

Thank you for requesting information on National Billing Services Pty. Ltd. (NBS).

This information folder is designed to give you a detailed understanding of what NBS offers, and how the NBS system works.

The folder has been broken up into the following sections to make it easier for you to locate information. The contents of each section are listed below:

- Section 1** Introduction
- Section 2** Services Offered
Other Services Available
- Section 3** Account Formats
- Section 4** Data Transmission
- Section 5** Other Administrative Matters
- Section 6** Joining NBS
Application Form
- Section 7** Contact Information

Having read the information provided here, please do not hesitate to call NBS if there are aspects of the service you are unsure of, or points you wish to clarify.

INTRODUCTION

NBS was established to provide a billing service for medical practitioners who would otherwise have to bill patients themselves, in addition to fulfilling their primary professional responsibilities.

NBS's services are ideally suited to practitioners who:

- a. **operate without the support of office staff** and currently manage their own billing,
- b. are **engaged in locum employment** involving constant change of locale, have just left a practice where staff used to perform the billing tasks, or
- c. are **considering establishing partnerships or practices**, but wish to avoid employing full time office staff specifically to deal with billing activities,
- d. wish to **avoid the need to employ additional office staff** to deal with billing activities.

NBS is also well placed to offer a temporary billing service to practitioners whose circumstances are such that a permanent service is not appropriate or required at this point in time.

From a client's point of view, the use of NBS as their billing agent attracts the following advantages:

- a. **Create efficiency in the execution of accounts** – accounts are generated within 1 working day of receiving all billing information (in most cases the same day)
- b. **The saving of time and money.** Considerable time and effort is required to set up a billing system, whether computerized or manual. Computerized systems can also be expensive. Similarly, the time involved in producing accounts, preparing the banking, issuing receipts, and dealing with account problems can be considerable. (All this involves the allocation by the practitioner of resources to tasks that are not central to their profession).
- c. **Use of an intermediary** with a number of years experience in practitioner billing who can deal with most account matters raised by a patient.
- d. **Easy access by patients** to fee quotations prior to admission to hospital,
- e. **Access to practice data**, without the need to extract it personally.

SERVICES OFFERED

NBS offers the client the following services:

Account distribution:

Initial patient accounts are produced and dispatched on behalf of the client. The accounts are based on information provided to NBS by the client. The NBS system is designed to minimize the work required of the client in order to provide the necessary information. The mechanics of the transfer of information is dealt with in detail in a later section.

Payments and receipts:

All payments received for a client are entered into the client database. This transaction automatically generates a fully itemized receipt that is dispatched to the patient. Patients can pay by cheque, money order, credit card or via the internet using a special NBS account.

The NBS system is structured in such a way that all cheques/money order payments made by patients, Medicare, the private health funds, and other organizations are drawn in favor of the client, not NBS. Credit card payments and EFT payments via the internet however, are made to NBS. These funds are then transferred to the client once a week when all other banking is carried out, by direct electronic transfer from the NBS account. Comprehensive documentation of all such payment activity is included as part of each banking report.

In some instances clients have pre-existing arrangements that allow patients to pay accounts in person. If this is the case, and the client wishes it to continue, NBS will make arrangements to enable that to occur. Payments received and banked by the client can also be readily entered into the NBS system as remote payments.

Banking:

Banking occurs once a week. Each client receives monthly banking reports. The banking report includes a list of cheques banked to the client's account, a summary of activity associated with accounts for which payments have been banked (date account sent, account status, dates of reminder notices etc.), and details of credit card, EFT and direct payments lodged in the client's account by either NBS or third party payers. If no banking occurs for a client a banking report is not produced.

To provide the banking service NBS requires the following account information

- a. name of the bank,
- b. the branch name **and** BSB number,
- c. address of branch
- d. account number, and
- e. name of the account.

Access to the client's account is limited to deposit action only.

Email transmission of reports

The most common method of conveying reports to clients is via Australian Post however, NBS does have the facility to transmit reports via email. This is particularly suitable for clients with email capabilities who work as locums and move location frequently, or who have relocated overseas. It allows reports to be received immediately they have been generated, rather than having to wait for them to follow client movements via the traditional mail system. It is also useful for those clients who prefer to file reports on their computer, rather than as hard copies in binders. If you decide to join NBS and receive your reports in this manner please tick the appropriate box on the application form and supply your email address.

