

4 June 2020

The Hon. Stuart Robert MP
Minister for Government Services
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House Canberra
ACT 2600

E: Stuart.Robert.MP@aph.gov.au

Dear Minister

Re: Improvements to Simplified Billing Adjustments and Late Lodgement forms Services Australia.

The Alliance of Members Health Funds and HAMBS write to you regarding inconsistency and issues in the administration of Simplified Billing Adjustment and Late Lodgement forms for Services Australia.

As the peak body for 27 not-for-profit, member owned and community based health insurers, Members Health advocates for a successful and vibrant private health insurance industry supported by robust and fit-for-purpose policy frameworks and efficient processes.

Since 1978, Members Health Funds have endeavoured to be leaders in customer service and satisfaction. Yearly independent surveys of thousands of Members Health fund policyholders consistently reflect our Funds' customer-first credo, with extremely high satisfaction rates.

Established in 1991, HAMBS supplies and supports the HAMBS (Hospital and Medical Benefits System) Application. A sophisticated and user-friendly software and information technology solution for the private health insurance industry in Australia.

In a rapidly changing industry with increased regulation, technological advances and in an increased competitive environment, HAMBS continues to expand the services available to its customers. Today, HAMBS has over 80 professional staff servicing 25 mostly not-for-profit Health Funds nationwide.

Insurers with both Members Health and HAMBS constantly aim to provide policyholders with an uncomplicated, hassle-free membership and claiming process. Since 2006, customers of Members Health insurers have consistently rated our funds 94% or higher when it comes to overall satisfaction, and 95% or higher when it comes to the fast payment of claims.

Part of this ongoing success has been our Health Funds' and the Government's ongoing commitment to streamlining processes and reducing complexity to benefit the consumer experience. The COVID-19 pandemic has provided a unique opportunity to review and make expedient progress on administrative issues that might otherwise have gone without review.

In this context, we highlight the advice from Services Australia dated 20 April 2020, allowing private health insurers and approved billing agent employees to send completed Simplified Billing or ECLIPSE adjustment claim form (HW023) and Application for late lodgement of a Simplified Billing claim for assigned Medicare benefits form (HW026) (with the required documentation) via email instead of the current fax delivery process. This solution was provided only for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We also highlight communication from Services Australia on 6 April 2020 reiterating to health funds the requirement for additional documentation to support these forms. Completed Simplified Billing or ECLIPSE adjustment claim form (HW023) must be returned with amendments 'endorsed'.

HAMBS and Members Health have surveyed funds about both the above issues. Results from our member fund survey have been included in Attachment A.

With regards to the changes to fax form lodgement, there was overwhelming consensus that fax is inefficient, out dated and out of step with modern delivery methods, and adds unnecessary cost to business operations.

We strongly suggest, therefore, that beyond the COVID-19 pandemic the allowance of email form lodgement remain, and that the requirement for fax delivery be permanently removed.

Moreover, Members Health and HAMBS' funds strongly agreed that the requirement for the 'endorsement' of forms for Services Australia requires review to accommodate more modern technologies and to reduce the impact on person-hours.

Overarching these issues is the need for consistent advice from Services Australia as to whether fax remains a strict requirement, and what method of endorsement is accepted.

HAMBS and Members Health commend Services Australia on its rapid and constructive response to our joint request in September 2018 for improvements to the Rebate registration process for consumers. To date, the Department has enacted numerous changes that directly impact the consumer experience, including:

- Funds, aggregators and third party agents can now collect voice recorded Rebate registration information; and,
- Members can now save their information in digital Rebate registration forms; and,
- Health funds can now pre-populate the Rebate Application form; and,
- Health funds can now customise and embed the Rebate form in their online joining process/application form; and
- Insurers can now use digital channels to collect rebate registration information; and,
- Legislation now allows "7 business days" to notify of application for participant in the premium reductions scheme.

