



## PRESS RELEASE

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### World first medication management system launches Khayelitsha pilot

***SIMPill, a South African-developed product that uses GSM technology to ensure patients with chronic diseases take their medication regularly, will launch its largest pilot to date at the Michael Mopongwane clinic in Khayelitsha tomorrow.***

The launch, to be attended by Western Cape Health MEC Pierre Uys as well as patients and health care workers, will highlight early results from the 150-person pilot project using SIMPill for medication compliance management of TB patients.

"TB treatment requires patients to take daily medication for months on end, even when they're feeling well," explains Lloyd Marshall of SIMPill, a Tellumat owned company.

"Many people don't follow their treatment, and resistant strains of TB are emerging as a result. The number of TB cases in the Western Cape has been rising rapidly in recent years, and there has been a steady increase in the number of multi drug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) cases."

"We have been losing the battle".



The SIMPill is an ordinary pill bottle with an attached device that includes a SIM card and transmitter. Every time the bottle is opened, it sends an SMS to a central server.

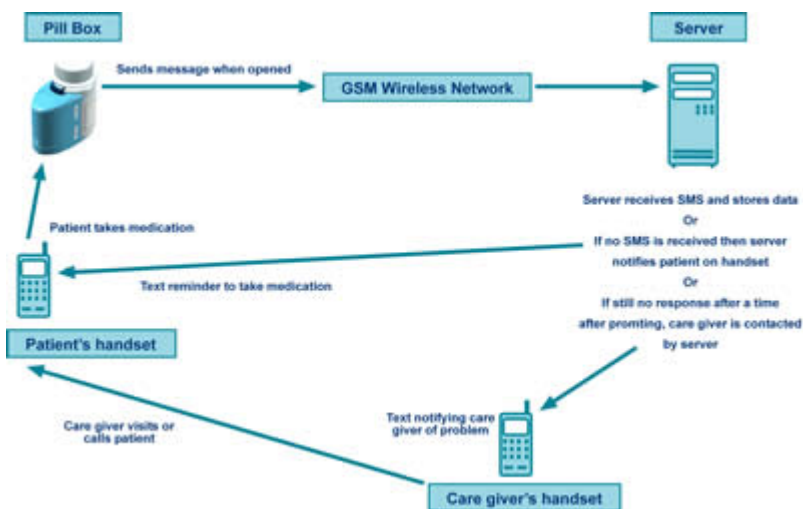
If the bottle isn't opened on time, the SIMPill server sends a reminder message to the patient, a family member or a caregiver. If patients don't take their medication for more than a day or two, health workers are alerted and can call the patient or visit at home.

"Sometimes all it takes is one phone call from a patient care manager to ask how the patient is feeling and explain the importance of continuing to take the medication," says Marshall.

"We're seeing compliance rates of up to 95% so far, where they can be as low as 30% normally."



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"The current practice is Directly Observed Treatment or DOTS, which means patients must visit a clinic daily to take their medication under the eye of a health care worker," says Marshall.

"This can be disruptive to the lives of the patients, it adds to the administrative and time burden at the clinics. The SIMPill allows health care workers to monitor large numbers of patients in minutes each day, rather than hours."

The Western Cape pilot was launched at three clinics in August, and will continue until the end of March 2007. "The Western Cape is really leading the way with this," says Marshall.

"We're confident that the pilot will demonstrate much greater compliance and a better cure rate for TB."

**Source:**

[www.itinews.co.za](http://www.itinews.co.za)

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