PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

QUESTION ON NOTICE

EXTRACT FROM TRANSCRIPT:

CHAIR: Recommendation 1 of the Auditor-General's report recommends that to address errors found in payments to visiting medical officers, improvements to Vmoney should be made to eliminate the manual data entry and improve access by hospital staff to visiting medical officer payment management reports. I have a few questions on that. Firstly, has the Vmoney application been improved to address those particular suggestions?

Mr JENKINS: Yes.

CHAIR: Were they part of the application during the pilot program?

Mr JENKINS: We tested the pilot with those improvements in the system, yes.

CHAIR: What, if any, evaluation was done of that pilot program?

Mr JENKINS: I cannot answer that question at this time. I can come back to you on that.

CHAIR: You will take that question on notice?

Mr JENKINS: Yes.

ANSWER:

The newly developed VMoney Web application was piloted with selected facilities within Western NSW Local Health District (WNSWLHD) and Western Sydney LHD (WSLHD) during November and December 2012. These facilities were chosen in order to thoroughly test the application with a good cross section of Visiting Medical Officers (VMOs), including Fee for Service (FFS), Sessional and Rural.

The main objectives of the pilot were:
  a) To ensure that the VMO payments processed through the Web application were the same as claims processed through the current paper-based system
  b) To ensure the web application meets business processing requirements
  c) To evaluate efficacy of business rules in improving the accuracy of the VMO claims
  d) To ascertain participants' reactions to the Web application, including views on accessibility and ease of use.

A total of 25 VMOs (including delegates) took part in the pilot, with seven LHD staff checking or approving claims.

Participating VMOs and their delegates were then required to enter and submit their October and November claims online via the VMoney Web application, as well as on

paper, for a parallel payment process. The claims were checked and approved by delegated LHD staff prior to payment by HealthShare NSW (HSNSW).

Reconciliation of the VMO payments via the Web application against those via the paper-based system showed identical payments (providing details of the online claims were the same as the paper claims).

The pilot experience and outcomes demonstrated that VMOs and their delegates had little difficulty in completing their claims and appreciated a number of the application's features.

The pilot also demonstrated that the business rules incorporated into the VMoney Web application improved the data integrity and accuracy of the VMO claims.

Whilst most of the issues reported during the pilot can and will be addressed, some are subject to the requirements of the VMO determination and must remain in place.

In terms of checking and approving claims, the LHD users had no difficulties and appreciated the clarity and completeness of the data they were required to check and approve.

In general, whilst acknowledging outstanding issues for resolution, positive feedback was received verbally and anecdotally from participants with comments about the system being 'user friendly' and providing 'better record keeping'.

The pilot concluded on 14 December, with participants reverting to using the paper-based claims system while any issues are fixed and further changes are made, as required. The pilot has been very helpful in determining any system or process errors for correction prior to state-wide rollout.