With membership numbers growing, exacerbating Funds' staffing requirements to meet customer service standards while under new working arrangements, Members Health and HAMBS see now as an opportune time for swift improvement to form lodgement with Services Australia.

Yours Sincerely,



MATTHEW KOCE
CEO, Members Health Fund Alliance



Kathryn Hawkins
CEO, HAMBS

1. ANALYSIS

1.1. Following a survey of Members Health and HAMBS Health Funds, a number of key issues surfaced regarding fax resourcing and endorsements of Simplified Billing Adjustment and Late Lodgment forms. Those issues are summarised as follows:

- Adjustment and late lodgment forms are not user friendly.
- Confirmation or receipt of adjustment forms is not received from Services Australia.
- Lengthy and manual follow-up processes can stretch out to months for an adjustment to be processed.
- Overhead costs including fax, printing of forms, invoices and FTE staff to follow up and manage processes.
- A need for consistent endorsement requirements across the industry.
- A need for consistent advice from Services Australia to all Health Funds regarding form lodgment processes.

1.2. Relevant legislation

Section 20B of the Health Insurance Act 1973 outlines the general requirements for Health Funds to lodge or send claims for Medicare benefits, in accordance with the approved form, with the Chief Executive Medicare “in such manner as the Chief Executive Medicare determines”.

1.3. Fax Requirement

The requirement for fax as the method for form lodgement is inconsistently enforced across health insurers. Based on survey information supplied, there are some Health Funds that have been lodging these forms using alternative methods to fax, at the acceptance of Services Australia, while others have been advised they can only submit forms via fax.

It is particularly telling that one health fund, in an effort to streamline this process, resorted back to physical post to lodge these forms:

“A few years ago we stopped using fax as a method to send the forms, because we found we were constantly following up Services Australia for answers and were often told the fax had not been received. We therefore changed to using post.” – Health Fund 12

From a security perspective, fax is not the preferred method for sending confidential information. The data may not be encrypted end to end and therefore, it cannot be guaranteed that the integrity of the data is protected nor remain confidential from transmitter to receiver. In addition, there is no confirmation from Services Australia that the fax has been received and that the adjustment is being processed. Some Health Funds will contact Services Australia if they have not received a response after a number of weeks to ensure the adjustment is being actioned. If not, then funds must re-send the forms, because the original paperwork cannot be found.

From a resourcing perspective, many health funds have removed fax machines from day to day business as it is more cost effective and secure to use other methods of transmission.

With the shift to working remotely in recent months, fax is simply not an option in the current environment. To re-instate fax machines into the business, as the shift to more distributed working occurs over the next few months, is not viable and will be costly across insurers.

1.4. Endorsement Requirement

The Simplified Billing or ECLIPSE adjustment claim form (HW023) states that the amendments must be endorsed by the person making the changes. It also states that such a person be the provider.

An adjustment to a claim can be initiated by either a provider, the health fund or in some instances, the patient. However, irrespective of how the adjustment was initiated, it is the health fund that is required to commence the adjustment process.

When this occurs for a claim received via ECLIPSE, the health fund does not have access to the original invoice and it is a very manual, resource intensive and lengthy process. While working remotely, the process of obtaining a copy of the original invoice becomes particularly challenging.

However, responses to the Members Health and HAMBS survey have shown inconsistencies in the level of endorsement requirements enforced on each insurer. For example, some health funds are required to use a specific endorsement stamp, others are not; some adjustments will be accepted when endorsed by the health fund, while for others it must be the provider; screenshots from health fund systems may or may not be accepted.

If the required endorsement is not met, Services Australia may reject the adjustment, requiring the Health Fund to re-commence the adjustment process altogether.

Adding confusion and inconsistency to the process was a recent change to the requirement for ECLIPSE claim adjustments.

Previously, screenshots from insurer systems to complement claims submitted electronically were allowed. This meant health funds did not need to request providers to supply a paper-amended accounts for electronic claims.

