

# Doing business online

## Fast, online claiming equates to money in the bank

At Wollongong, on the NSW South Coast, the Illawarra Sleep Disorders Service has been using Medicare Australia's online claiming for bulk bill and private patient claims for about one year.

Practice manager Julie Breasley said they switched to Medicare Australia's online claiming on the advice of their software vendor, who recognised that the benefits of online claiming surpassed those offered by the previous generation of electronic claiming known as Medclaims.

'We went to Medclaims first and then our software provider suggested we change over to Medicare Australia's online claiming,' Ms Breasley said.

'That was nearly 12 months ago now.'

Ms Breasley said making the transition to Medicare Australia's online claiming was trouble-free.

'After we upgraded our software to include the Medicare Australia modules we just did one extra step and that was all it took for us to go from Medclaims to Medicare Australia's online claiming,' she said.

'It's all been pretty straightforward.'

She said the real benefit of using Medicare Australia's online claiming was faster payment from Medicare Australia to the business and much simpler private debt collection.

'I like it because not only do we get paid by Medicare Australia much faster, usually in about two days, but we can chase our debts with private patients quicker.'

Private patients can now use their service provider's access to Medicare Australia's online claiming to lodge their Medicare claim electronically. They can elect to pay either the whole account or the gap and, depending on their choice, they will receive direct payment to their bank account or a cheque, which they can then bank or return to their doctor in the case of part-paid accounts. There's no longer a need to visit a Medicare office.

'Debt collection is much better now because we know we've lodged the claim with Medicare Australia and we know what time period it should be taking for them to get the payment back. That makes it a lot easier when we have to chase people up,' Ms Breasley said, 'because we still have people who put the cheque on the fridge and forget about it.'

Ms Breasley said some people were a little apprehensive at first about using online claiming but once they knew more about it and how it worked, they didn't mind using it at all.

She said for their practice, Medicare Australia's online claiming was a great investment and had delivered everything promised.

'It's just quicker and it certainly seems to have made us more efficient,' she said.

And common concerns about the reliability of technology need not be an issue, because with Medicare Australia's online claiming you could store and forward claims whenever it was convenient.

'Usually Medicare Australia will let me know via email if there's going to be any outages or problems, but there's never really been any problems with transmissions. And if there is an issue we just wait half an hour or so before we transmit,' she said.

The system also includes advanced security measures to protect important business and patient data.

'Overall Medicare Australia's online claiming works well in our business and I'm very happy with the system,' Ms Breasley said.

