with multi-dependency on different suppliers. This was overcome by close communication between all parties, resolving issues before they had chance to escalate. LCS was formed to implement and operate the health helpline. LCS was also responsible for ensuring that the development of the service met the requirements set out by the Portuguese Health Ministry. In order to maximise self dependence within S24, a Clinical Solutions 'train the trainer' cascade process was also put into operation – enabling staff to provide self-support to their teams.

## In summary

### Customer

Saúde 24 (S24), Portugal

### Website

[www.saude24.pt](http://www.saude24.pt)

### Customer profile

Saúde 24 (S24) is a telephone based service that offers clinical assessment, health advice and health information for the people of Portugal. The aim of the service is to direct callers to the most appropriate level of care and ease pressure on more traditional branches of the healthcare service. A private company, Linha de Ciudados de Saude (LCS), was formed to implement the S24 programme.

### Benefits

- As much as 10% of the Portuguese population did not have direct access to a GP
- The project team identified that it needed to implement call centre management and clinical decision support software, providing information to aid advice for patients and allocate the correct level of care based on the assessment of each case
- A solution needed to be found to manage the Portuguese Public Health System resources more effectively



**“The new service will provide a lifeline for the Portuguese people and an invaluable resource for the Portuguese Public Health system.”**

*Richard Turner, Director for Trade and Investment  
British Embassy, Lisbon*

## Clinical Solutions Telephone Triage application

The Clinical Solutions Telephone Triage application allows complete visibility of a patient encounter from personal details through to final outcome using tried and tested decision support algorithms. Designed specifically for the call centre environment, it closely supports expert advisers in assessing callers' needs, and its highly customisable interface allows call centres to support their chosen workflow.

## About Clinical Solutions

Clinical Solutions is a leading supplier of flexible decision support and clinical software solutions to the healthcare industry that help healthcare professionals safely and consistently assess a patient's symptoms and direct them to the most appropriate level of care. This results in more efficient management of resources and alleviates pressure on emergency and primary healthcare services. The software is designed for use in both call centre environments and face-to-face encounters with patients.

With a mission to change the way the world accesses health and social care service, Clinical Solutions continues to invest in developing software solutions for health and social care organisations around the world.

## General enquiries

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Richard Craven, Sales & Marketing Director, Clinical Solutions comments, “To be involved with this project from the outset is a testament to our credibility and experience in enabling the delivery of leading healthcare advice in call centres. We will be working with LCS every step of the way in implementing this helpline which we feel will have a positive impact on the provision of healthcare in Portugal.”

### Go-live

The health helpline went live in April 2007 taking around 1,500 calls per day, significantly more than the 900 daily calls anticipated. The immediate uptake demonstrates the current need for this type of service for the Portuguese population.



*The service was officially launched by Portuguese Prime Minister Mr José Sócrates and Minister of Health Dr. António Correia de Campos.*

In May 2007, the service was officially launched by Portuguese Prime Minister Mr José Sócrates and Minister of Health Dr. António Correia de Campos. Richard Turner, the Director for Trade and Investment at the British Embassy in Lisbon attended the launch event. He explains, “The new service will provide a lifeline for the Portuguese people and an invaluable resource for the Portuguese Public Health system. The choice of Clinical Solutions' technology is a testament to the company's track record in the UK. Britain's ability to export this technology says very positive things about its healthcare infrastructure.”

### Patient benefits

S24 can now offer direct access to a significant number of the population who previously had limited or no access to healthcare advice. Patients can benefit from quick reassurance of their condition and advice on the best course of action to take. Being a user of S24 also guarantees rapid access to the level of care required, in an emergency situation.

### The future

The Clinical Solutions and the LCS team are working together to support the expansion and development of the service. The current S24 service is viewed internally as a baseline for future growth in order to develop further ways to support the population of Portugal. The senior medical teams are collaborating on an ongoing basis in order to increase clinical content and help better manage the service and patient expectations.



## Proven?

Our clinical software powers the largest telephone triage system in the world, handling 25,000 calls a day.

**Clinical Solutions produces medical software solutions for healthcare.**

Our solutions, designed by clinicians, help healthcare professionals safely and consistently assess a patient's symptoms and direct them to the most appropriate level of care. This results in more efficient management of resources and alleviates pressure on emergency and primary healthcare services.

Our Telephone Triage application allows complete visibility of a patient encounter from personal details through to final outcome using tried and tested decision support algorithms. Designed specifically for the call centre environment, it closely supports expert advisers in assessing callers' needs, and its highly customizable interface allows call centres to support their chosen workflow.

As a result, over 58 million people in the United Kingdom now have 24 hour access to the largest telephone triage system in the world.