Now, particularly in instances where a claim submitted via ECLIPSE needs to be cancelled and all Medicare funds returned by the Health Fund, insurers must obtain a physical copy of the provider invoice before commencing the refund process to Medicare. A similar scenario arises when a health fund receives money from Medicare to forward onto providers or patients.

*“Because Medicare now requires an invoice for eclipse non eligible PHI claims it has increase our work load. Previously we provided an endorsed screenshot of the eclipse claim with LDA requesting cancellation. Requesting invoices from providers for non-eligible PHI benefits is proving to be a timely and confusing process considering we are trying to return Medicare money.”
– Health Fund 2*

It would seem counterintuitive to enforce this for a claim that was submitted electronically.

The endorsement process is already a lengthy one, however, it has been further exacerbated by the requirement to obtain physical provider invoices.

1.5. Cost related to the fax and endorsement of Services Australia forms

Numerous Health Funds noted in their response to the Members Health and HAMBS survey overhead costs associated with the resourcing of fax form lodgement and endorsement of documentation for Services Australia.

Responses to these questions varied, meaning a definitive figure could not be extrapolated accurately. However, given the relative consistency across the respondent funds, it is evident to suggest that both these processes impose hundreds of thousands worth of overhead costs upon the private health insurance industry each year, including lost productivity and person-hours, additional staff or unnecessary resourcing.

In our funds' continuous bid to provide the best value and service to their members and healthcare providers, Members Health and HAMBS suggest these unnecessary costs could be easily saved and translated into faster and more efficient operations.

1.6. Conclusion

HAMBS and Members Health continually seek ways to streamline and ensure consistent processes for all Health Funds, service providers and Services Australia. Our core objective is to eliminate confusion in the process, reduce manual effort for insurers, and reduce unnecessary overhead costs.

Similar to the commendable work recently achieved by the Data and Information Working Group in the rebate administration process, Members Health and HAMBS believe a review of the processes discussed above is necessary. For example allowing for newer technologies in the form lodgement process would considerably reduce the amount of effort and the length of time funds are required to commit to an adjustment or late lodgement.

We hope that the above analysis prompts consultation through the Data and Information Working Group, with an eye towards permanently legislating (through S20B of the Health Insurance Act 1973 and subsequent regulations) the removal of fax lodgement requirement with Services Australia, and a review of the form endorsement requirements.

In the interim, we would welcome clear and consistent advice from Services Australia to all health funds regarding the requirements for endorsing. We also welcome further engagement with Services Australia on the status of the COVID-19 related changes beyond the pandemic.

Appendix A

Members Health and HAMBS Funds Survey: Services Australia form lodgement

Survey Period: 29 April 2020 to 8 May 2020

Channel: Direct Email

Respondents: Health Fund Operations Managers

Number of Responses: 12

Health Fund 1

Does your health fund still use fax for form lodgement?

Not anymore. We currently use Medicare's "Symantec Encryption" system.

How often is fax used by your organisation extending beyond that for form lodgement with Services Australia?

We no longer use fax

How much is spent by your organisation on operating fax for form lodgement?

None

What is the process for health fund personnel when 'endorsing' amendments to invoices/accounts?

We complete the Simplified Billing or Eclipse adjustment claim form on behalf of the provider.

This form is not very user friendly from our perspective or even as advised by Services Australia, user friendly for them.

Is the process of 'endorsing' amendments to invoices/accounts streamlined and efficient? If yes, how? If not, why?

The actual process of submitting the form (through the Symantec system) is efficient, however we still have issues whereby Medicare don't appear to have received the forms and this requires us to be constantly checking with them once a claim has been in the system too long.

We follow up with Services Australia if it is not returned to us within a couple of weeks so we ring them to chase them.

Medicare's turnaround is not good in general. There is a long delay, for example, claims over 2 years as Medicare just do these when they have time.

How much time do health fund staff spend on 'endorsing' amendments to invoices/accounts? How much expenditure on manpower does this translate to?

