

**RAMSAY HEALTH CARE AND ICSGLOBAL TO
PURSUE EFFICIENCIES WITH THELMA**

Following on from the successful trial of THELMA (Transactional Health Exchange Linking Multiple Applications) at their flagship North Shore Private hospital, Australia's second largest private hospital operator Ramsay Health Care will now extend the trial of THELMA to other hospitals in the Ramsay Group, in parallel with the take up of THELMA by the health funds, with the next hospital being Albury Wodonga Private Hospital.

Ramsay Health Care and ICSGlobal will work closely with the health funds to re-engineer the health claims and payment processes in pursuit of shared business efficiencies for both the hospital and the fund.

Mr Pat Grier, Managing Director of Ramsay Health Care, said "We've been a great supporter of THELMA for the past 12 months. I think everyone involved in health in Australia is aware that there are efficiencies to be had through collaborative electronic trading. We've decided to take a leadership role in this process from a hospital perspective, which should reap some quick results now that ICSGlobal is gaining significant momentum in signing up the health funds to use THELMA. E-health is after all a two way process."

According to Ramsay's General Manager – Operational Development, Robert Glynn, THELMA provides a catalyst for hospitals and health funds to improve the way they do business.

"The health care payment and general administration processes in Australia have evolved into an incredibly inefficient trail of paper. What we've seen over the years are layer upon layer of redundant administrative procedures evolve between hospitals and funds just to manage the paper. THELMA gives hospitals and health funds the first real opportunity to address these problems by doing business electronically. This will require a collaborative attitude to review the business processes at either end and translate these into business rules that THELMA can then automate. Once we implement this, we are expecting significant business value at both ends, in terms of administrative savings and shorter payment cycles" said Mr Glynn.

"From a patient services perspective, THELMA will strengthen Ramsay Health Care's leadership position by making the discharge from hospital and payment of hospital bills as effortless for our patients as if they were checking out from a hotel" said Mr Glynn.

Mr Greg King, Director of Healthcare for ICSGlobal, said that Ramsay Health Care's drive for efficiencies through e-commerce will put pressure squarely on the health funds to step up or risk losing members to other innovative and more efficient health funds.

"E-commerce has now become a business requirement rather than an option for health funds. When you look at the rate at which some funds are attracting new members by simply being a better value proposition for their customers, you realise that the public now vote with their feet in their search for value from their health insurance premiums. It's hard to imagine the Boards of any health fund being relaxed about the erosion of their membership due to an inability, or unwillingness, to implement these new technologies" Mr King said.

Tim Murray, Managing Director of ICSGlobal, said "The path to profitability through THELMA is very clear. Firstly we need to get sufficient health funds signed up. We've had a very positive response in the three months since THELMA went live with eleven health funds and fourteen health plans, making up about 6% of the national market, now engaged. Discussions are well advanced with a further three funds which will take this figure to over 10%."

"The second step is to get the hospitals connected. Ramsay Health Care makes up 10% of the national private market so are an important player. We're developing aggressive co-branded marketing programs and hospital roll out plans with our larger partner funds which will really accelerate the take up by private hospitals nationally. And we've had strong interest from a vast array of smaller hospitals and day surgeries."

"Thirdly we will work with the hospitals and health funds to get the GPs and specialists connected through THELMA. We are at final negotiation stage with our first group of specialists."

"So at this stage everything is on track for THELMA meeting its Business Plan expectations and ICSGlobal being cash flow positive within this financial year."

"At a philosophical level, THELMA has thrown down the e-health gauntlet to the health industry, and how it responds to this challenge will be a litmus test of Australia's ability and resolve to become a "Smart Country". On first impressions, you'd have to say it's looking good" Mr Murray said.

About ICSGlobal and Ramsay Health Care

For more information about ICSGlobal or Ramsay Health Care, please visit the respective web sites www.icsglobal.net, and www.ramsayhealth.com.au.

About THELMA

THELMA is the first and only transaction exchange in Australia that has been designed for the entire health care industry. It offers hospitals, health insurers and medical practitioners a low cost, no risk technology solution to exchange health business information securely over the Internet in real time, to cut administrative and technology costs, re-engineer tired healthcare processes and offer much improved patient care and member services. For further information visit www.thelma.com.au.

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