

Patients told to claim via GP

by Jared Reed

Medicare is launching an advertising blitz and mailout to seven million cardholders this week, urging them to make electronic claims at the doctor's practice rather than at a Medicare office.

Medicare Australia says it wants to encourage patients to claim via EFTPOS using the re-vamped Easyclaim claim system which it says is now in use by more than 2000 practices.

But the agency denies it is trying to shift costs and workload off Medicare offices onto GP practices and their staff.

Melbourne GP Dr Chris Pearce, deputy chair of the Melbourne East division, says the Medicare Easyclaim system has had a successful facelift and he believes it will be more widely adopted by practices.

"They've done a lot more work with the software industry association, and I think that's going to make it a lot more user friendly from our end, in the sense that it's going to be easy to implement where the first system wasn't," he told *6minutes*.

However, despite the push for electronic claiming, Medicare is unable to completely abandon the paper trail, he notes.

"We still have to print off a paper record [of the MBS item number being claimed] and keep it, which seems a bit nonsensical...The thing we'd really like is to reduce paper, and the thought that you don't have to get the patients to sign necessarily and things like that, it's just great, but we still have to generate these wads of paper," he told *6minutes*.

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re Easyclaim: Initially thought it was fantastic until a mistake was made. You cannot correct a mistake unless it is between 8.30 am and 5 pm! The wrong patient was bulk billed (at 6.15pm) and immediately we tried to correct it. No can do. We had to write a letter to Medicare, enclosing a cheque for the wrongly bulk billed amount and asking for the patient's record to be altered so that she could claim her rebate for her item 23.... What a lot of nonsense.

Posted by **Clair Marsh/Practice Manager** 19/05/2009 8:33:32 PM

With Pracsoft Tyro solution, "Integrated Easyclaim", you can still submit your bb claims as a batch through Medicare Online. You can continue to batch bulkbill to allow you to pick up errors before sending them to Medicare. I know some practices love real time bb but it depends on the practice environment. If you batch your bulkbill, you can still use Integrated Easyclaim as an on-the-spot rebate service for patient paid claims, which patients love.

Posted by **Jessica Ellerm** 20/05/2009 11:45:22 AM

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