We receives on average approximately 3 per day. They can be quick and can be completed in 15 mins however if we need to engage with external parties i.e. doctors, Medicare (can be on the phone waiting for a long time – although we try later if been on hold for 6 mins to answer call), clinics, etc.

Then the handling time goes up and can spend more time on them (over an hour per day). Often we can't complete a form in one sitting if we have to wait for a third party to get back to us dragging out the process.

Health Fund 2

Does your health fund still use fax for form lodgement?

Yes

How often is fax used by your organisation extending beyond that for form lodgement with Services Australia?

Nil, the business is eliminating fax functionality on printers as it's not used. The only faxing (we are aware of) is to Services Australia.

How much is spent by your organisation on operating fax for form lodgement?

Cost of printing the form and associated invoices. Manually faxing the documents to Medicare

What is the process for health fund personnel when 'endorsing' amendments to invoices/accounts?

Process is to email, send letters, or call provider to request the invoice.

Is the process of 'endorsing' amendments to invoices/accounts streamlined and efficient? If yes, how? If not, why?

No, every amendment is different and is dealt with on a case by case basis. This is more difficult if the fund has initiated the audit and if the provider is not forthcoming or cooperative with the requested information.

Because Medicare now requires an invoice for eclipse non eligible PHI claims it has increase our work load. Previously we provided an endorsed screenshot of the eclipse claim with LDA requesting cancellation. Requesting invoices from providers for non-eligible PHI benefits is proving to be a timely and confusing process considering we are trying to return Medicare money.

How much time do health fund staff spend on 'endorsing' amendments to invoices/accounts? How much expenditure on manpower does this translate to?

At least 15 minutes to process an adjustment to Services Australia. This is just to request invoice and fill out the forms.

Requesting an invoice or amended invoice from a provider is time consuming and usually requires us to have the correct contact details for the provider to begin with. This also includes waiting for the rooms to submit the invoice (can take a few weeks in some cases).

The new change where Medicare now requires an invoice for eclipse claims that are not eligible for a private health fund benefit has now increase our workload. Where we use to send a screenshot of the eclipse claim to request cancellation we now have to go back to the provider, not only explain the reason for claim rejection but ask them to provide an invoice for a service that is not eligible for private health benefits. All to cancel the Medicare portion and return their money.

Manpower translates is currently approximately \$3224 per year. This figure is based on fully trained staff however, would increase when training new staff members.

Health Fund 3

Does your health fund still use fax for form lodgement?

No, we haven't used the fax number since about start/mid 2019 due to it being unreliable. We have always sent to the email address.

How often is fax used by your organisation extending beyond that for form lodgement with Services Australia?

Never

How much is spent by your organisation on operating fax for form lodgement?

Nil.

What is the process for health fund personnel when 'endorsing' amendments to invoices/accounts?

Currently we are not endorsing due COVID-19 restrictions. We haven't had any forms knocked back regarding the endorsing but don't think we have sent many if any. Prior to COVID-19 restrictions we were:

1. Printing a screen shot of the Eclipse account as we don't have a physical account.
2. We would then endorse with our Health Fund Stamp
3. Then email to Medicare with Form.

Is the process of 'endorsing' amendments to invoices/accounts streamlined and efficient? If yes, how? If not, why?

No as we are printing and then re-scanning. Much easier to just send without endorsing.

How much time do health fund staff spend on 'endorsing' amendments to invoices/accounts? How much expenditure on manpower does this translate to?

We wouldn't have a huge amount. Maybe one a day and then during Monthly audit checks (HCP) maybe a few more.

Health Fund 4

Does your health fund still use fax for form lodgement?

We were using fax but it is not user friendly as you can't fax multiple claims in one transaction or else they tend to process all under the first claim on the fax, which then raises follow up calls. You have to fax individually which is not ideal. Our preference is the Covid-19 process of email as we have a record of the email and you can have a read receipt, it's electronic and easier to record on the membership, diarise and to follow up.

How often is fax used by your organisation extending beyond that for form lodgement with Services Australia?

We only use fax for Medicare adjustments, so no other use.