Telephone support for account inquiries

NBS provides a Free Call number that allows patients from anywhere in Australia free access to advice/information regarding their account.

Fee Estimates

NBS can also provide patients with estimates of what fee they could reasonably expect for the service provided by a particular client. Estimates can be given either in writing or over the telephone. The written version complies with the requirements for Known Gap billing (for more details see the “Known Gap” section below).

If a client wishes to make this service available for their patients they will need to supply NBS with “default” set of fees they want to use as the basis for estimates. In general it is recommended that the fee used as the default for this service is set at the higher end of the range of fees the client uses - this will mean that any variations between the estimate and the actual fee will tend to be in the patient's favor. Patients can obtain an estimate by ring our office on Free Call 1800 627180.

OTHER SERVICES AVAILABLE

As NBS is associated with an accountancy practice and under the direct supervision of a fully qualified accountant and tax agent we have additional services available to our clients. These services include the following and are also available to clients not using NBS for their invoicing needs:

Bookkeeping Services

Fully trained bookkeepers can prepared on your behalf a complete set of reconciled and fully balanced set of accounts and all working papers ready for forwarding to your accountant or financial controller as required. This service has the potential to save you a considerable amount of money in accountancy fees way beyond the cost of this service. Never again will you accountant have to chase you for outstanding information.

Payroll Services

NBS can arrange a full payroll service for any client and their employees including spouses. As part of the service each pay period NBS will calculate the applicable salary including the amount due to the Australian Taxation Office in PAYG Withholding, Superannuation due under the Superannuation Guarantee Charge requirements. NBS can also facilitate these payments on your behalf. Clients will also receive at the end of each financial year a reconciled Payment Summary and all appropriate PAYG Payment Summaries (Group Certificates) for forwarding on to the employees and the Australian Taxation Office. As part of this service all employee entitlements will be recorded and reconciled on your behalf.

BAS Statement preparation and lodgment

As NBS operates under the direct supervision of a fully qualified accountant we are allowed under the Australian Taxation Office's strict requirements to both prepare and lodge on your behalf both Business Activity Statements and Instalment Activity Statements. Our fees for the preparation of this service are generally considerably less than that of most accountancy practices.

Accountancy and Taxation Services

Through its associated accountancy practice NBS can arrange for both the preparation and lodgment of all types of returns with the Australian Taxation Office and all other State and Federal Offices. Experience has shown that as general rule the fees for this service are approximately 25 – 30% cheaper than that of other accountancy practices. This service of course would be completely separate to that of the medical invoicing practice.

Other services you may require

If there are any other services that you require from NBS please do not hesitate to contact us as we are sure that we can accommodate most requests to ensure that your practice is both efficient and profitable. Leaving you to carry out your primary professional responsibilities.

ACCOUNT FORMATS

All NBS accounts are printed using A4 size paper, and may consist of one or two pages. For all private patients, defined by NBS as those who are going to claim from a private health fund and/or Medicare, the account generally consists of two pages. The front page comprises the formal account, while the second page is structured as a letter to the patient from NBS. The letter contains information on the discount fee if applicable, an explanation of the basis of the fee charged, instructions on how to pay their account and contact details etc. This structure means that a patient will still have key fee and contact information in their possession, even after submitting the account to Medicare. The letter also includes a "Payment Advice Slip" that enables patients to mail credit card payments to NBS.

NBS's aim is to make the billing process as simple as possible for our clients. If a client has a pre-existing way of formulating the account fees, which does not match one of the built-in account structures, we will make the necessary changes to include it. The system also allows for variation of account structure for individual patients within the same batch.

To speed up data entry NBS uses, wherever possible, a set of account format defaults. These are loaded each time a new account is entered onto the system. The defaults usually take the form of a specified gap above the Schedule Fee. Whilst these defaults are loaded for each new patient, they can be easily changed for a particular patient if required. A section on the Application Form asks clients to nominate their defaults. It may interest you to know that the use of a discount/full fee structure significantly speeds up payments and reduces the need for follow-up action.

