Our statistically significant study suggests that the “average” orthodontic practice using the HouseCalls telephone reminder system will have an “average” decrease in failure rate of 44%, resulting in the “average” orthodontic practice gaining/recapturing **5.7 working days** or an increase of **$17,337** per year in practice revenues.

Based on 200 scheduled working days (Using HouseCalls System)

It was concluded that TeleVox’s HouseCalls system greatly reduces the staff time needed to make appointment reminders, decreases “no-shows” and increases revenues. Founded on this preliminary study, computer-generated telephone reminders are a very effective method of increasing attendance in an orthodontic clinic.

*This is a preliminary study conducted by the Department of Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics at the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Dentistry by Theodore J. Kula, PhD; Katherine Kula, MS, DMD, MS; Barton J. Girdwood, DDS; and Daniel Tira, PhD. Any reprints of this study must have written approval.*

*HouseCalls™ Software is developed and engineered by TeleVox Software, Inc.*
**Abstract**

**Objective.** To measure the effectiveness of TeleVox® Software’s HouseCalls™ messaging system for improving patient attendance in an orthodontic practice.

**Methods.** A preliminary, randomized study was conducted by the Department of Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics at the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Dentistry by Theodore J. Kula, PhD; Katherine Kula, MS, MDM, MS; Barton J. Girdwood, DDS; and Daniel Tira, PhD.

This study was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of a computer-generated telephone reminder system (HouseCalls) in reducing patient appointment failure rates (the number of broken appointments) in a university-based orthodontic clinic.

There were 264 patients randomly divided into a “No Call” (control group) and a “Called” group (experimental group which received a call via HouseCalls). Each group was monitored over approximately 3 appointment cycles. The overall failure rate for 342 appointments in the “No Call” control group was 9.1%. The 352 appointments for the “Called” experimental group had an overall failure rate of 5.1%.

**Results.** The difference between groups was statistically significant. Extrapolating this decrease in failure rate of the “Called” group to the average full-time private practice environment would result in the recapture of 5.68 production days.

Based upon the failure rates for successive orthodontic appointments, the “No Call” group failure rates were 5.8%, 13.0% and 11.9% while the “Called” group failure rates steadily decreased from 7.2%, 4.2%, to 1.9%.

**Conclusion.** Patients that did not receive a reminder call were variable and random with their attendance, whereas patients that received a reminder call were more likely to show up for their assigned appointments. In fact, the more patients were called and reminded, the more effective HouseCalls became.

In the 1999 *Journal of Clinical Orthodontics* Orthodontic Practice Survey, the “average” orthodontic practice saw 48.1 patients per day with an average failure rate of 3.1 appointments per day or 6.4%.

For a 200 day per year schedule, approximately 12.9 days per year are lost due to the patient appointment failures.

If the “average” orthodontic practice gross income is $610,899, then 12.9 days lost income equals approximately $39,403.