



White Paper



10-Minute Report

International Benefit Administration & Claims Processing: Multi-Currency Support, Importing International Code Tables, and Remote Access

The rapid increase of globalization has created challenges and opportunities for many healthcare organizations. For example, international organizations must process a wide variety of medical claims and healthcare benefits that originate from different countries. Many international organizations handle claims from the United States, which are coded with CPT and ICD9 codes, as well as claims with local coding systems or no coding at all. While different coding systems present a challenge for many organizations, working with currencies from all over the world offers another significant challenge to international claims processors. Claims originating from one country may require payments to be calculated in that country's currency, while claims originating from other countries may require calculation of payment in another currency.

This paper examines several key features required for international benefits administration and claims processing, including multi-currency, coding of medical encounters and diagnosis, and remote access issues.

A case study that outlines an international solution provided for Cayman General Insurance is included at the conclusion of this paper.

For international healthcare organizations, system integration is a key factor in streamlining processes and automating benefits administration. Member enrollment, eligibility and claims data are much easier to maintain and process if they are integrated into a single system. An integrated system eliminates the need to import or manually enter updated subscriber data every time a new claim is filed. Likewise, a subscribers' demographic information, which is necessary for identifying currency and coding, can be maintained and accessed within the system to facilitate claims processing and auto-adjudication.

Plexis Claims Manager from Plexis Healthcare Systems provides international health insurers with a fully integrated system that allows automated access to member enrollment, eligibility and claims data. In addition, Plexis Claims Manager supports the import of international code tables, remote access, and multi-currencies.

Plexis Claims Manager's Multi-Currency Support

Plexis Claims Manager supports the standard Microsoft Windows multi-currency function and uses Microsoft Great Plains Dynamics for the maintenance of currencies and exchange rates.

An example of multi-currency functionality is the need to have a single database for processing claims and premium bills from offices with multiple locations, each with a



different currency. At each office location, there may be members that receive services outside of their native country. As a result, received claims may come from providers in multiple currencies.

Plexis Claims Manager's multi-currency functionality features include:

- *Plexis Claims Manager saves claims in the native currency of the payor.*
The payor record has an associated "native" currency type. When you save claims into the database, all money amounts (charges, deductible, coinsurance, net payment, etc.) save in the native currency of the payor.
- *Plexis Claims Manager pays claims in the native currency of the payee.*
Each provider record has an associated "native" currency type. The native currency of the subscriber is the native currency of the payor. The system makes payments to the payee (Vendor) in their native currency. A future version of Plexis Claims Manager will allow the dynamic selection of the currency to allow payments in currencies other than the payee's native currency.
- *Claims may be entered in any supported currency.*
Plexis Claims Manager has a currency exchange rate table that identifies every supported currency. The claim entry screens supports entering monetary amounts (charges, deductible, coinsurance, net payment, etc.) in any of the currencies supported by the exchange rate table. The claim defaults to the native currency of the provider during data entry. The person doing the data entry can change the default currency type to any of the currencies defined in the exchange rate table.
- *Plexis Claims Manager supports multiple exchange rate dates for claims processing.*

Whenever a person enters a claim in a currency other than the native currency of the payor, then the data stored in the database does not match the monies entered on the claim. To translate between the two currencies there must be a fixed exchange rate date. This is the date used to look up into the exchange rate table to determine the exchange rate to use when translating from the currency used to enter the claim to the default currency used.

- *Plexis Claims Manager supports the following fixed exchange rate dates:*
 - The from date of service entered on the claim.
 - The received date entered on the claim.
 - The date the claim was entered into Plexis Claims Manager.
 - The date the claim was adjudicated.
- *Plexis Claims Manager displays and modifies claims in any supported currency.*
Once PCM saves a claim, it can display the claim in any currency supported by the currency exchange rate table. The claim screens have dropdown fields for



selecting the desired display currency. This dropdown field defaults to the native currency of the provider. The user makes any currency field modifications in the same currency as shown in this dropdown entry. For example, if the display currency is US dollars and you want to change the charged amount field on a procedure line then users must enter the change using US dollars.

Exchange Rates

Exchange rates continuously change. To know what the exchange rate is on a given day, PCM maintains a table of exchange rates for each currency that is being used. These exchange rates will have an effective date range (“effective from” and “effective through” dates). To keep things simple, the user will be able to define a “Default Currency” and maintain exchange rates for that currency only. For example, a client may use US Dollars, Canadian Dollars, and Mexican Pesos. They may choose Canadian Dollars as their default currency. They would then need to maintain the following exchange rates:

- Canadian Dollars to US Dollars
- Canadian Dollars to Mexican Pesos

They would not have to maintain exchange rates for:

- US Dollars to Mexican Pesos.

The finest granularity the system will support is daily exchange rates. PCM does not currently support hourly exchange rates. PCM does maintain a history of exchange rates.

Importing International Procedure and Diagnosis Codes

International healthcare organizations receive claims from various parts of the world that typically include a variety of coding. For example, international healthcare claims may include CPT, ICD9, ICD10, French social security codes, and others that are often less descriptive than CPT codes.

To support these codes, a system must be capable of loading multiple coding tables and apply the correct code tables necessary to process international claim data. Coding tables for both pricing and benefits can be loaded into Plexis Claims Manager. Existing PCM functionality will process standard CPT and ICD9 codes and other coding regimes, however, depending on the specific international coding involved, customization may be required to select which code table a claim should be applied to on an individual claim.

