

# Medicare Australia's online claiming

## Paediatric specialist rapt with online claiming

The office of busy Fremantle paediatrician Dr Aida Partridge has successfully slashed more than five hours a week in administration tasks by switching to Medicare Australia's online claiming.

Practice manager Wendy Taylor said she decided to try online claiming through Medicare Australia on the recommendation of her software supplier.

Setting up the office to carry the online facilities was simple and involved just a minor software upgrade and connection to the internet using broadband.

'I think it took about eight weeks to get everything up and running but there weren't any hitches; everything went well,' Mrs Taylor said.

Online claiming is available to all health care professionals who bulk bill as well as for all private patient claims. Practices can also access and submit updates to the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register using the online system.

Mrs Taylor said Dr Partridge was now offering convenient online claiming to all of her private patients.

Patients could choose to pay in full and wait for their Medicare rebate to be paid by cheque or directly into their bank account, or to pay the gap and then forward the doctor's cheque back to Dr Partridge.

'We find patients a little bit hesitant to fill out and give their bank details to a government institution and that will take a little bit of educating, but paper-wise it's been tremendous,' she said.

*'It just takes so much of the stress out of running the practice.'*

'I've just found it a lot easier to do and it's saved me a lot of paperwork and a lot of extra typing.

'Dr Partridge goes down to the country a couple of days a week and we used to have to print out all the Medicare forms and send them all down and then when she came back we would then have to do the accounts.

'I just think this is a lot more efficient. It's a lot quicker from our point of view. Time wise I would say it probably cuts between five and 10 hours a week.'

In addition to saving time, online claiming had also improved the patients' payment habits.

'We haven't got anywhere near the overdue accounts that we were sending out before,' Mrs Taylor said.

'That in itself is very time efficient and because everything's done online we are getting the money in quicker than previously.'

She said the new system also had little room for error because all of a patient's details had to be verified before the claim could be submitted.

'Before if there was a mistake on the claim form it would get sent back to the family. They would then have to alter it and quite often they sent it back to us because they didn't know what to do.

'So this works quite well I find.'

On dealing with the staff at Medicare Australia's eBusiness Service Centre, Mrs Taylor said she was very happy.

'They're excellent, absolutely gorgeous. You ring up and nothing's too much trouble for them,' she said.

After several months now of using the system, Mrs Taylor said she was pleased she decided to make the change and thought all doctors and specialists should be encouraged to do the same.

'It just takes so much of the stress out of running the practice,' she said.

