

HCN reaches milestone with PracSoft Easyclaim

HCN has announced that it now has over 1,000 practices actively using the Medicare Easyclaim functionality in its PracSoft practice management solution. The software has been designed to work with EFTPOS terminals from Tyro, which connect to the practice's network instead of a telephone line.

According to HCN, throughout January more than 440,000 Easyclaim transactions were processed using PracSoft, delivering Tyro over \$100,000 worth of government funded Easyclaim transaction fees.

Tyro CEO Jost Stollmann said, "The Integrated EFTPOS solution took longer than anticipated to bring to market, but the speed of uptake since launch clearly shows that it has been what busy practices really want".

According to research conducted by Medicare, more than 80 percent of paying patients want an easier way to claim their Medicare rebate. This research led to the introduction of per transaction incentive payments for practices using either Medicare Easyclaim or Medicare Online, and a multi-million dollar campaign to drive patient adoption. Practices are no longer paid transaction fees to use either channel, however it is unclear at this stage what impact the withdrawal of this program has had on the utilisation of these services as Medicare's first quarterly report following the cessation of the practice incentive at the end of 2009 won't be available for another month.

Feedback gathered from practices by HCN has indicated that Easyclaim transactions performed with its system

can be completed in around 20 seconds, significantly faster than the two minutes typically required to complete a transaction using Easyclaim via a stand-alone EFTPOS terminal.

HCN CEO, John Frost, believes that the adoption of Easyclaim for patient claims is occurring at a much faster rate when compared with the uptake of Medicare Online for the same purpose.

"Anecdotally we have heard Medicare staff say the uptake of the Integrated Easyclaim solution has been ten fold that of the uptake of Medicare Online claiming over a similar period. Based on the current speed of uptake we predict that by the end of 2010 well over 50 percent of PracSoft users will be using Integrated Medicare Easyclaim as their primary claiming channel, which represents a significant proportion of the GP market," said Mr Frost.

Medicare Online was introduced by several software developers in 2004, however utilisation of its patient claiming functionality, which allows patients to have their rebates paid directly into their bank account within a few days of the service, has only recently started to increase in-line with the growing number of providers that are offering electronic patient claiming. As of November 2009, nearly 22,000 providers had either submitted a patient claim via Medicare Easyclaim or Medicare Online, up 6,000 from a year prior and 14,000 from November 2007. Medicare Australia report that as of Christmas 2009, 2.7 million Australians had registered their bank details with the government organisation.