How much is spent by your organisation on operating fax for form lodgement?

Taking into account the fax itself and then the Medical Specialist time in follow up due to issues like above (multiple claims) or confirmation of claim received etc., or process time, for small fund like ourselves we have around 120 adjustments per year, to prepare the adjustment is around 15 mins per adjustment, but the actual time consumption is in the remaining processes which is the follow up and then the process of adjustment which can vary, follow up can be multiple occasions of around half hour for each, the processing of the adjustment is an additional 20 mins – 30 mins, the reason for the need to follow up is; it is taking Medicare anywhere between 2-6 months for an adjustment to be processed.

What is the process for health fund personnel when 'endorsing' amendments to invoices/accounts?

Reviewed and lodged by Senior Medical Specialist and endorsed by signature. It is the inconsistency of what paperwork Medicare require that is the issue. It is also my intention to order a fund endorsement stamp to assist in the process.

Is the process of 'endorsing' amendments to invoices/accounts streamlined and efficient? If yes, how? If not, why?

Endorsing is okay however the back end process to the actual claim is the real time consumption of the processes.

How much time do health fund staff spend on 'endorsing' amendments to invoices/accounts? How much expenditure on manpower does this translate to?

Endorsing is not time issue it is the Medicare processes referred above.

Health Fund 5

Does your health fund still use fax for form lodgement?

Yes it is only the reports team which lodge adjustments, late lodgements and clinical notes via fax to Medicare. We would fax Medicare every day

How often is fax used by your organisation extending beyond that for form lodgement with Services Australia?

The fax is used by other areas within the organisation for both sending and receiving information.

How much is spent by your organisation on operating fax for form lodgement?

Unsure

What is the process for health fund personnel when 'endorsing' amendments to invoices/accounts?

With each lodgement we are required to supply the completed MCA form and the providers account/s (original and amended this is required for both manual claims and electronic Eclipse claims).

Is the process of 'endorsing' amendments to invoices/accounts streamlined and efficient? If yes, how? If not, why?

We have to contact the providers to supply the accounts to us otherwise Medicare will not action the lodgement.

How much time do health fund staff spend on 'endorsing' amendments to invoices/accounts? How much expenditure on manpower does this translate to?

We have four people (2 full time & 2 part time) in the Reports team to manage the Simplified Billing claims.

Health Fund 6

Does your health fund still use fax for form lodgement?

Yes, we have been advised this is the only way Medicare will accept the lodgement

How often is fax used by your organisation extending beyond that for form lodgement with Services Australia?

Very little, it's mostly used for lodgement

How much is spent by your organisation on operating fax for form lodgement?

We wouldn't have the estimated costing at this stage, but it's a large impact to FTE in work hours.

What is the process for health fund personnel when 'endorsing' amendments to invoices/accounts?

We have a stamp that endorses the invoice stating that it is a "True & Certified Copy" with our logo on stamp.

Is the process of 'endorsing' amendments to invoices/accounts streamlined and efficient? If yes, how? If not, why?

This appears to work on most occasions, but relies on staff doing to correct process and is open to error.

How much time do health fund staff spend on 'endorsing' amendments to invoices/accounts? How much expenditure on manpower does this translate to?

Minimal time to endorse cost would be nothing.

Additionally, we have issues with asking for claims to be fully cancelled when ECLIPSE – since SA have asked for the original invoice, which we do not have due to ECLIPSE – have for as long as I can remember allowed a screen capture of the claim for the adjustment. Now they are requesting a detailed invoice.

If entire claim is being cancelled and refunded to Medicare a screen dump would be easier and quicker.

Medicare staff appear not to follow the same rules when processing Simplified Billing Adjustments. We have had some recently for the same member sent on the same day by the same operator which resulted firstly in rejection due to requirement of an original invoice; then rejected again because screen dumps were not accepted, then the third time the adjustment was successful.

Health Fund 7

Does your health fund still use fax for form lodgement?

