

HEALTHSCOPE SIGNING GIVES THELMA A NATIONAL HOSPITAL BASE

Healthscope, one of Australia's largest private hospital groups, has signed a three year contract for ICSGlobal's e-health service, THELMA. The contract represents a significant milestone for ICSGlobal as it expands its electronic network and clearing house to all participants in the Australian health sector – insurers, private and public hospitals, specialists, GPs and suppliers.

Healthscope will progressively roll out THELMA across its hospitals in Victoria, NSW, Queensland, Tasmania, South Australia and Northern Territory. Healthscope has increased its private bed capacity by over 40% this year and is also one of Australia's largest providers of private mental health services.

Commenting on the contract Mr Tony Hockley, Chief Financial Officer for Healthscope, said "There are significant business benefits to be had by exchanging transactions and information electronically which will also have a direct positive impact on patient and member care throughout Australia.

"The increase in people opting for private health insurance and our growth in private bed facilities will greatly impact the volume of transactions going through the system. We knew we had to put in place a technology solution that could deal with these volumes, the complexity of information to be exchanged and new Government initiatives such as No Gap/Known Gap. This solution was THELMA," said Mr Hockley.

THELMA generates both subscription and transaction revenue through replacing existing manual, paper-based health administration processes with intelligent technologies that allows B2B transactions over the Internet. Other examples of systems which have replaced costly, manual processes with efficient automation are ATMs / electronic banking and the CHESS clearing house system which underpins the Australian share market.

ICSGlobal has identified tens of millions of potential transactions each year for THELMA that are currently carried out manually in the health industry at costs ranging between \$4 and \$40 per transaction, depending on complexity.

THELMA offers a means to perform these transactions at just a fraction of the existing manual costs, delivering massive cost savings to health sector participants. The e-health electronic transaction market in Australia has an estimated potential value in excess of \$100 million per annum.

At \$50 billion, health is one of Australia's largest industries, made up of 44 health funds, some 1,500 hospitals and day surgeries, 36,000 clinicians, hundreds of equipment, drug and service suppliers and some 18 million consumers. However, the industry is dominated by large players. For example, in the health insurance fund sector, 8 funds command 85 per cent of the market. Of these 8, 2 have signed up to THELMA. Good progress is being made with most of the remaining 6.

THELMA currently provides three types of transaction: automated insurance eligibility checking, electronic hospital claims and specialist "No Gap / Known Gap" claims. ICSGlobal intends to progressively expand the range of transactions to cover the end-to-end health care process and eventually reach every participant in the health industry, resulting in a recession proof business with secure cash flow, backed by Government and insurance.

Tim Murray, Managing Director of ICSGlobal, said "At this stage, it's hard to see anything preventing THELMA from becoming the dominant health industry clearing house in Australia."

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