

Thelma signs Australian Health Management Group as first health fund user

Just a week after THELMA became available for commercial use by hospitals and insurers, ICSGlobal today announced that the Australian Health Management Group (AHMG), a health insurer to over 280,000 Australians, has signed a 3 year contract to use THELMA to process private patient eligibility checks and hospital claims.

THELMA is the only exchange in Australia that is designed for the entire health care industry. It offers hospitals, health insurers and medical practitioners a technology solution to exchange business and transaction information securely over the Internet in real time, to cut current administrative and technology costs, re-engineer healthcare processes and improve patient and member care (see www.thelma.com.au).

Bryce Fraser, Group General Manager of AHMG said, "Health insurers could do so much more for their members with the right information. For example, an insurer in many cases doesn't know that a member has been admitted to hospital until after they have been discharged. THELMA will give us this information in real-time. Then, under our Carelink program, we can offer our members the chance to get home quicker into an environment in which they more comfortable. Or take the expectant mother who has high blood pressure, and would like to stay home to be with her other children. Under Carelink we can provide her with childcare support, cleaning, meals and so on. But only if we know she is going to require this support in advance. THELMA will give us this information."

AHMG have been involved in the development and testing of THELMA since last October. Rod Wright, Manager Information Services for AHMG said, "AHMG have always been proactive in terms of technology, as we recognised early on how we could improve services to our members through the smart application of technology. In the absence of a THELMA-type service, we had started to build our own online system, but this is not our core business. So as soon as THELMA became available, we didn't hesitate."

Mr Greg King, Healthcare Business Director for ICSGlobal, said "This first contract with AHMG sees the beginning of the "trading community effect" that a transaction exchange like THELMA produces, as AHMG's business partners – hospitals and other health care providers, diagnostic groups and so on - cluster around the health fund as the payer. The benefits of exchanging this information are quickly shared by the whole community and transaction volumes quickly ramp up. It's easy to see how THELMA is expected to be processing 75 million hospital and medical transactions per annum within 18 months."

Tim Murray, Managing Director of ICSGlobal, said "The improved member services that AHMG will be able to deliver, just by knowing in advance who is being treated for what, and matching this against their member profile, will no doubt see innovative funds like AHMG become the fund of choice among members who are looking for more than just a membership card. AHMG have been fantastic partners over the past nine months, and a shining light in the use of technology to improve our national health industry."

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