

Doing business online

Online claiming helpdesk a lifeline for busy practices

Practice manager Jan Schindler at the suburban Toowoomba Medical Centre in Queensland knows how important good call centre staff can be.

After dealing for years with private health insurers who didn't always put their best people on the front line, Mrs Schindler was pleasantly surprised the first time she called the Medicare Australia's eBusiness Service Centre.

Medicare Australia's online claiming has been operating at Toowoomba Medical Centre since September 2004 and makes claiming from Medicare Australia, both for the practice and private patients, a whole lot faster and more convenient.

Mrs Schindler said she first learnt about Medicare Australia's online claiming at an industry conference and was instantly drawn to what the system offered.

As someone who takes pride in running an efficient office, Mrs Schindler recognised the benefits of introducing the system.

'We discovered though, that we had to have a whole lot of new hardware. We had to

upgrade our server and firewall and connect broadband,' she said.

Toowoomba Medical Centre received \$750 from the Australian Government to help with its set-up costs.

However because the practice chose an internet service provider other than those recommended by Medicare Australia, they did not receive additional assistance to cover the cost of upgrading to broadband.

During the installation period, Mrs Schindler said the help Medicare Australia provided impressed her.

'There was an online helpdesk that I could phone and one particular operator there was very helpful. He stepped me through and eventually we sorted my problem out. I think it's really important to have someone who knows what they're doing on the helpdesk,' she said.

Since installing Medicare Australia's online claiming, Mrs Schindler said she had found the claiming process much simpler.

'It has made the payments a lot quicker. We're only a small practice but it means we can now process every day. There was a time under manual batching when we had to wait until we had enough claims to send through a batch, so this is excellent,' she said.

Another benefit of claiming online was that the system was able to call up and verify a patient's details instantly, which saved time and reduced data entry errors.

'Medicare Australia's online claiming really has saved us time, especially in chasing up errors,' she said.

She was also pleased that the two-day turnaround between claim lodgement and payment meant money was reaching the business's bank account much sooner.

And again, whenever she has problems making a claim, the staff at Medicare Australia are right there to assist.

'When I have a problem with one of the private medical funds it's usually frustrating because people don't seem to know what they're doing, but Medicare Australia has done it right. When I've had to phone for assistance, they've had people who know what they're talking about and who can help me sort the issue out,' Mrs Schindler said.

'They've been professional and they've been polite and courteous.

'Obviously Medicare Australia have put good staff on and it pays off,' she said.