Some clients set up the fee by specifying a full fee, and then indicating a percentage deduction for the discount fee, e.g. "\$350.00 less 10% for early payment" or

"Schedule Fee

+ 20% for the discount fee and Schedule Fee + 30% for the full fee; while others go the other way and ask, for example, for a fee to be calculated on the basis of a discount fee of \$300.00, with a 20% loading for the full fee (a late payment penalty).

Workers Compensation

The payment schedules used by workers compensation insurers vary from state to state. In NSW and the ACT, for example, the insurers base their remuneration on the AMA's List of Medical Services and Fees. In Victoria however, insurers, including the TAC to calculate their reimbursements using the HIC's MBS as a guide. In Queensland insurers, including WorkCover, use yet another schedule of payments.

Providing NBS is aware of which state the insurer is located in, we can structure an account using the appropriate schedule.

Department of Veterans Affairs

NBS produces DVA accounts using HIC's MBS

No Gap Accounts.

NBS has in place the necessary account formats and fee tables to process "No Gap" accounts for submission directly to the various health funds.

If you intend using No Gap billing it is essential that you ensure that the patient's Medicare number, health fund membership number, surgeon's provider number, are made available to NBS.

Known Gap Accounts:

NBS is able to produce an account that conforms to the requirements for a Known Gap account. It includes a special form that the patient can use when submitting the account to their health fund.

We supply a letter to the patient that provides the patients with appropriate fee information prior to surgery. The letter is designed to ensure that we keep a record, signed by the patient of what fee information has been provided and what gap they should expect. A copy of the letter is included in the folder. The only difficulty with providing the patients with the necessary information is the fact that they need to contact us prior to surgery.

DATA TRANSMISSION

For NBS to process the accounts the information needs to be sent to our office in Newcastle. This can only be achieved by the use of postal service, by fax, or by email. It is strongly recommended that photocopies are made of all data dispatched to NBS in case the originals are lost en route.

For fax or mail transmission NBS can provide a supply of billing sheets for your use. An example of the sheet is included in Section 7.

In general, the information required by NBS for account production is no more than would be needed for accounts to be produced by the clients themselves.

The information required includes:

- a. The title, name, address of the patient; and the name and address of the account recipient if the account is not going to the patient (e.g. to the patient's parent, employer or to some other organization – with the exception of DVA accounts – the DVA address details are already to hand)
- b. Name of the hospital and the surgeon/physician under whose care the patient has been admitted to hospital.
- c. DVA/workers compensation/third party claim numbers, or military service numbers where appropriate.
- d. Telephone number (if available) of the patient.
- e. The type of account the client wishes the patient to receive.
- f. Details of the ICU services provided to the patient. N.B. If a blood transfusion has been performed, particularly on the first ICU day, it is essential that the time of the ICU transfusion is provided, otherwise there is a good chance the HIC will reject it if a transfusion has also occurred during surgery prior to admission to ICU. We recommend that transfusion times are listed for all such services during a patient's admission to ICU.

Generally the information for points a and b are provided by the hospital via stickers that can be attached to the NBS billing sheet, index cards, pages of a book or loose leaf pages.

The client can then enter the other information.

OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Group linking of Provider Number(s) to NBS postal address

In order for NBS to be fully utilized, clients need to organize for Medicare to group link NBS's address to their provider Number(s) prior to having NBS issue their first accounts. This ensures that the NBS address appears on the Medicare and private health fund cheques. This ensures that although the cheques are still drawn in favor of the client, they are sent directly to NBS, rather than to the client's permanent address. Past experience has shown that the latter situation leads to confusion and may result in NBS dispatching an overdue notice for an account that has already been paid through the client's own banking process, unbeknown to NBS.

Patient to Client Contact

One of the key roles of NBS plays is that of intermediary between the patient and client. Patients may contact us with a view to speaking with the client about a number of matters. The most common has to do with fees, and the size of gaps. In these cases our standard procedure is to ask the patient to write a letter to the client, care of NBS. It is recommended that they detail their concerns and where applicable, outline their case for a fee reduction. On receipt of their letter we freeze all action on the patient's account and forward the letter on to the client. The account then remains on hold until such time as we obtain direction from the client. At all times NBS staff are careful not to infer that a reduction in fees will be most probable outcome of such a letter.

