ECLIPSE claim lodgement doubles in twelve months

Medicare Australia has reported impressive growth in the number of In-patient Medical Claims lodged through the Electronic Claim Lodgement Information Processing Service Environment (ECLIPSE). Utilisation of the service has doubled since January last year, with recent figures showing that 30% of all In-patient Medical Claims were now being lodged through the electronic system.

ECLIPSE is an extension to Medicare's online claiming services, through which In-patient Medical Claims are lodged directly through practice management software and processed simultaneously with Medicare and the private health fund.

In-patient Medical Claims are for medical items from in-hospital care where benefits may be payable by both Medicare, and the patient's private health fund.

Describing the role of ECLIPSE, Human Services Portfolio General Manager, Hank Jongen, said "ECLIPSE provides a secure connection between practices, public and private hospitals, billing agents, Medicare and private health insurers.

"There are many benefits for both doctors and patients who submit claims through this system, including fewer claim rejections, better quality of data, reduced administration and faster processing and payment."

All private health insurers currently use the ECLIPSE system for In-Patient Medical Claims, with many practice management software solutions now containing the necessary functionality needed to facilitate ECLIPSE transactions.

A Medicare Australia spokesperson said the department is "committed to providing more options for health professionals to process claims through convenient channels. The use of ECLIPSE doubling since January 2010 is a significant achievement, and Medicare Australia hopes to further increase the use of this channel."

— Cara Sayer-Bourne

HIC2011 and associated events coming to Brisbane in August

Australia's longest-running e-health event, the Health Informatics Conference (HIC2011) will be held in Brisbane this August.

The conference, run by the Health Informatics Society of Australia (HISA) will celebrate the inspiration, innovation and implementation that has taken place in the sector, showcasing examples from both Australia and overseas.

Attendees come from the private and public sectors, health service delivery, insurance, pharmaceuticals, technology, government and foundations, with over a thousand people attending each year. A stream of the conference is tailored to healthcare leaders and for those at management level.

Highlights include international and local speakers, as well as a large exhibition of e-health vendors. A notable participant at the event is Mike Walsh, author of Futuretainment and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of innovation research agency Tomorrow. As an experienced trend tracker, Mr Walsh is a leader authority on the digital future and will highlight ideas that are currently transforming our world.

A Q&A-style discussion with Q&A host, Tony Jones, will be back for its second year to look at the question: Are we any good at innovation in e-health? The panel will feature Mike Walsh, Foundation Chair in Medical Informatics at the Faculty of Medicine at the University of NSW, Enrico Coiera, and politicians from both sides of the political spectrum. HISA has called for attendees wishing to participate in the interactive session to email in questions or pre-record video questions. During the forum, attendees will be able to SMS questions directly to Tony Jones.

Built within the exhibition hall, HIC2011 will also feature the Learning Exchange.

This initiative challenges speakers to share their learning with colleagues in a ten minute time frame.

Run concurrently with HIC2011, HISA will debut 'HealthBeyond: The Interactive E-Health Experience' this year. The virtual e-health world will showcase technologies and innovations that are being used in healthcare related settings. Rather than just speaking to a vendor about the products, the showcase is designed to give attendees the opportunity to experience various health settings such as an aged care facility or a doctor's surgery, or experience what it might be like to interact with a healthcare professional from their own home. Visitors can go on a self-guided tour of each room, with facilitators in each room to explain things along the way.

Executive Producer of HealthBeyond, Laura Salvatore, believes that the Interactive E-Health Experience is important in the education of the public about e-heath:

"At the moment I think if you said 'e-health' to a member of the public, they wouldn't have much idea what it is. I don't think the public knows much about the technology available, or what is currently being developed.

"They might wonder why the nurse is spending more time on the computer than their elderly parents, and with this interactive demonstration we can show them what's really happening.

"I think it also opens the public's eyes to what's out there so they can make a informed choices about healthcare related matters. For example if there is a nursing home that has modern technologies available to residents, families may be more inclined to entrust their elderly relatives into such care.

"HealthBeyond is working to demystify

e-health and drive public awareness of the technological innovations that are in fact a reality."

To serve as a follow up to the event, a HealthBeyond road show will set out from Melbourne in 2012, with plans to stop in 26 cities and regional areas across Australia. The exhibition is free for the public to experience, with promotion towards health professionals, high school and community groups.

In addition to HealthBeyond, HIC2011 will feature a plethora of associated events and conference streams catering for a wide diversity of interests. Amongst these events are the Aged Care Informatics Conference, the Nursing Informatics Conference (1 August), the Digital Hospital Design Conference (1-2 August), Games for Health, the Indigenous Informatics Conference, and the AGPN eHealth Conference (1-2 August).

While programs and other event specifics are being finalised for some of these associated conferences, it is understood that the Aged Care Informatics Conference will feature Eric Dishman, Director, Health Innovation and Policy, Intel Corporation, who will present on the current status of IT innovation in home care, and the inaugural Indigenous Informatics Conference has garnered interest from both Canada and New Zealand, with a focus on the differing needs for this sector and how they can be best tackled.

To be held for the second year — but for the first time in association with HISA — the AGPN eHealth Conference will commence with a pre-recorded presentation from Minister for Health and Ageing, Hon Nicola Roxon, followed by a keynote presentation by Ms Fiona Granger, First Assistant Secretary, eHealth Division, Department of Health and Ageing.

Other notable presenters for the event include Dr Mukesh Haikerwal, National Clinical Lead, NEHTA, Mr Colin Frick,

Chief Executive Officer, Improvement Foundation, Dr Emil Djakic, Chair, Australian General Practice Network and Mr Peter Fleming, Chief Executive Officer, NEHTA. A selection of senior executives and IT professionals from within the Division network will host sessions throughout the two day event, with some parts of the software industry also represented.

For HISA members, the organisation's Annual General Meeting will be held during a breakfast session during the conference. With last years AGM garnering record levels of interest, the meeting will provides an opportunity for members to come together and hear from CEO, Dr Louise Schaper, about the organisations past achievements and organisational aims for the future. Elections for HISA positions will also take place, with HISA currently calling for nominations.

Dr Schaper believes there are a number of reasons why HIC 2011 stands out from other e-health conferences:

"This is the 19th HIC so the fact that it has been running since 1992 is pretty impressive. This was before the Internet and before most people had computers in their home so I think that this legacy is very important.

"At any time over the four days, you can choose to go to six different presentations and the trade exhibit that we have going. People are really spoilt for choice and that was actually a criticism we had last year, 'there's too many things to do and I can't decide' — there's competing priorities, but I think it's nice problem to have.

"It's an event that has stood the test of time, and has continually grown and evolved into something really special."

More information about HIC2011 and the associated events is available from the HISA website: http://www.hisa.org.au

— *Cara Sayer-Bourne*