The settlement of health insurance claims could soon be a matter of a few clicks, as the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai) is planning a common portal for the process.

The insurance regulator is seeking to bring all stakeholders in the health insurance space—insurers, the insured, as well as hospitals—under one roof with an aim to standardise the claim settlement procedure and ensure payment in a time-bound manner. TL Alamal, member (non-life), Irdai, said on Friday.

Irdai has also formed a committee to look into the matter, and the platform will be developed by the

Common portal for health...

Alamal said the idea was to have cashless claims as well as reimbursements routed through the common portal.

"All claims will be settled via this platform. This will give rich wealth of data, apart from standardising settlements and ensuring that settlements are done within a specific period in time," she said. Irdai has been moving towards standardisation in health insurance for quite some time. Recently, it asked insurers to offer the standard health insurance product, Arogya Sanjeevani Policy, before the April 1 deadline.

Arogya Sanjeevani will have basic mandatory covers, which will be uniform in nature. The premium may be set by insurers on their own.

The regulator is also in the process of standardising the charges for certain common procedures. At present, there is a huge disparity in charges of same procedures by different hospitals. Also, Irdai has expressed concern over rising hospital costs. "There is a mismatch in pricing," Irdai is thinking how to handle it. In this context, the General Insurance Council’s talks with TPAs are on course to standardise charges for some procedures such as cataract and hysterectomy, she said.

"It has been noticed that hospital inflation at present is 10 per cent to 15 per cent and tariffs are being changed on a regular basis. There is nobody to check that," Alamal said. Irdai is also planning to let customers choose their TPAs, she added. Meanwhile, Irdai is planning to come out with a second window for proposals under the sandbox mechanism.

The first window for submitting application was open for around 30 days in the months of September and October. The regulator got 173 proposals, of which the majority pertained to wellness and use of technology in health insurance. Many proposals involved using fitness apps for determining premiums.

"We are also looking for more disruptive sort of policy. There will be a second window, may be some months later or year later. It should cover a huge population and is also simple," she said.

Regulatory Sandbox usually refers to live testing of new products in a controlled environment, wherein regulators may permit certain relaxations for the limited purpose of testing. It is similar to a pilot project and the insurer is free to withdraw the project in case it fails to succeed, provided it doesn't impact customers who have already purchased it.
Irdai concerned over high hospital tariffs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Kolkata, February 14

INSURANCE SECTOR REGULATOR Irdai on Friday expressed concerns over rising tariffs in hospitals and has planned to standardise charges for some medical procedures, an official said. It has been noticed that rate of inflation of hospital charges at present is around 10-15% and tariffs are being changed on a regular basis, Irdai member (non-life) TL Alamelu said.

"Hospitals keep on changing tariffs on a regular basis. There is no body to check that. The regulator does not allow insurance companies to raise premium every year though there is around 10-15% inflation of hospital charges at present," Alamelu said.

There is a "mismatch", she said at a programme, organised by the ASSOCHAM.

"In this context, the General Insurance Council is in talks with the TPAs (third party administrators) to standardise charges for some procedures like cataract surgery and hysterectomy," she said.

Currently, TPAs are being selected by the insurance companies, Alamelu said. "We plan to introduce a system in which people will have the liberty to choose their TPAs," she said.

Alamelu said the regulator is considering setting up a health insurance forum for settlement of claims.
ASSOCHAM in the News

The Hindu Business Line (Page 06)

15th February 2020

IRDAI plans to set up common electronic platform to settle health insurance claims

Regulator keen to open second window to invite proposals under the sandbox model

The insurance regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) is looking at setting up a common electronic platform to settle health insurance claims. This will help avoid disputes and delays in settling claims and also reduce administrative costs. IRDAI's chairman, M. K. Ranga Rao, said the regulator is looking at setting up a common electronic platform to settle insurance claims. The platform will be developed by the insurance industry and will be used by all insurers. It will be a single window for settling insurance claims. The platform will be launched in the second half of this year.

The platform will be developed by the insurance industry and will be used by all insurers. It will be a single window for settling insurance claims. The platform will be launched in the second half of this year.

The platform will be developed by the insurance industry and will be used by all insurers. It will be a single window for settling insurance claims. The platform will be launched in the second half of this year.
Online claims on menu

ASSOCHAM in the News

The Telegraph (Page 08)
15th February 2020

A STAFF REPORTER

Calcutta: Insurance market regulator Irdai is mulling an online national portal to settle health insurance claims.

"There are ongoing discussions on having an online health insurance forum that will allow settlement of claims. The idea is to bring all the stakeholders on a common platform. The Insurance Information Bureau is developing this. It could bring a paradigm shift in how claims are settled," Irdai member (non-life) T. L. Alamelu said on the sidelines of an Assocham summit.

The forum once implemented would also allow for a timebound settlement of claims.

The insurance regulator also expressed concern over the rising tariffs in hospitals and is exploring ways to standardise charges.

"In this context, the General Insurance Council is in talks with the TPAs (third party administrators) to standardise charges for some procedures," she said.

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai) is looking for standardisation of charges of medical procedures, she said, adding that it will take some time as this is a "tough challenge".

At present, TPAs are being selected by the insurance companies, Alamelu said.

"We plan to introduce a system in which people will have the liberty to choose their TPAs," she said, adding that the regulator is pursuing hospitals and TPAs for more disclosure on cashless treatments, costs and settlement performance.

Alamelu said there has been a good growth in the health insurance industry for the last 10 years.

"From Rs 3,342 crore in 2006-07, collection of health insurance premium has increased to Rs 44,873 crore in 2018-19," she added.