In other cases patients may want to speak to clients about medical or other non-account related matters. In these instances our normal practice is to ask the patient for contact details, and if possible a brief outline of the matter they wish to discuss. We then contact the client and pass on the information so that the client is in a position to deal with the matter at a time and place that best suits them.

NBS Fees and Charges – Reviewed in July of each year

The current fee for the preparation of “normal” private patient accounts, DVA and Workers Compensation Claims is a flat fee of \$21.00 including GST. This fee covers all the services listed in the “Services Offered” section above.

“No Gap” accounts (not to be confused with “Known Gap” Accounts)

The current fee for the processing of No-Gap accounts is a flat fee of \$14.00 including GST.

“Known Gap” accounts

Known Gap accounts are currently billed at \$21.00 per account.

Pre-paid accounts

In the case where a patient pays an account by cash, cheque, or money order, either prior to or at the time of surgery and we are required to send out a receipt only the fee is \$14.00 – except for accounts paid via the NBS credit card facility.

For these types of payments the full fee of \$21.00 is still levied.

It should be noted that NBS will levy a fee for each account raised for a patient.

Refunds

Occasionally patients will inadvertently pay the full fee prior to the discount period expiring. It is NBS policy, in this instance, to refund the patient the difference between the full and discount fee. In other cases, patients pay up front, but then receive a cheque from Medicare or their health fund drawn in favor of the client. In these cases the patient sends the cheque(s) to NBS and banked in the client’s account with a refund being sent to the patient. These refunds are drawn against NBS in the first instance and a request for refund by the client to NBS is then sent as part of the weekly banking report.

Eftpos fees

Due to rising costs and the increasing amount of patients who wish to pay their account by credit card, in order to keep our fees low, NBS will now be charging the client (doctor) an Eftpos fee equivalent to the Commonwealth Bank.

This rate is currently at 1% and is subject to change according to the Commonwealth Bank.

This fee will be charged to the client’s credit card (if applicable) at the end of each month and an invoice or receipt will be included with the monthly reports.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information that is communicated to NBS about both clients and patients is treated in the strictest confidence. No one, apart from NBS staff, is permitted access to any information held by the organization.

Liability

NBS will accept liability for any errors or omissions that are a direct result of negligence on the part of NBS staff. NBS takes information provided to it in good faith and therefore does not accept any responsibility for errors or omissions that are the result of incorrect information having been forwarded by a client.

Service Agreement

NBS undertakes to provide the account services as detailed above for all accounts forwarded to NBS and paid for by the client. In the event that NBS is placed in a position where it can no longer provide a service for new accounts, it will continue to provide support for all current accounts, until such time as all accounts for its clients have been closed or NBS commitment has been fully met.

There is no requirement for a client to commit himself or herself formally to using NBS for a specific time. A client can decide to cease using NBS at any time.

Should a client terminate their use of NBS, NBS will continue to provide account support for all accounts currently on NBS books, until such time as the accounts are closed or NBS commitments have been fully met.

Payment to NBS for services rendered

As part of the weekly reporting NBS will generate a tax invoice based on the number and type of accounts which have been dispatch during the week. It would be greatly appreciated if payment could be made within 7 days. Prompt payment of our accounts helps keep our costs down and therefore costs to clients are kept to a minimum. Payment can be made by cheque, money order, direct credit to our account via the internet or credit card.

A form has been included in Section 7 that asks for your credit card details. If you intend paying NBS cheque/money order/direct funds transfer please ignore this form, however, if you wish to pay by credit card please fill in this form and return it with your Application Form. There are two payment processes available if using your credit card.

The first is for you to authorize NBS to debit your card automatically when accounts are processed on your behalf. The normal practice is for NBS to do this at the end of each week. You will still receive a fully itemized account at the end of each week.

The second involves the use of pre-printed credit card payment slips. If you choose this option NBS will print a payment slip with your credit card details already entered and forward this to you along with the weekly tax invoice. You can then simply sign the form and return to NBS either by mail or by fax. The form in section 7 allows you to indicate which of the credit card payment options you wish to use.

A fully itemized tax invoice will be mailed to you at the end of each week if NBS have generated accounts on your behalf regardless of which method you choose to pay our account.