Yes but would prefer email. Currently sending all by email due to COVID-19 and WFH arrangements.

How often is fax used by your organisation extending beyond that for form lodgement with Services Australia?

Rarely.

How much is spent by your organisation on operating fax for form lodgement?

We spend a considerable amount of time having to resend documents. Have constant issues with the fax not being received.

What is the process for health fund personnel when 'endorsing' amendments to invoices/accounts?

We get new invoices for most amendments (item number changes, date of service, amount or provider number). Endorsing is mainly used for cancellations. Usual process requires us to print out a screenshot of the claims lines and stamping it to say it is true and correct and then faxing through. Currently sending by email due to COVID-19 and WFH arrangements.

Is the process of 'endorsing' amendments to invoices/accounts streamlined and efficient? If yes, how? If not, why?

It is not streamlined to have to print out documents and fax them off – it is a waste of paper and time for employees when it could simply be a screenshot in an email and them validating in the email that it is true and correct.

How much time do health fund staff spend on 'endorsing' amendments to invoices/accounts? How much expenditure on manpower does this translate to?

Not a significant amount of time but it is unnecessary. To insist on printing and faxing also does not enable us to allow us the flexibility of having the role work from home.

Health Fund 8

Does your health fund still use fax for form lodgement?

Yes, however we use an email that is converted into Fax

How often is fax used by your organisation extending beyond that for form lodgement with Services Australia?

Very rarely, to none.

How much is spent by your organisation on operating fax for form lodgement?

\$2,000 per year.

What is the process for health fund personnel when 'endorsing' amendments to invoices/accounts?

We sign SBAs / Late Lodgements on behalf of the provider/s as the providers have a Medicare Contract with us.

Is the process of 'endorsing' amendments to invoices/accounts streamlined and efficient? If yes, how? If not, why?

No it is not. A manual SBA / Late Lodgement needs to be completed every time we need to raise an adjustment. A web-form would improve the process exponentially

How much time do health fund staff spend on 'endorsing' amendments to invoices/accounts?

How much expenditure on manpower does this translate to? Once the investigation is complete, raising and submitting SBAs / Late lodgements take approximately 15 minutes. It involves: completing the forms, copying, attaching invoices and sending.

Health Fund 9

Does your health fund still use fax for form lodgement?

Yes (we have a virtual fax machine).

During COVID-19 only, email has been gratefully used as an alternative for those with no access to a fax machine working from home.

How often is fax used by your organisation extending beyond that for form lodgement with Services Australia?

We mainly use it for form lodgement with Services Australia, and very rarely for a doctor or hospital when they insists on fax.

How much is spent by your organisation on operating fax for form lodgement?

No additional cost – it is wrapped up in the licensing fees for our other electronic services

What is the process for health fund personnel when ‘endorsing’ amendments to invoices/accounts?

Endorsing of any amendments are done by stating the adjustment on the LDA Form, identifying ourselves as DH by using our 'Minor ID' code - and digitally signing the LDA form prior to faxing. The completed LDA form and invoice/account are then merged and emailed to the HosMed Accounts mailbox in order to generate an E5 event that can be saved on the member's policy in the communications log.

Is the process of ‘endorsing’ amendments to invoices/accounts streamlined and efficient? If yes, how? If not, why?

Currently, it is efficient as we digitally endorse the invoice. However, our internal process of merging the LDA Form and the invoice/account, then routing it through E5 is inefficient and adds time to this process.

How much time do health fund staff spend on ‘endorsing’ amendments to invoices/accounts?

We average 5 LDA Forms sent to Medicare per week. On average an operator spends 15 minutes per LDA form. So on average 1.25 hours per week are spent on the LDA Form lodgement process (but this can range from 30 minutes to 2.5 hours per week). This translates to approximately \$2000 per year.

Our internal process of merging the LDA Form and the invoice/account by sending it around E5 is an additional work item that adds further time.

Health Fund 10

Does your health fund still use fax for form lodgement?