For example, if the international procedure and diagnosis code tables do not occupy the same text range, then the correct international code table would be applied to the specific claim. However, if the codes associated with ICD9 tables and French social security tables overlap in terms of text ranges, then customization would be required to provide this functionality in Plexis Claims Manager.



Remote Access Solutions

Remote access is a significant issue for many international healthcare organizations. Because they may be geographically decentralized, international healthcare organizations require reliable access to the system for claims handlers located around the world. There are several ways to accomplish this, provided there is enough bandwidth in place to accommodate connectivity. Plexis claims processing and benefit administration software supports each of the remote access solutions described below.

Remote Access Option 1: Wide Area Network.

Wide Area Networks (WAN) refer to the technologies used to connect offices at remote locations. The size and effectiveness of a network is limited due to size and distance constraints. However networks may be connected over a high- speed communications link (called a WAN link) to link them together and become a Wide Area Network.

In a Wide Area Network, routers are used to route packets of information via dedicated lines between networks. With this mechanism in place, international healthcare organizations' data can be sent from remote locations on dedicated lines to a central office for processing. For example, a WAN may directly connect remote offices in Brazil, the United States and Canada through a large network, based on dedicated lines between those locations. In this way, Plexis Claims Manager can reside at a central location and claim adjudication can be accomplished from remote locations.

Remote Access Option 2: Virtual Private Network.

The function of a Virtual Private Network (VPN) is to allow two computers or networks to talk to each from remote locations. To accomplish this, a VPN uses a computer at each of the two or more points on the various ends of the transport media, such as the Internet. For example, a healthcare organization based in Europe may have offices in France, Germany, Algeria and Thailand. The organization can setup a VPN so it can access any of the 4 network locations at any time through the Internet.

Healthcare organizations can have a unique server located in Europe, equipped with SDSL lines and accessed by users via VPN. Claims data from remote locations could be encrypted and transmitted via VPN to central offices for adjudication.

Remote Access Option 3: Built-in Web Front End

A Web Front End allows a variety of users to access data from remote locations via the Internet, and allows healthcare organizations to limit data access privileges. Plexis WEBWorks is a Web application that connects providers, consumers, employers, administrators and vendors with an integrated database. WEBWorks provides a fast and efficient method of delivering clear, on-demand and up-to-date information from one location to another, and provides seamless integration with the Plexis database. However, WEBWorks does not provide access to the centralized application (Plexis Claims Manager) to perform their daily processes. Options 1 and 2 will be required for remote access to the centralized application.



White Paper



Plexis International Case Study: Point-of-care settlement for Cayman General Insurance

Partnership, remote access and multi-currency functionality provide successful solution

The Issue: Soaring Administrative Costs

Located on the island of Grand Cayman in the British West Indies, Cayman General Insurance sought a remote access solution to provide members with electronic transmission of claims and to reduce administrative costs, which were about 25 percent of the company's revenue. To accomplish this, CGI teamed up with Plexis Healthcare Systems, which developed a processing system for CGI that offered point-of-care claims settlement, and two other vendors.

Prior to implementing Plexis Claims Manager, CGI had been using a quasi-manual system and the response time was not good. In the summer of 2001, CGI began installation of the Plexis Claims Manager Benefits Administration Software for processing and claims paying. On Jan. 1, 2002, the system went live.

The Caymans do not have income taxes, but companies that import technical personnel are required to pay costly work permit fees. Not being able to find enough technical talent locally to provide in-house support, and not wanting to keep importing technicians as the company grew, CGI looked to technology for its answer.

The Solution: Strategic Partnership Provides Remote Access

About a year after installing the Plexis system, CGI signed a contract with Brac Informatics Centre, a local technology service provider that took over the management of the Plexis system. But CGI also wanted to provide a direct link to providers. To accomplish this, the company enlisted the services of NY-based Mitan Technologies, which formed a strategic alliance with Brac Informatics. In this way, CGI provided its doctors with access to the Plexis system, with Mitan Technologies using the Internet and providing the software that links the two.

The CGI point-of-care claims settlement allows physicians and payers to track each claim and know exactly where it is in the process. Eligibility can be verified electronically in the doctor's office and when payment is made at the end of a session, the amount goes against the Plexis database, is recorded as a claim, and the provider can see how much the patient should pay as co-pay. Once payment is made, the provider also can see on his screen that the claim has been adjudicated.



White Paper



The Results: Increased productivity and 40% reduction in administrative costs

Plexis faced several obstacles, including developing a system flexible enough to handle multi-currency conversions. However, the point-of-care settlement system built around Plexis Claims Manager has resulted in significant gains in efficiency and cost savings associated with automated multi-currency functionality and remote access. CGI is now able to turn claims around in a day rather than weeks, and that it takes only three days to get checks out rather than three weeks. In addition, the system has reduced CGI's administrative costs by 40 percent and its use of paper by 30 percent, according to officials at CGI.

Plexis Healthcare Systems provides industry-leading benefits administration software for the healthcare industry. Built with the very latest Microsoft technology, Plexis software ranked #1 in functionality in an independent industry study. Customers have been reducing their costs, streamlining their claims payment operations, and enhancing customer satisfaction with Plexis solutions since 1996.