Please note that all credit card details for both patients and clients are held in a separate database that is protected by both encryption and password. All hardcopy payment slips are kept in a safe, to prevent unauthorized access.

JOINING NBS

Complete the Application Form, which has been included and return to NBS.

Once we receive this application we will complete all the necessary forms as listed below.

- a. Application to register NBS as a billing agent with the private health funds
- b. DVA “Claim for Treatments Services” vouchers for your signature and return to NBS. These will be held in NBS’ safe and used as required. Periodically more vouchers will be sent for signing.
- c. The HIC Group link Form
- d. Any other forms as required

Once signed these forms should be returned to NBS for lodgment with the appropriate bodies.

Once registration is completed NBS will be in a position to commence generating accounts on your behalf immediately.

APPLICATION FORM

Notes for completing the application form.

Notes are provided only to those sections of the form that require amplification. Please read carefully before filling in the form. If you have any queries do not hesitate to call NBS on the toll free number listed at the bottom of the application form pages.

Phone Numbers Please include here your home, mobile, paging service, facsimile and email numbers/address where applicable. *Could you also indicate a number you are happy for patients to ring you on, should the need arise (e.g. they contact NBS to discuss a medical concern rather than one related to the account)*

Policy with regard to pensioners. Some clients of NBS elect to charge pensioners only the Schedule Fee. In most instances this is indicated on the data sent to NBS, however, occasionally a patient who has received an account with a fee greater than the Schedule Fee will ring and inform NBS that they are pensioners – in this case NBS needs to know whether to continue to charge the fee as initially calculated, or reduce it back to the Schedule Fee. In this box please indicate your preference by using either “S/F”(i.e Reduce to Schedule Fee) or “As Is” (maker no change). NBS will then use this as a general guide.

Estimated patients/month. Please provide a rough guide as to how many accounts per month you would expect to send to NBS. This will assist NBS in planning efficient allocation of resources.

Hospital /Provider Number(s). Please list here all the hospitals you will be providing services to that will involve NBS support and the HIC Provider Number allocated to you for each of those hospitals

Workers Comp. third party, military accounts. Please give details of how you wish to bill workers compensation, third party and military accounts. You may need to make enquiries to ascertain what is common practice in your region.

Other types of accounts. Provide a description here of account types or billing regimes you wish to use that have not been described in the information booklet. If you are happy with NBS' current range leave this section blank.

Reports required. Please list in this section what reports you require from NBS and their frequency. As a matter of course a banking report will be sent each week along with a summary of all account activity if there have been no deposits to your account then a banking report will not be included. Weekly reports will also include a list of accounts sent that week and accounts outstanding.

Debt default policy. NBS needs to know what to do with bad debtors – including differing policies, if appropriate for those who have paid nothing, as opposed to those who have paid only the Schedule Fee – leaving the gap unpaid. Options included the Small Claims Tribunal, a debt collection agency, an organization such as the Debt default Register, the writing off of accounts etc. Debt recovery does not constitute part of NBS' services – but we will seek to assist you in whatever way possible to recover outstanding funds.

If you find that there is insufficient space provided for any sections please use the reverse side of the previous page for your response.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Business Name: National Billing Services Pty Ltd

Managing Director: Jenny Richardson

Manager: Jaime Finnie

Postal Address: P.O. Box 5185
Kahibah NSW 2290

Telephone Numbers:

Facsimile: 02 4920 7885

Free Call: 1800 NBS 180 (*1800 627 180*)

Email Address: billserve@idl.net.au

CREDIT CARD DETAILS FORM

If you intend paying NBS by credit card for services rendered please fill out the form below and return it to NBS.

We will print a number of payment slips with these details already entered and mail them to you for use as required.

NBS undertakes to take all reasonable precautions to ensure that these details are secure from unauthorized access.

A detailed receipt will be sent to you for each transaction made against your card.

Credit Card Type: VISA Bankcard MasterCard (**circle one**)

Expiry Date: _____/_____/_____

Name of Card Holder

(as it appears on the card) : _____

Card Numbers: _____/_____/_____/_____

Payment Options (tick one)

I authorize NBS to automatically charge my card the appropriate amount when processing accounts on my behalf.

I wish to use the pre-printed credit card payment slips, please send me a suitable number