Fax for claim adjustment lodgement after the Covid period is up.

How often is fax used by your organisation extending beyond that for form lodgement with Services Australia?

It would only be a very rare occasion that we would use fax other than for lodgement of adjustments

How much is spent by your organisation on operating fax for form lodgement?

The costing of the fax service is hard to gauge as our fax is incorporated with our copier/scanner.

What is the process for health fund personnel when 'endorsing' amendments to invoices/accounts?

The process for raise an claim adjustment involves printing out the original and amended accounts after they are received from the provider; filling out the Services Australia form; printing the form; signing the form and then faxing all the information off. All this information is then scanned through and placed in the appropriate file and diarised ready for follow-up.

Is the process of 'endorsing' amendments to invoices/accounts streamlined and efficient? If yes, how? If not, why?

The process of endorsing amendment is not streamlined and can be difficult to obtain this endorsement from providers particularly if the endorsement is in relation to Eclipse claims and/or operator error.

How much time do health fund staff spend on 'endorsing' amendments to invoices/accounts?

The average time on endorsing amendments could possibly be around 10-15 minutes on each claim adjustment. Being a smaller fund we don't usually get a lot of adjustment all at once so they just slot into a normal day's processing most of the time.

Health Fund 11

Does your health fund still use fax for form lodgement?

Yes, for Services Australia only.

How often is fax used by your organisation extending beyond that for form lodgement with Services Australia?

No other department within our organisation uses fax communication, this is required specifically for Services Australia.

How much is spent by your organisation on operating fax for form lodgement?

Approximately \$1000 per annually.

What is the process for health fund personnel when 'endorsing' amendments to invoices/accounts?

Prior to COVID 19- Print the invoice, using a "True and certified copy" stamp it, a team member would then sign, rescan to incorporate into E5 processing, and then attach to the completed LDA form for faxing.

Is the process of 'endorsing' amendments to invoices/accounts lined and efficient? If yes, how? If not, why?

No, it's inefficient due to the time and manual intervention required to complete all documents with required endorsements.

Eclipse – Services Australia has advised that screen dumps or Eclipse transcripts cannot be used therefore we have to contact Provider to submit invoice which we are being advised that they cannot produce via eclipse system?

If there is an issue, and Services Australia fax the documents back to us, and the process starts all over again.

How much time do health fund staff spend on 'endorsing' amendments to invoices/accounts? How much expenditure on manpower does this translate to?

This process can take up to 15 minutes for each request including requesting eclipse invoices and sending the fax. Currently this is taking approximately 4 man hours a week.

Note – We receive our LDA's remittances advices and overpayment invoices via Services Australia secure mail, with our Fund Id etc., cannot see how this same process couldn't be implemented for the submission of LDA's.

Health Fund 12

Does your health fund still use fax for form lodgement?

No

How often is fax used by your organisation extending beyond that for form lodgement with Services Australia?

Not used

How much is spent by your organisation on operating fax for form lodgement?

Not applicable.

A few years ago we stopped using fax as a method to send the forms, because we found we were constantly following up Services Australia for answers and were often told the fax had not been received.

We therefore changed to using post.

Usually twice a week, we bundle up the forms and invoices and send them via registered post. I believe the postal costs are around \$25 per week.

What is the process for health fund personnel when 'endorsing' amendments to invoices/accounts?

Our process is to print the Services Australia form, print all appropriate invoices, have them scanned together into our system so we have an electronic copy, then post the originals.

Is the process of 'endorsing' amendments to invoices/accounts streamlined and efficient? If yes, how? If not, why?

We only recently reviewed the process to ensure that it is as efficient as possible.

It is still far less efficient than if we were able to email forms and use an electronic signature.

How much time do health fund staff spend on 'endorsing' amendments to invoices/accounts? How much expenditure on manpower does this translate to?

My team estimate the current process takes around 10-12 minutes (for a new lodgment) and we do an average of 8 per week. There is obviously further work involved once Service Australia have returned them to us.